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Maritime Heritage Association, Inc.

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With a registered length of just 70.6', *Chearful* set out from Sydney for California with 86 passengers which included 11 women and 2 children. She ran out of provisions before she reached Tahiti.

Drawing by Ross Shardlow.

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

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

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The Editor, 12 Cleopatra Drive, MANDURAH, Western Australia, 6210.

EDITORIAL

A big thank you to all the people who contributed articles for the journal during the past year, especially to new contributors. There is now enough interest in sending in items that I could not fit them all in this edition, but they will appear in future magazines. It is your articles that keep the journal going.

In this edition you will find the first of our autobiographies of members; this one by Rod Dickson.

It is really heartening to see the interest shown by members in some of the articles. The correspondence that has been received regarding the article on the adze for instance has produced a number of corrections with a lot of interesting information. The next edition will have more on shipwrights' tools, including more information on the adze.

The March 2004 edition will also see the first of a series of articles by retired shipwright Jack Gardiner on a variety of subjects to do with boat building, particularly regarding Thames barges.

By the time you receive this magazine the annual Christmas get together will have been and gone. I won't be at that event as I will be overseas but I take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year.

Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year

Presidential Tidings

Tidings: from the Old English Tidung *meaning news and information. (Ed.)*

Ah, retirement, how sweet it is!!! I finally made it to a committee meeting and gentleman's book club meeting and what a pleasure it was. Firstly thanks to Barbara and Jill for the fine supper they provided. There was a diverse range of books read and discussed and it was a very pleasant evening.

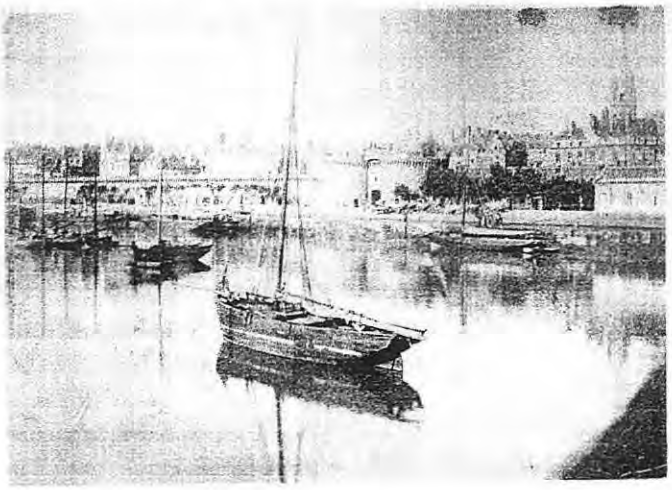
One of the most common questions I have received since the day I hung up the boiler suit and boots for the last time is -- when are you going to buy a boat? Hells bells, after 45 years of tramping around the world on all types of vessels from small to large, why on earth would I want to buy a very expensive hole in the ocean? In fact since I came ashore I haven't even seen the ocean. My time now is taken up with researching and writing a catalogue of the states maritime resources, both in the State Records Office at the Alexander Library and at the National Australian Archives. Hopefully this, in the future, will assist researchers to more easily find hidden treasures in our states history, of which there is an enormous amount. So far in the Police Station Occurrence Books I have discovered previously unknown wrecks and a wreck that happened down south when it is officially listed as having had its near coming to grief in northern waters. This will need some further investigation with tides and currents and will keep me occupied for some time to come.

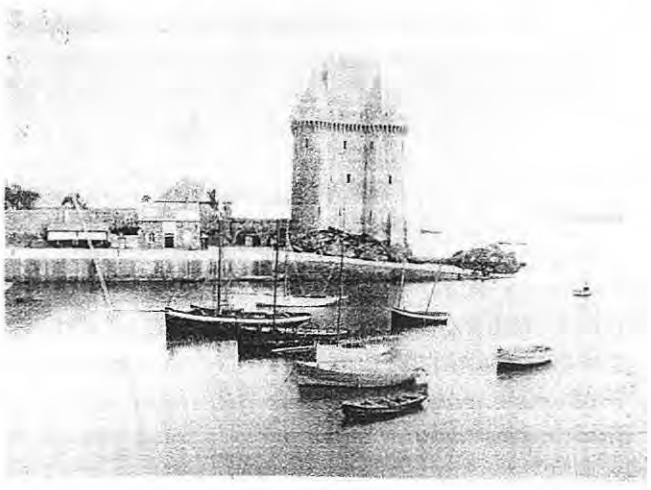
Our esteemed editor has set me a problem, how does one condense a life at sea in a mere couple of pages? I have already written my autobiography and it runs to some 200 pages, however I will do my best to give a bare outline of my life and times. **Rod Dickson**.

Can You Help?

This is a plea from Rod Dickson for help in solving a problem set by some old photographs. Can anyone help?

They come from an old album in my collection which is a compilation of photos of a voyage from Fremantle to Europe in 1889, via Colombo, Suez, Malta to England, France, etc. The two photos of what appear to be fishing boats seem to be somewhere in France and the strange contraption in the enlarged photo would appear to be somewhere there also as it is on the same page in the album. BUT WHAT IS IT AND WHERE IS IT. It appears from the photo that it is moving as you can see a wake from the legs on the right and we seem to think that it is on rails under water and probably being towed by a cable. It appears to be very flimsy in construction. See photo on facing page.





The Californian Gold Rush – further links to Western Australia.

Responding to the *River Chief* article (Vol.14, No.2), Rod Dickson brought it to Ross Shardlow's attention that there were two other Western Australian vessels associated with the rush to San Francisco, the *Emma Sherratt* and *Rory O'More.* Following up Rod's information, an examination of the shipping lists actually revealed some twenty vessels with links to Western Australia and the Californian rush.

Ross Shardlow takes up the story.

A New Eldorado

When gold was discovered in California 24 January 1848, California was still a possession of Mexico. At the time of the discovery, Mexico and the United States had been at war for two years and were in the process of negotiating a peace treaty that would cede California to the United States. The treaty was signed just over a week after the gold was discovered. The treaty was ratified by the United States Senate in March and agreed to by the Mexican Congress in May. San Francisco's first newspaper, the *Californian,* reported the gold strike on 15 March 1848 under the heading 'GOLD MINE FOUND'. Had the report been announced a little earlier, Mexico may well have been even less enthusiastic about giving up California. The initial news of the gold strike created little attention. A few strikes had been reported a few years earlier but these had come to nothing and with a population of just 459, there were few people in San Francisco to actually read the newspaper. When the owner of the rival *Star* newspaper rode into town a few weeks later, waving a bottle filled with gold dust, the people of San Francisco literally took to the hills, leaving only about a dozen behind. It still took some time for the outside world to hear about the strike. Reports were filtering through to New York in August and September yet the rush didn't really gain momentum until President Polk's address to Congress on 5 December 1848, proclaimed 'accounts of the abundance of gold in that territory are of such extraordinary character as would scarcely command belief ...' By next morning New York newspapers were running headlines describing an 'Age of Gold' and in immortalising the words 'Go West, young man', fuelled the 'greatest mass migration since the Crusades'. By the end of 1849, San Francisco's population had escalated to nearly 25,000. California's overall population increased by 85,000, of which some 23,000 came from countries other than the United States – Australia included.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* gave an account of the 'New Eldorado' on 23 December 1848. The prospect of easy riches was very appealing to a largely poor, working class, ex-convict population. During 1849-50, over two hundred vessels (of various and indifferent description), sailed from Australia and New Zealand carrying seven to eight thousand people. Whereas none were officially recorded as having departed from Western Australia, it is evident that several vessels involved in the Western Australian trade were diverted to the Californian run, calling at other ports before making their final departure. The following is a list of vessels with links to Western Australia and the Californian Gold Rush.

BANDICOOT — Schooner 55 tons. Built Hobart 1838.
Traded regularly from Western Australia 1847-48, departed Fremantle, 9 November 1848 bound for Hobart.
Departed Hobart 5 June 1849 for San Francisco via Tahiti and Sandwich Islands but did not proceed beyond Honolulu as her cargo was unsuitable for San Francisco.
Returned to Hobart 23 January

1850 by Pacific Islands and New Zealand. Called at Fremantle 9 November 1851.
Wrecked Port MacDonnell, South Australia, 18 April 1861.

CHEARFUL Brigantine 124 tons. Built Leith, Scotland 1834.
Made two trips to Western Australia in 1843.
Departed Sydney 25 September 1849 for San Francisco via Tahiti and Honolulu. Ran out of provisions by the time she reached Tahiti.
Arrived San Francisco via Honolulu 20 February 1850, 148 days, 86 passengers (shockingly overcrowded).
Sold at San Francisco 1850.

COQUETTE Schooner 72 tons. Built St. Vincent NSW, 1840.
Departed Sydney 6 September 1849 for San Francisco.
Arrived San Francisco 27 November 1849, 82 days, 3 passengers.
Came to Western Australia 1868 from Torres Strait for the bech-de-mer and pearling industry off the North-West coast. Repeated the season in 1869.
Wrecked Clarence River Heads, NSW, 31 December 1872.

EAGLE Schooner 93 tons. Built Harwich 1818.
Traded regularly to Western Australia 1830-36.
Departed Launceston 16 September 1850 for San Francisco via Auckland.
Cleared Auckland 19 March 1850.
Wrecked 20 March 1850 off Cape Colville, New Zealand.

EMMA SHERRAT Brigantine 94 tons. Built Torbay, Western Australia 1844. Built in Western Australia but sold to South Australia 1848.
Traded regularly to Western Australia 1844-50 making her last run from Fremantle and King George Sound 18 April 1850 bound for Port Adelaide.
Departed Port Adelaide 15 May 1850 for Tahiti and San Francisco.
Arrived San Francisco 9 September 1850, 110 days, no passengers.
Cleared San Francisco 25 September 1850 for Sydney and Adelaide and was wrecked in the 'Feejees' 6 December 1850 while making her return to Australia.

EUDORA Barque 208 tons. Built Chepstow, UK 1835.
Traded to Western Australia 1837 and 1841.
Departed Hobart 10 December 1849 for Honolulu and San Francisco.
Arrived San Francisco 8 May 1850, 148 days, 130 passengers.
Returned to Australia and departed Sydney for second trip to San Francisco 10 November 1850.
Arrived Honolulu 14 January 1851 with eight passengers but apparently did not go on to San Francisco.
Wrecked Poverty Bay, New Zealand 28 July 1851 on voyage from Lyttleton to Sydney.

GIRAFFE Brig 260 tons. Built South Shields, UK 1834.
Made one visit to Western Australia calling at Fremantle 30 December 1835 with 13 children from the Children's Friend Society – an immigration scheme for destitute and disadvantaged children.
Departed Sydney for San Francisco 5 September 1849.

Arrived San Francisco 2 December 1849, 88 days, 4 passengers.
Returned to Australia and departed Sydney for a second trip, 24 December 1850.
Arrived Honolulu 4 April 1850 but there is no record of her going on to San Francisco. Returned to Australia.
Hulked Melbourne 1857, abandoned at Salt Water Creek, 1888.

HENRIETTA Schooner 140 tons. Built Sunderland, UK 1845.
Only made one visit to Western Australia, calling at Fremantle from London 19 August 1849 on her way to Adelaide.
Departed Port Adelaide 22 April 1850 for California. Called at Sydney 4-21 May 1850 to repair damage to bulwarks.
Arrived San Francisco 8 August 1850, 111 days, no passengers.
Register closed 1891 with comment 'missing for years'.

JOSEPH ALBINO Brigantine 142 tons. Built Orwell Bay, Prince Edward Island 1839.
Called at King George Sound having sprung her mainmast in a gale off St Pauls Island 26 August 1846.
Departed for Adelaide.
She made another run to King George Sound and Fremantle returning to Adelaide 2 January 1847 with 47 passengers.
Cleared Adelaide 12 July 1849 for New Zealand, Sandwich Islands and California.
Arrived San Francisco 26 October 1849, 104 days, 44 passengers.
On 4 December 1849, the vessel was seized at San Francisco for landing contraband goods.
Though the captain appealed on the basis that it was a false accusation, the ship was condemned and was never returned to her owners.

JOSEPH CRIPPS Schooner 78 tons. Built Circular Head, Tasmania 1840.
Traded to King George Sound in 1843. Departed Hobart 6 October 1849 for Auckland and San Francisco.
Arrived San Francisco 1 April 1850, 99 days, 1 passenger.
Wrecked at Long Point, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, 11 June 1851.

LORD HOBART Brig 190 tons. Built Salcombe, Devon 1805.
Called at King George Sound from Timor, 25 November – 8 December 1837, on way to Adelaide with a shipment of ponies.
Also called at Fremantle from Coepang 3 April 1838 on way to Adelaide with 107 ponies – all but eight lost after boisterous weather.
Departed Sydney 12 December 1849 for San Francisco.
Arrived San Francisco 24 April 1850, 133 days.
Condemned and hulked at San Francisco, 18 January 1851, broken up.

MAQUASHA Brig 151 tons. Built Carleton, Canada 1834.
Traded to Fremantle from Hobart and Port Phillip in 1843. Departed Hobart 25 December 1849 for San Francisco.
Arrived San Francisco 4 May 1850, 130 days, 16 passengers.
Stranded at San Francisco, condemned and sold for $380, 29 November 1850.

MAZEPPA Three masted topsail schooner 163 tons. Built Deptford NSW, 1846.
Traded to Fremantle and King

George Sound, 1848-49.
Cleared Port Adelaide 7 June 1849 for New Zealand and California.
Put in to San Diego for water and took on additional passengers.
Arrived San Francisco 14 October 1849, 128 days, 19 passengers. The captain and mate discharged the cargo, the crew having bolted.
Departed San Francisco for Sydney and Adelaide 1 January 1850.
Returned to trade in Fremantle 1851-52.
Wrecked east coast of Colombo, November 1854.

PRYDE Brig 205 tons.
Built Quebec 1842.
Whaleship from Hobart Town – 4 April 1848, put in under stress of weather, the wind being on the land. Sheltered under Rottnest Island but did not come further in.
Laid on for California from Hobart but run into by the *Elizabeth Starbuck*, 2 February 1850, lost fore topmast and a new boat.
Departed Hobart 1 March 1850 for California via Oahu. Put into Port Arthur 5 May 1850 having been damaged in Storm Bay due to overloading, horses were landed because the vessel considered too small.
Arrived San Francisco 17 June 1850, 104 days, 31 passengers.
Returned to Australia.
Wrecked Port Phillip Heads, February 1866.

REGIA Brig 181 tons.
Built Cochin 1835.
Made only one visit to King George Sound and Fremantle, 29 September 1837, captain making comment about unsafeness of harbour in a storm. Court case over mutinous crew, captain appeared ill or drunk.
Departed Sydney 5 June 1849 for San Francisco.
Arrived San Francisco 29 August 1849, 85 days, 32 passengers.
Returned to Australia.
Lost Portland, Victoria 16 November 1860.

RIVER CHIEF Brig 159 tons.
Built Mandurah, Western Australia 1845.
Built in WA, sold and registered in South Australia 1847.
Departed Melbourne 6 January 1850 for San Francisco via New Zealand and Tahiti.
Arrived San Francisco 2 July 1850, 177 days, 90 passengers.
Vessel sold at San Francisco for $1,000 to pay wages for the crew, December 1850.
Returned to Australia and re-registered at Sydney 1854.
Wrecked Richmond River Heads, NSW 25 November 1865.

RORY O'MORE Barque 296 tons. Built Kirkudbright, Scotland 1841.
Departed San Francisco 6 June 1850 for Launceston via Tahiti (not clear if she had sailed from Australia or whether this was her first visit to Australia. She had previously been registered at Quebec).
Arrived Launceston 17 August 1850.
Departed Launceston 16 November 1850 for her second trip to San Francisco.
Arrived San Francisco 2 February 1851, in the good time of 78 days, 4 passengers. Returned to Australia.
Sold in Singapore April 1858 and purchased by Captain John

Thomas, re-registered in Fremantle, Western Australia and employed in the sandalwood trade 1858-60.
Sold foreign, Singapore, 12 December 1863.

TAMAR Schooner 119 tons. Built Blackwall Point, Tamar River, Tasmania. 1848.
Departed Launceston 24 March 1850 for California. Put into Auckland for minor repairs 6 April 1850.
Arrived San Francisco 17 June 1850, 85 days, 1 passenger.
Returned to Launceston 28 October 1850.
Traded to Western Australia 1855-56.
Wrecked Dunedin Heads, New Zealand, 8 November 1862.

THOMAS LORD Schooner 71 tons. Built North Sydney 1842.
Traded to Fremantle 1848-49.
Departed Launceston 16 April 1849 for Auckland. Sold and re-registered Auckland May 1849.
Departed Auckland 10 September 1849 for San Francisco.
Arrived San Francisco 28 December 1849, 109 days, 12 passengers.
Sold in San Francisco for £200.
Returned to Australia and re-registered at Sydney.
Wrecked North-East Coast Tasmania, 1857.

TIMBO Brigantine 123 tons. Built Littlehampton, Sussex 1835.
Traded to Western Australia 1843-44.
Departed Hobart 11 March 1850 for California. Returned to port 21 March 1850 due to misunderstanding between captain and owner. Vessel overloaded and part of cargo discharged.
Departed 23 March 1850 for San Francisco.
Arrived San Francisco 1 July 1850, 100 days, 20 passengers.
Returned to Hobart from San Francisco 6 December 1850.
Departed Hobart 6 February 1851 for Honolulu, 20 tons flour, potatoes & grain, 4 passengers.
Returned to Australia from Honolulu.
Hulked and broken up Melbourne 1856.

VELOCITY Brigantine 138 tons. Built Wallace, Nova Scotia 1840.
Traded to Western Australia 1841-44.
Departed Sydney 12 March 1850 for San Francisco via Honolulu.
Arrived San Francisco 13 June 1850, 93 days, 9 passengers.
Returned to Australia.
Broken up Melbourne 1862.

WIDGEON Brig 280 tons. Built North Shields, UK 1848.
Called at Fremantle from Canton 7 February 1850, refused to take pilot on board. Bound Hobart.
Departed Hobart 26 April 1850 for Columbia and California, general cargo & 30 passengers – disgracefully overloaded & unseaworthy.
Put in to Sydney under jury rig 12 May 1850 having been damaged in a gale off Cape Pillar, cut away mainmast, lost steering gear, passengers manning pumps. Lost 2 horses, 12 sheep and 50 tons deck cargo.
Departed Sydney 29 August 1850 for California.
Arrived San Francisco 14 December 1850, 107 days, 12 passengers.

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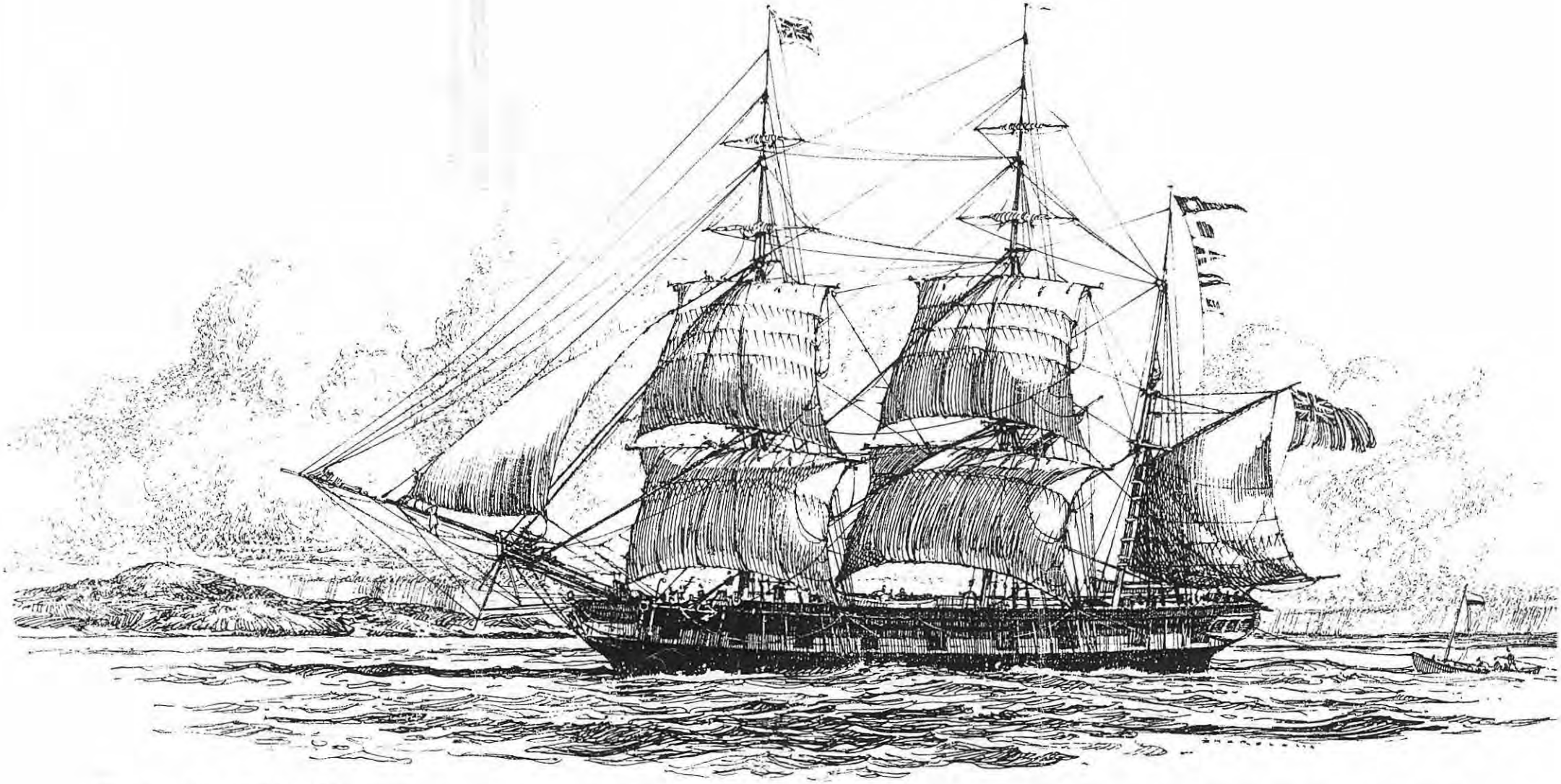

The barque *Rory O'More*, 296 tons, working to windward for the Garden island Anchorage, 22 July 1858. The signal flags from her mizzen read 3, 4, 6, 1 under a second distinguishing pennant – Marryat's Code for *Rory O'More*. The Union flag with a white border flown from her foremast is the Pilot Jack.

Drawing by Ross Shardlow.

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Battye Library
PG. 2.1.1836, 9.1.1836, 8.4.1848
WA. 4/5.4.1848

Q. Who is the sailor firmly aground in this photograph?

A. See article opposite.

A LIFE AT SEA or MUM'S GREY HAIR!!!

The first of the autobiographies of MHA members is from Rod Dickson, President and recently retired sailor.

I went away from Melbourne in 1956 when ships looked like ships and not the square, ungainly, unsightly floating blocks of flats that one sees in the ports around the world today. My first ships were crude oil tankers of the STANVAC fleet, the first was the *Stanvac India*, (1954) 13 months, and the second was the *Stanvac Australia*, (1954) two trips of 13 and 14 months duration. These ships traded from the Persian Gulf to mainly Africa, Australia, India and Europe. The last was the *Stanvac Nairobi*, ex *Jame J Maguire*, (1938) 12 months. She was a white oil or refined product tanker and traded mainly to the Far East, Australia, India and New Zealand. From these I went to dry cargo vessels such as *Lodestone*, (1938) and *Cape Horn*. The latter carried phosphate from Christmas Island when I was on her. I ended up in Fremantle and joined a whale oil tanker, the *Norwhale* on a voyage north and then joined the *Point Cloates* a whale chaser, boys own stuff on that one, and a job I am extremely proud of being a part of.

After a bit of fishing for crays and prawns and hunting turtles I went back deepsea on the *Rhodesia Star*, paying off in KG V docks in London. Part of the cargo we carried in No. 2 hatch was premium Aussie wines, some of which, by some mischance, seemed to end up in the crew's quarters almost every night, which caused some horrible heads in the mornings. We also, on the way "home" called at Aden and transferred the gold from the banks there to the Bank of England in London due to the transfer of power. The strange thing about that was that when loading it was guarded by half the British bloody Army and yet at London there was only ONE London Bobbie t o supervise the unloading.

After doing a bit of the touristy things in and around London I joined the British Post Office cable laying vessel *H.M.T.S. Monarch* for a voyage to the Far East. On this trip of five months we laid a section of the COMPAC undersea telegraph cable from Guam to Madang in New Guinea. On our return to England she reloaded with more cable and after three months we sailed for Madang again and laid the cable from there to Cairns in north Queensland. Interestingly this particular vessel carried a large number of pink silk parachutes as standard equipment. They were used to lower the repeaters to the seabed slowly as the cable was payed out over the stern. We also repaired broken cables on the way back to England, such as the one from Jeddah to some other port on the other side of the Red Sea. When I paid off in Belfast at the end of the voyage I was boarding with a mate and his family at the top of the Falls Road and some of the parachutes found their way there to be turned into dresses for the youngsters!!

Across the fitting out wharf at Harland and Woolfes' Belfast yard was a brand new ship painted Admiralty Grey. She was the Royal Fleet Auxiliary *Regent*, a 26,000 ton ammunition ship. I was one of the first six AB's to join her and on our first day we were given a job in the focsle sewing canvas. We were sitting on coils of new rope sewing away and gasbagging when all of a sudden we heard Whoopa Whoopa, just like the dive signal used in subs. Never having heard the noise before we ignored it. A little later, the mate, red faced, burst into the focsle abusing the hell out of us for ignoring a fire signal. It took a little while but we finally made it clear that we weren't aware of Navy type signals that were different from the normal bells of Merchant ships. Later when the vessel was fully operational and loaded with lots and lots of things that go bang in the night there was no way that we could ever ignore that noise, drunk or sober!!!

Being an Aussie on Pommy ships I was always the odd one out and I doubt whether most of the crew even knew my name as I was always called Aussie, the kangaroo kid, or, by a particular 4th mate, that Colonial Bastard. And I didn't do nuffink, your honour!!!

On the *Regent*, probably because nobody knew what to do with me, I was sent from Belfast to *H.M.S. Phoenix*, a shore training establishment at Portland to partake in the Nuclear, Bacteriological and Chemical Defence course run by the Navy. This was great fun, especially the fire fighting drills, shipboard, helicopter and fixed wing aircraft dummies were set alight in great blazes just so that we

could attack and extinguish the fires. The C.P.O. in charge was a bloody pyromaniac and set off some of the best fires I have ever seen and run away from, along with the rest of the class. I could go on for ages about the "school" but best leave it to memories.....When I returned to the ship I was made Chief Fireman on the flight deck as we had our own helicopter on board and we had flying duties virtually every day. In port I was the liberty boat coxswain and ran either the 36 footer for the crew or the Captain's gig when he had official engagements ashore.

I spent a couple of years on the *Regent* sailing through the Faroes north past Jan Mayen to the Arctic Ocean, to the Med to de-store Malta and carry the ammunition back to the depot in Loch Long, Scotland. South about Africa, via Sierra Leone, where I acquired some souvenirs from the local "navy", Capetown and one of my favourites, Port Elizabeth, (girls, beer and sports cars spring to mind) and north to Aden, back to Mombassa, across to Gan and down to Mauritius and then up to Singapore. Many exercises off the Malayan coast and I finally paid off in Singapore when offered a better job!!

I was given a plane ticket to Bangkok and a railway ticket back south to Surot. Then came a short bus trip to the coast at Surot Thani. Two days there and a ferry ride out to Ko Samui to join the *Mediterranean Seal*, an American flagged seismic survey vessel. She was working for Philips Petroleum in the Gulf of Thailand. The Yankee skipper was a bloody lunatic, when sober he was continually bible bashing and preaching about the evils of strong drink and loose women, (what else did seamen live for???) and yet on his own leave he was completely drunk for the whole time. After ten months and many madcap stories I finally left and flew back to Australia, supposedly on my way back to Melbourne, but once again the grog got me and I ended up with another job in W.A., this time at Barrow Island on the landing craft running from the Island to Onslow carrying the supplies and anything else needed. In 1974 came an interesting job on one of the barges, the old *Tern*, renamed *Ternable*. This was the very last explosive seismic job in the world. In a matter of 6 months we exploded 32,000 50lb depth charges no more than 50 metres from the stern. Every week we had to beach the old girl and reweld the hull and change propellers as we "blew" a number of blades off them. I have a favourite slide from that era in which a shark is shown 40 feet in the air having stupidly swum over the top of the charge just as it was detonated. We also had fun with the silver gulls, chuck a bit of garbage out to drift astern just as the first bomb went off and the gulls would be seen heading south at a rapid rate of knots!!!

Three years went by in a haze and then I joined my first State Ship the *Wambiri* and from that time on I was on the "Coast" so to speak for the rest of my career. There were seismic jobs, oil rig tenders, oil rigs and tugs for the next ten years and then I joined the *Australian Achiever*, a B.P. crude tanker running to the Persian Gulf for oil to Australia. This was at the time of the Gulf War, (between Iraq and Iran) and inside the Gulf we were only allowed to steam during the hours of darkness. During the day we were supposed to anchor in a safe anchorage away from bombs and missiles. It was pretty hairy being on watch at night as a lot of the tankers were running around up there with all lights extinguished which made them very difficult to see.

After a couple of years of that I left and rejoined State Ships on the *Pilbara* on the round Australia voyages. Then came more rig tenders and oil rigs and finally my last job the *S.S. Northwest Stormpetrel*, an L.N. G. Tanker running from Withnell Bay to any one of ten different ports in Japan. I spent 8 1/2 years on her and enjoyed almost all the time on her.

And now I have retired with all those years of memories, thousands of photographs and slides and movie film, finally transferred to video format to remind me of how lucky I have been. None of the young blokes in the industry today will ever have the opportunities and experiences that I have had because of the bullshit that has crept in mainly through Government intervention and red tape, however for anyone contemplating a career at sea, go for it, it's a wonderful and rewarding life.

Strive and *Master Hand*

This interesting article by Brian Lemon illustrates the differences between the sailing drifters and the sailing trawlers which worked around the U.K. over eighty years ago. This article first appeared in Modellers' Shipwright.

Both of these vessels are the older type of sailing/fishing boats. *Strive* is a herring drifter of the late eighteen hundred series, whereas *Master Hand* was built in the 1920's as a trawler. Around this time a lot of fishing boats were being purpose built with engines, predominantly steam. Both models were built from plans and information from Edgar March's two books on the history of these vessels. Both models are to a scale of half inch equals one foot (one twenty-fourth) and are approximately thirty four inches long on deck. Both are very similar in profile, but with subtle differences. It is these differences that I will describe from a constructional point of view as opposed to the complete construction which I have described in past issues.

The most noticeable difference that immediately comes to the eye is the stern area. On *Strive* the stern is of the semi-circular type and the stern post is less angled than that of *Master Hand.* The construction of these areas I found easier, or more straightforward on *Master Hand.* The framing was made up of small straight pieces of wood to form what is almost a transom-style stern. On *Strive* I had to make up a couple of cardboard templates to get the semi-circular stern shape and then transfer these to the appropriate piece of wood (.8mm ply). Both rudders are made of 6mm plywood, sanded and shaped and secured to the stern post by a standard pintle system. They are both tiller-steered, but on *Strive* it is iron (painted brass rod). On *Master Hand* the wooden tiller has some decorative work on either side.

The next subtle difference is the means of securing the bowsprit. Both bowsprits are quite large but immediately noticeable is a lack of bobstay on the *Master Hand.* On both boats the bowsprits are offset to starboard, but on *Master Hand* it exits through the gunwhale, whereas on *Strive* it runs atop the gunwhale through a gammon iron. Although the forward deck area is similar in that both have forward hatches, only *Master Hand* is equipped with both anchor-handling windlass and hand winch. It is notable that the inboard end of the bowsprit on *Master Hand* is secured to the windlass, whereas on *Strive* the inboard end of the bowsprit is secured to a special support. Both bowsprits can be run inboard.

On both models the decks are individually planked and secured with over nine hundred fine wooden trenails. Both boats have the Elliot and Girrood steam capstans. On *Strive* the fishnet is hauled over the side of the boat and emptied into the sorting ponds and then stacked down in the fish hold. On *Master Hand* the trawl is emptied onto the deck and then stacked down into the fish hold. Heading aft on the deck what is notable is the different types of access hatches, skylights and method of allowing the main sheet to travel. On *Master Hand* the main sheet has a boom whereas on *Strive* it has a standard iron traveller system. On *Strive* there doesn't appear to be any area for port and starboard lights. Both boats have fourteen-foot clinker dinghies (seven inches on the models) secured to the decks inboards. The seven inch models are fully detailed with nine clinkers either side, thwarts, knees and one pair of oars. Both models are painted flat black with *Strive* painted anti-fouling red below the water line and *Master Hand* a dark green below the water line.

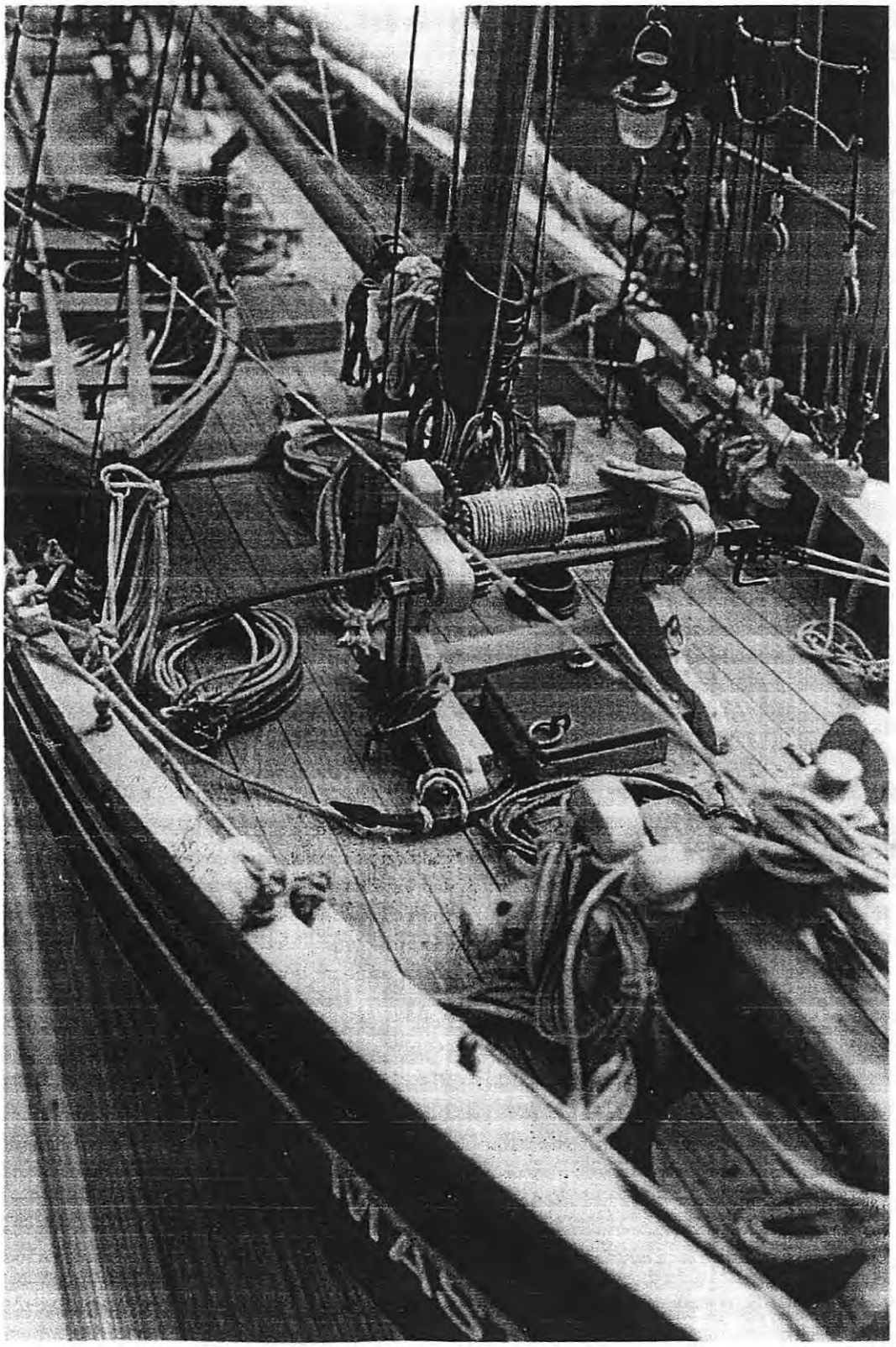
Although the basic sail plan for both vessels is the same, it will be noted that *Strive* has some additional topsails. The main mast of *Master Hand* has a top mast, whereas on *Strive* it is a single mast; also there are no ratlines on *Strive's* main mast. As has been mentioned *Strive* has no mainsail boom. *Master Hand* is mounted on two American white ash turned supports on a varnished white ash base board. *Strive* is mounted on two square supports on a varnished jarrah base board.

Construction Details

Having described the major differences of the two boats I will describe the hull and deck details construction.

On both models the stem, keel and stern were cut from one piece of 6mm 12ply marine quality wood. On the stem and keel I left one inch of surplus wood below the final keel depth for holding in my "Workmate" trestle. The sternposts of both models were cut to the finished size, allowing me to set up the rudders of both models early on in the building process; also there was no need to clamp these two areas at any stage. The position of the frames was, marked off on each keel - 13 frames on *Master Hand,* 11 frames on *Strive*. The frames, which were also cut from 6mm 12ply were glued to these positions. Once this was completed eight 6mm square stringers were, set into these frames on each side running from bow to stern up to deck level.

At this stage both "skeletons" were thoroughly sanded using my orbital sander and hand sanding



Forward deck detail on *Master Hand.*

Note the inboard securing of the bowsprit.

Also note the incredible amount of realistic detail that Brian has included.

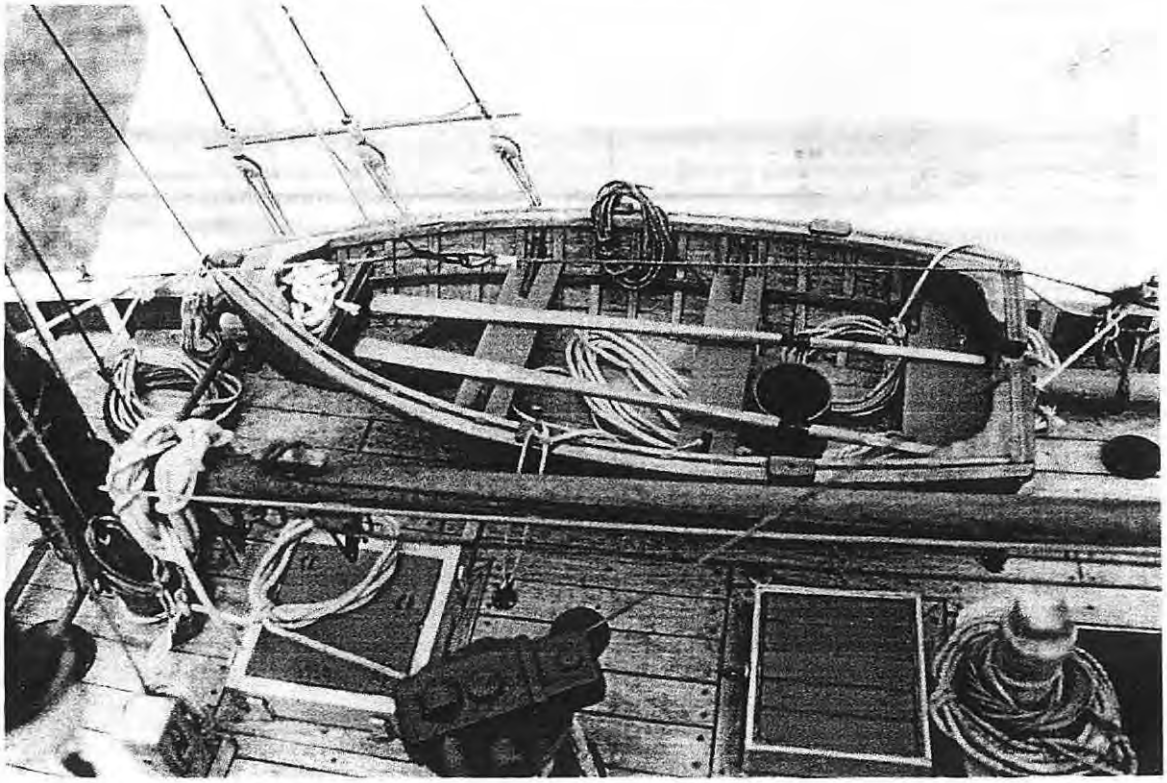
until satisfied that all bumps and imperfections have been eliminated. The hulls were now ready for "plating" (as opposed to conventional planking). Inside, the hulls can have up forty separate .8mm pieces of ply, glued to half of each frame and stringer and butt-joined to each other. This method is shown to advantage in my article in M/S No 73 on the *Flying Eagle*. Once this plating was finished up to the last stringer before deck level, several hours of fine sanding was applied until satisfied the hull is completely smooth. A set of stringers was then run from bow to stern thorough the top of each bulkhead (frame) sanded and cambered to take the false deck of .8mm ply. Once this was finished the appropriate number of deck planks were cut, also from .8mm ply. Starting from the centre and working out each side, the planks were held in place with pins while gluing. These pins were in position for the treenails. Once the deck was completed and the pins removed the holes were drilled slightly under one millimetre. For the treenails I used the points of over nine hundred round toothpicks dipped in glue and tapped into these holes and cut off flush with the deck. The deck was then sanded to eliminate the slightly raised trenails. I find that when the deck is stained with either pitch pine, teak or oak stain, these treenails show up quite realistically.

The next step was to mark and construct the deck details, winches, capstans, skylights, companionways, etc. Also, the position of the masts was marked for a later stage of stepping.

On *Master Hand* the roof of the main companion slides open and the vertical door panel lifts out. The hand winch also is fully workable. It will he noted, that there is no winch on *Strive*. Having completed all the deck details, the final plating of the hull, including the gunwale height, was finished and the appropriate capping rails were built and attached. The internal vertical supports on the inside of the gunwales were fitted.

The masts and spars were then made and were quite straightforward, although the mainmast on *Master Hand* has a separate topmast. Also it will be noted there are no ratlines on *Strive*. On both port, and starboard side of *Strive* spare spars, sweeps, boathooks, etc are held in place by gammon irons. On both models the fully-detailed clinker built dinghies are seven inches in length (1:24).

On *Strive* the ship's water barrel was shaped from a piece of very old broom handle. The brass bands were made from fine gold coloured automobile pin striping. The fully working winch on *Master Hand* is made from made from wood, brass section and a pair of clock gears.



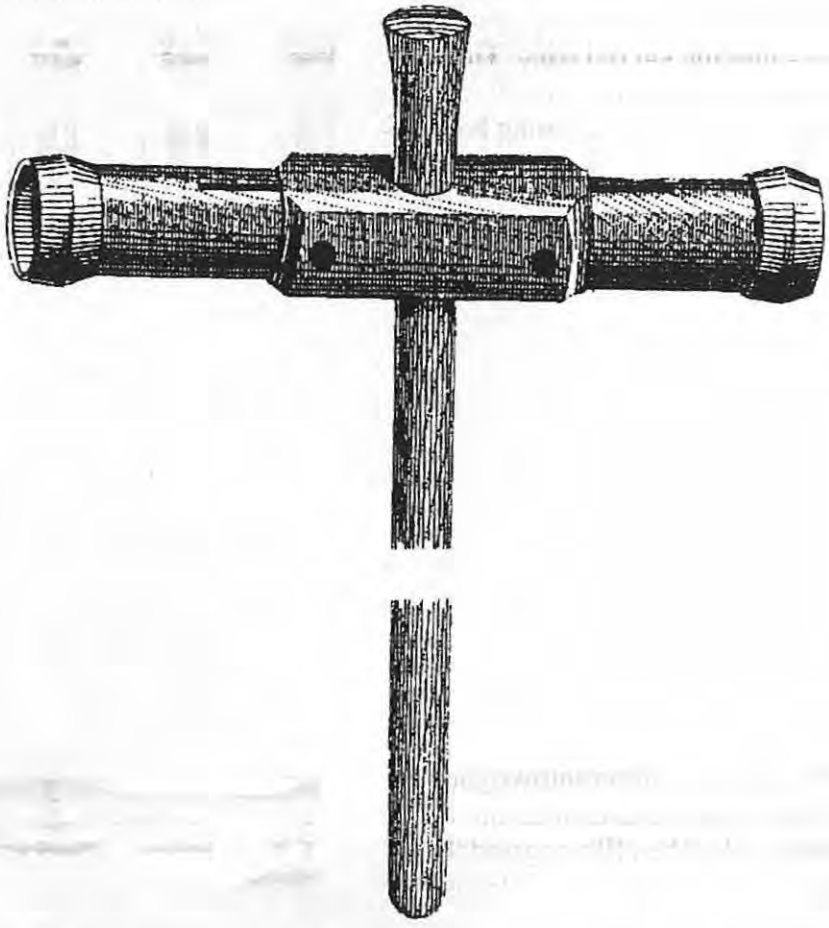
The 14' clinker dinghy on *Master Hand*

Shipwright's Tools

A second article on shipwright's tools, this time by MHA member from Darwin, Tony Duvollet. Tony is a shipwright and lives aboard his yacht.

Caulking Mallet & Irons

The tools of trade used by traditional shipwrights and boatbuilders are as varied and unique as some of the tradesmen. Most are used by other trades such as carpenters, joiners, cabinetmakers, coffin makers, etc. But some are unique and peculiar to boatbuilding. Some handed down from generation to generation. Always a source of pride. Many shipwrights developed or adapted tools to suit a particular purpose. I am still of that habit. Probably the most unique and distinctive symbol of the trade is the Caulking Mallet and Irons. The best irons were crafted by blacksmiths to the shipwright's specifications. Some were mass-produced in the UK. But the mallet was always custom made. In Australia the mallets were turned on a lathe in ironbark, spotted gum, river gum, jarrah, etc., but the best were made of the Amazon rainforest timber lignum vite. A timber so hard and heavy it was used for bushes and bearings and sold by weight, including the offcuts. Enduring generations in Europe, they tended to crumble in the dry heat in Australia.



The actual mallet head was about 18ins long (that's 450mm for those that are not bi-lingual), 2ins (50mm) diameter at the ends. The mid-section was rectangular in cross-section through which passed the handle. This handle was removable for easy transport and generally secured with a small wedge. Such are the forces imposed on the face of the mallet, and to add weight, that the ends are reinforced with boiler-tube ferrules. Boiler-tube is extruded seamless and unlike standard tube, will not split under pressure. Additional reinforcing was given by copper through-fastenings, roved and riveted, through the mid-section, either side of the handle. Between the boiler-tube ferrules and the mid-section a slot was cut into each barrel, with a hole, double the width of the slot, at each end, to prevent splitting. As a naive and gullible apprentice (I did go looking in the store for a left-handed screwdriver, but I never fell for the can of striped paint trick, honest) I was told that these slots were to make the mallet whistle. But 40 years on, and hopefully, a tad wiser, I now know that they were there to give 'spring' to take up the jarring effect of constantly striking a steel iron. This also gives 'bounce' or recoil, springing the mallet back for the next blow.

The irons were made in many shapes and sizes, with many adaptations but all with the same aim. To feed-in the caulking material, be it either oakum or cotton into the seam and then tamp it home hard. Basically there were three types of

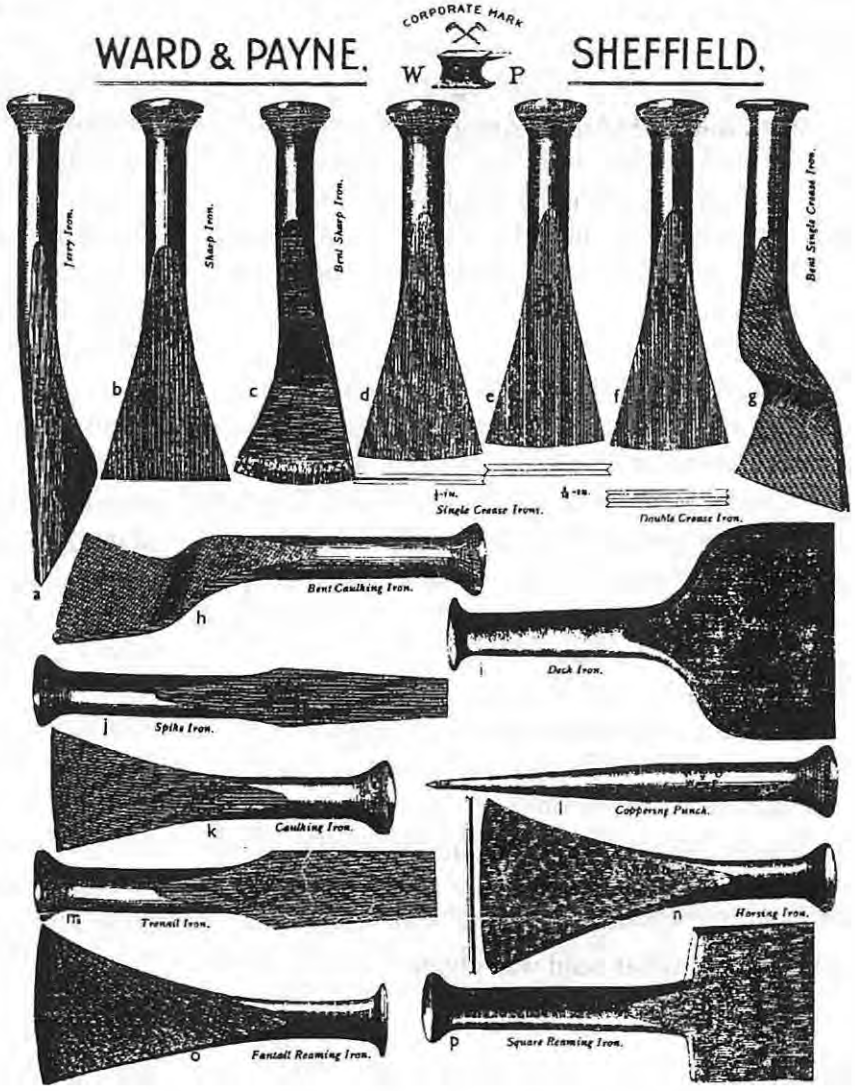
iron.
Making.
Setting.
Bent.
The making iron was about 6 to 7ins (150 to 175mm) long, as indeed were the other irons, rounded head, a fine narrow neck tapering outwards to a wide 3ins (75mm) feather-edged slightly curved blade. This was used for feeding oakum or cotton into the seam in a series of loops, loose or tight according to the thickness and depth of the seam. The setting irons were similar in shape to the making iron except instead of a feather-edge, they finished in various thicknesses to suit varying seam widths. A concave groove was filed into the curved edge. This allowed the caulking material to be tamped home hard forming horizontal 'beads'.

The bent irons were simply a set of making and setting irons bent either into an 's' to suit caulking the seam alongside a hatch coaming or cabin side or bent into a curve to enable caulking those awkward angled seams on the garboard. Narrower bladed making and setting irons were used in the seams of butt joints, stealers and the joggles in scarf joints.

Cleaning-out old seams was done with an iron similar to a bricklayers chasing tool. Some shipwrights would bend the tang of an old file at right-angles then file or grind the end to a triangular point, also with the aim of cleaning-out old seams.

Beetling or hawsing mallet and irons. The mallet was similar in shape to a croquet mallet but much larger, requiring two hands to swing. Beetling irons, again similar in shape to ordinary making irons but larger and fitted with steel-rod handle, similar to those handles used by blacksmiths. These were used on caulking the larger timber vessels. Oakum was fed lightly into the seam then housed (hawsed) home; one man on the mallet, another handling the iron. Must have required quite a degree of cooperation. Although the tools were in the store shed where I served my time, I never saw them in use.

As with most tools, balance is very important. Even more so with caulking mallets and irons, for you have to be comfortable to be able to caulk all day. The use of a brick bolster would make the old Caulkers turn in their graves and I shudder and have to walk away when I see it happening. No style, no finesse. Not good form. The use of these unique tools has declined with the advent of Bondwood, strip-planking, and, dare I say it, plastic, steel and Ferro. But they can never be replaced by power tools. I suppose the closest they came to mechanical caulking is when they used to 'caulk' the overlapping plates of riveted ships with air-driven tools.



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 1937 there were 45 miles of quays in the Port of London. The first dock there was constructed during the reign of Alfred the Great (848-c900).

The Carron Company was founded in 1759 and is famous for the carronade. However they later also ran a shipping line of steamers operating between London and Glasgow. The company owned the Carron and London and Continental Steam Wharf with two berths, in the Port of London. The wharves were demolished in 1974. Their steamers could be identified by the cannon ball carried on the main masts.

When the Royal navy first started putting steam engines into sailing warships they accomplished this, for ships on the stocks, by cutting off the stern and launching it. The hull was then lengthened, the engines and boilers installed and then the stern dragged ashore and re-attached to the ship. The three-deckers *Duke of Wellington* and *Marlborough* were altered in this fashion.

The *Great Eastern* was launched sideways into the Thames in 1858. She was the largest and most spectacular ship ever built on the Thames. When the site of her building was being cleared for redevelopment in 1984, some of the timbers and piles of the *Great Eastern's* slipway were uncovered. At low tide it is still possible to see parts of the timber slipway running out into the river.

The Millwall Boiler Works had rolling machines for bending the metal plates into a cylindrical shape. They also had a large 1888 Smith, Beacock & Tannet of Leeds plate edge-planer with a bed of twenty feet. This was used to chamfer the edges of the iron boiler plates, thus aiding the riveting, hammering and caulking together of the different plates of the boiler.

The time ball on the Greenwich Observatory was the world's first visual time signal and has dropped at precisely 1300 hours since 1833.

John Penn and Sons, builders of the engines in the *Xantho* and *HMS Warrior* had their main marine engine works at Greenwich. Their boiler shop was at Deptford. In 1880 Penn's employed 500 men at Deptford and 1,200 at Greenwich. The firm amalgamated with the Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company in 1899, and continued to produce engines and boilers until 1911, when the company ceased production. Their shipyard at Bow Creek, where *HMS Warrior* was launched in 1860, was the last major shipyard on the Thames to close when it ceased operation in 1911.

Trinity House has the responsibility for both pilotage and navigation lights on the Thames and around the coast of the U.K. They also had the job of dredging the Thames and providing ballast for outward bound sailing ships. This ballast was obtained by the vessels from the Trinity Ballast Wharf and a fee, called ballastage, was payable.

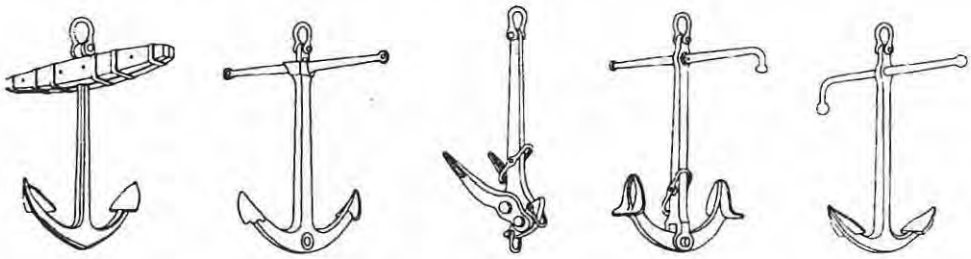
The War Department in the U.K., between the two World Wars, operated a special fleet of coasters based at the Woolwich Arsenal. These ships carried guns, munitions, foodstuffs and stores. The fleet's flag was a blue ensign defaced by gold guns, the vessels were painted black and the funnel was buff coloured with a black top. They carried the names of the ships in small letters on the stern like navy vessels and not on the bows like merchantmen. The personnel wore a uniform and were referred to as the 'Woolwich Navy'.

At the beginning of the 18th century the British regarded with distrust and distaste the idea of using exploding shells in ship to ship engagements as being ungentlemanly. The French however had no such qualms and issued there warships with a variety of combustible projectiles!

Crossing the Bight II

In response to the story in the last journal by Wal Bird of his encounter with strange seas in the great Australian Bight we have a story by Brian Lemon set in the same area.

While reading the article by Wal Bird it reminded me of a similar experience I had in about 1950. I was with my parents on board the ss *Kanimbla* heading across the Bight on holidays to Melbourne. It was in the evening about two days out from Port Adelaide that the captain made an announcement that there had been a severe earthquake in South Australia, affecting the city of Adelaide. The crossing of the Bight, and in fact right from Fremantle, had been incredibly calm. All the next day, although the ocean was beautifully calm we experienced this incredible swell. It could be seen way out to the horizon, higher than the ship and like slow motion eventually reached the ship. As I mentioned this went on all day. The next morning for the three hours prior to reaching Port Adelaide we were entertained by a "group" of dolphins swimming along with the ship. The *Kanimbla* sailed later that day for Melbourne, but we were able to go to the city for a few hours. There was quite a number of buildings including at least one church we saw damaged and a number of streets blocked off. I wonder if any of the older readers can remember this incident. I was about 18 years old at the time.



The Adze

The following is a follow-on from the editors article on the adze in the September journal. This correction comes from Tony Duvollet, shipwright of Darwin.

Peter, I tried your recommended stance when using this most versatile tool. One hand on the handle at the knee, t'other directly below. Phew! Not good ergodynamics. Bloody hard on the back and difficult to control depth and direction.

Left hand at the top of the handle hard against the left hip. This then acts as a pivot point giving excellent control. The right hand is about 12-18ins below the left giving stability and leverage when lifting. Some adzes had raised sides for trenching, rebating and housing.

The length of the handle was important for the comfort of the user. The criteria or gauge for the correct length is to hold the flat of the blade with your fingers, palm of the hand parallel to the handle, arm straight down alongside your body, the end of the handle should just tuck into your armpit. Which makes this a very personal tool and therefore one to be proud of. I still use this extraordinary tool occasionally. As recently as two months, ago shaping a new stem on an Indonesian pinisi. But probably the most memorable occasion was about 1967 when I was given the job of shaping the starboard aft sponson of one of R W Millers' '60-milers', the coal-burning triple expansion steam-engine collier *Teralba*. Took me three weeks to adze it out of a lump of ironbark, 24"x12" by 24ft long.

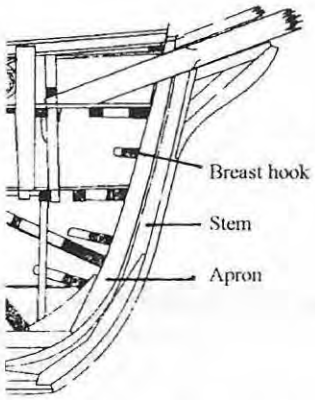
Such is the versatility of this tool that I found the electrician at Papunya, 150miles west of Alice Springs using it as an entrenching tool for his cables! Definitely not good form! He could not understand why I was so upset about it!

QUIZ

Answers to September 2003

1. Jurien Bay was named on 21 July 1801 during the French Expedition of 1801-03 which was led by Thomas Nicolas Baudin. It was named after Charles Marie Vicomte de Jurien (1763-1836), Commander of the French Navy.

2. An apron is a backing or strengthening timber behind the stem-post of a vessel.



3. The barque *Cervantes* was built and registered in America and was on a whaling voyage, having left New London, U.S.A., on 23 June 1843.

Questions

1. What is the name of the only VOC ship known to have been driven on to the Western Australian coast on the <u>return</u> journey from Batavia to Holland?

2. Do you know where in Western Australia may be found Steamboat Islet and The Man In The Boat?

3. What is gammoning?