Volume 30, No. 4



December 2019

# MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL



The motor launch Petrel high and dry at Koombana Bay, Bunbury, in 1969

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- \* A Tale of Two Restorations
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- \* Imperial Japan's Last Floating Battleship
- \* Bell Buoys

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# Just a Reminder MHA Christmas Wind-Up

<u>When</u>: 10:00am, 24 November 2019

### <u>Where</u>: 33 Gosnells Road East Orange Grove

Don't forget to bring a plate—tea and coffee will be provided by Robin and Pam

### **Did You Know?**

On 31 May 1942 three Japanese midget submarines (Nos 14, 21 & 28) tried to enter Sydney Harbour. At 8.00pm No. 14 was detected as it passed over the submarine detection loop. No action was taken at that time. Minutes later No. 14 became entangled in the anti-submarine net. At 8.15pm Maritime Services watchman J. Cargill rowed out in his dinghy to investigate, and then advised the duty patrol boat HMAS *Yarroma* that he had sighted a submarine. It reported the incident at 8.52pm and was sent, along with another patrol boat, HMAS *Lolita*, to confirm his sighting. At 9.30pm *Yarooma* signalled *Object is submarine. Request permission to open fire.* Five minutes later the crew of No. 14, being unable to disentangle the submarine, blew it up, killing themselves in the process. Almost half an hour later at 10.27pm a report was given to take antisubmarine precautions, and the harbour was closed to outbound traffic. At 10.36pm a general alarm was given that the presence of submarines was suspected.

### 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!)

A Double Elephant-sized chart measures 40 in by  $26^{3}/_{4}$  in.

Alexander Dalrymple, appointed Hydrographer of the Navy in 1795, had previously worked for the Honourable East India Company. During this employment he had surveyed and drawn many charts of the coasts of China, Palawan (Philippines), Borneo and the China Sea. In 1808, after Dalrymple's death, his successor as Hydrographer, Thomas Hurd, had to purchase Dalrymple's copper plates from a scrap metal dealer, as the Admiralty and the HEIC had refused to buy them at the price asked by Dalrymple's heirs.

The 371-ft long Spanish 4-masted sail training barquentine *Juan Sebastián Elcano*, launched in March 1927, was designed by Charles Nicholson of the British firm Camper and Nicholson Limited.

In the 12 months prior to the gold strike in California in 1847 only four vessels arrived at San Francisco. In 1849 this rose to 775 vessels carrying 91,000 passengers.

The first holder of the Trans-Atlantic Blue Riband was Cunard's 230ft paddle-steamer *Britannia*, which in 1840 crossed in 14 days 8 hours, an average speed of 8.19 knots.

The First Fleet transport vessel HMS *Sirius* had been built in 1780 as the *Berwick* for the Baltic timber trade. After being damaged by a fire it was bought by the Royal Navy and rebuilt. Initially named HMS *Berwick*, it was armed with six 18pound carronades and four 6-pounder long guns. It was re-named HMS *Sirius* on 12 October 1786 prior to service with the First Fleet.

When not using the capstans on Royal Navy ships the slots for the capstan bars were fitted with drawers containing a basic first aid kit. This usually consisted of bandages, linen thread and bottles of tincture of iodine to treat minor injuries received during action. The drawers were removed when the capstan was needed to raise the anchor. HMS *Victory* has a number of decorated drawers in the capstan drumhead containing these items.

The red, white and blue squadron flags of the Royal Navy were replaced by an Order in Council in 1864 confirming that in future the Navy would fly only the White Ensign. Later the senior squadron flag (red) was adopted for the Merchant Navy as the Red Ensign.

The Royal Standard was introduced in 1837. It is technically a banner, not a flag.

A Penn's trunk engine manufactured in 1857 was, in 1997, still powering the paddle steamer *Diesbar* on the River Elbe.

When HMS *Warrior* was launched on 29 December 1860 it was found that the ship was frozen to the slipway. Attempts to thaw the frozen grease on the slipway rails were only partially successful. Hundreds of dock workers ran from one side of the ship to the other to rock it, and eventually all 9,137 tons of it slid into the frozen River Thames.

Shrouds on sailing ships are made in pairs, i.e. the shroud is wrapped around the mast-head and brought back down the same side. The two legs of the shrouds are then seized together at the masthead. The pairs of shrouds are always placed on the mast in a certain order—the most forward starboard pair first, then the forward port pair, then the second starboard pair and so on.

The vice president of PepsiCo attended an American 'exhibition' in Moscow in 1959 as part of an effort to convince the Soviet Union of the benefits of capitalism. Pepsi became a big hit, and, as Russian money wasn't accepted in most countries, they traded Pepsi for vodka. In the late 1980s the initial agreement to serve Pepsi in Russia expired, vodka trading was insufficient, so they traded \$3 billion worth of warships. This included 17 diesel submarines, a cruiser, a frigate and a destroyer. For a short while PepsiCo became the 6<sup>th</sup> largest navy in the world until all were sold for scrap.

A shipwreck is designated a constructive total loss when the cost of salvage and repair would exceed the value of the vessel after it had been repaired. A total loss is when salvage is not possible, and the underwriters pay out the amount for which the vessel was insured.



### **CONGRATULATIONS!**

So t is with the greatest of pleasure that I offer, on behalf of the MHA, hearty congratulations to Peter and Jill Worsley on their both being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to maritime history in the Queen's Birthday Honours this year.

Peter is, of course, the editor of this *Journal*, and has been for more than twenty years, during which the quality has improved and improved.

But the award has been bestowed for services far beyond the editing and distribution of our Journal. Jill and Peter have devoted much of their lives since retirement, and their extraordinary energy, to research for the WA Maritime Museum. That research has resulted in the publication of a series of superb books presenting detailed information on the shipwrecks on Western Australia's coasts, along with historical context and the significance of those wrecks. The books are meticulously researched, the writing clear and succinct, the huge amount of information is admirably well -organised, and the books are things of beauty too - copiously illustrated and stylish in their layout. The three books and one e-book are appropriately published through the Australian National Centre of Excellence for Maritime Archaeology, and the Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology.

And yet, Peter and Jill's services to maritime history go well beyond these exemplary publications. Peter, who is a qualified and accomplished shipwright and boatbuilder, worked as a volunteer on the construction of both the HM Bark *Endeavour* replica and the *Duyfken* replica. Jill is a highly valued member of the Mandurah Historical Society. Jill and Peter, who have been married for more than 52 years, have contributed much to the Maritime Archaeology Association of Western Australia in years past when they were active divers. They are accomplished mariners too having honed their skill sailing the beautiful gaff-rigged yacht Panthalassa which Peter fitted out and rigged (with a rig which he designed himself) in Geraldton (see MHA Journal, 4. 3 & 4. Available on-line through the MHA website). Very few researchers of maritime history can bring such a depth of practical, hands-on, understanding of ships and the sea to their work. This, along with an honourable array of qualities such as discipline, persistence, dedication, public-spiritedness, and intelligence, have made their publications so valuable and well-informed. It is with real pride that I can announce that the MHA will be publishing Jill's latest work "The Waugal and the Swan: a history of the Swan River 1650 to 1850".

Peter and Jill have been stalwart members of the committee of this organisation since the late 1990's. This despite so many other commitments. For example, Peter spent the year 2000 studying boatbuilding in Albany and yet continued to edit the *MHA Journal*, and Jill frequently visited Albany travelling from Geraldton by bus! In writing this brief congratulatory appreciation I have found myself thinking "it's scarcely short of miraculous that the Worsleys can do so many admirable and demanding things concurrently!"

Letters of congratulation have been received from the Governor of Western Australia, the Premier, Chief of the Navy, Alec Coles (Western Australian Museum Director) and various members of Parliament. That Jill and Peter are so thoroughly worthy of the honour bestowed upon them is beautifully balanced by their modesty – "We have been helped so much along the way, and we hope some of this honour rubs off on those who helped us" they told the *Coastal Times* newspaper.

Nick Burningham, president MHA.

#### Chapman and her Voyage to Van Diemen's Land in 1826 By the late Geoff Vickridge, former MHA President and Committee Member.

**S** n 1826, the Royal Regiment of Staff Corps was sent to Van Diemen's Land to act as the guard for 100 convicts in the ship *Chapman* and then for service there. The shipboard guards could take their families to encourage them to settle in the new colony. On board as one of the guards, was Private William Rogers, a bootmaker, together with his wife Sarah, the author's great-great-great grandmother, her three-year-old son William Henry Barr and his two-month old half-sister Mary.

*Chapman* sailed from London on 10 April 1826. The ship which had been launched in Whitby, England in 1776 was named after the original owner, Abel Chapman. She was 116 feet long, a two-decker, and when she arrived in Hobart on what was her third but last voyage with convicts, it was said of her that 'she had been rebuilt about 1798 and that on that occasion only one sound plank of her original timbers had been left.'

By way of comparison, the ship *Earl of Pembroke* was also built in Whitby but 13 years earlier. She was only eleven feet shorter than *Chapman*. Later re-named *Earl of Sandwich* and then *La Liberte*, she is better known as *Endeavour* of Captain James Cook fame.

On her first voyage to Sydney as a convict ship in 1817, Chapman carried 198 convicts from Cork, Ireland. Rumours of a mutiny by the convicts had the soldiers and crew on the verge of panic. During the night of 17 April, after several false alarms, another alarm was raised and the soldiers opened the loopholes in the bulkhead and fired indiscriminately on the convicts. In the morning, when the door was opened, three convicts were found dead and 22 wounded. The ringleaders of the alleged mutiny were flogged and the prisoners chained. Later investigations showed that there was no evidence of a mutiny and members of the guard and witnesses were sent to England for a trial which commenced at the Old Bailey on 11 January 1819. The guards were all acquitted because the 'apprehension of danger could excuse the acts.' The ship has since been known as 'the murdering Chapman'.

In 1824, on her second voyage, *Chapman* sailed to Hobart Town from England in 112 days. Alt-

hough this was by no means a record, it was nevertheless a good passage.

The master of the 50-year-old vessel on the third voyage was John Millbank and the surgeon, Joseph H Hughes was appointed to look after the crew, the guards and their families and the 100 male convicts. The ship called en route at St Jago, an island in the Leeward Group of the Cape Verde Islands now known as Sao Tiago, where fresh fruit, vegetables and beef were purchased. She sailed again on 10 May.

William Rogers appears in the ship's sick book on 18 May and for nine days was treated for dyspepsia. The affliction results in a pain or uncomfortable feeling in the upper middle part of the stomach and is often caused by a stomach ulcer or acid reflux disease. William appears in the sick book again on 22 June being treated for obstipation, today known as constipation. He was discharged from treatment on the following day.

Many of those on board were treated for stomach ailments during the voyage. In his report, the surgeon stated that, "...most of the complaints, with very few exceptions have been of a mild character. The cases most prevalent have been fluxes of various type, chiefly, I believe owing to the great changes in the weather...a change to sea life and different diet."

He went on to report that:

...several of the children and two or three of the convicts have not had the variola (smallpox), and the vaccine matter put on board, I inoculated with four different times without success. (Half of the package put on board was given to the Governor and Chief Physician at St Jago, Cape Verde – they strongly requesting it, but afraid it will prove of little effect.) On arrival at Rio de Janeiro I applied to the principal English surgeon Dr Dickson to have the children vaccinated, who proposed to have them sent to the National Institution for that purpose, but were always too late. They are only to be admitted for the purpose at nine o'clock every Thursday and Sunday morning and for one hour only were they in at-



tendance. The dilatoriness of the mothers, the want of boats to go onshore and other ship's inconveniences, rendered my wishes in this respect perfectly useless.

On 20 June while in the South Atlantic Ocean at latitude 32°45'S, longitude 28°40'W, *Chapman* encountered a severe gale and suffered considerable damage.

[The ship] lost her main-mast and mizzen top-mast, had her port bulwarks stove in and her port quarter boat and davits carried away. For the convicts, battened down in the prison, it was a terrifying ordeal and they must have expected the *Chapman* to sink at any moment.

The other passengers, including the Rogers family and young William Barr, must also have been terrified.

When the storm blew itself out, the crippled vessel lay wallowing in heavy seas, but fortunately the wind remained steady from the south east and she was able to bear up for the haven of Rio de Janeiro, where she arrived on 28 June. Repairs were begun but not completed until early August. While in port two of the convicts succeeded in escaping and were not recaptured before the ship sailed on 9 August.

During the passage to Hobart Town *Chapman* encountered very wet and cold weather. On the day after William's fourth birthday on 11 September, his step-father was again treated for dyspepsia. At no time during the voyage did Sarah and her two children appear on the ship's sick list. When *Chapman* reached Hobart Town in Van Diemen's Land on 7 October 1826, Surgeon Hughes was able to report at voyage's end that not one person had died in the 180 days since the ship had left London. The vessel was not again employed as a convict ship, but she was still afloat as late as 1851, owned by King and Co., of London.



Hobart Town about the time that the Chapman arrived in October 1826.

Painting: National Library of Australia

#### A Tale of Two Ships

#### **By Peter Worsley**

#### Ping Wo

Given with a shallow draft for the river and coastal trade by the New Engineering and Shipbuilding Works, Limited, Shanghai, for the Indo-China Steam Navigation Company. It was used mainly between Hong Kong and Canton. Length: 290ft Beam: 46.2ft Depth: 12.5ft Tonnage: 3,105 Engines: Two triple expansion, coal fired steam

engines with twin screws giving a 14 knots maximum speed.

In December 1941 the *Ping Wo* (the name translates as 'Equitable Harmony') was in Singapore when the Japanese attacked that port. The ship was requisitioned by the Royal Navy, and manned by a mix of two RN officers plus the crew of the badly damaged Blue Funnel Line cargo liner

Talthybius (10,253 tons, Captain Kent). This had been bombed while in Singapore Harbour, and had then been abandoned. On 11 February 1942, only four days before Singapore surrendered to the Japanese, the Ping Wo under the command of Captain Kent of the Talthybius left port carrying nearly 200 refugees. It was also reported to be carrying 10,635 ounces of gold at that time worth £85,080 (now worth about \$23.3 million) References indicate that the gold was the property of the Bank of England, but that it had been in the Straits Settlement Bank in Singapore from where it had been removed to prevent it falling into the hands of the Japanese Army. The gold was to be delivered to Australian authorities. After eluding many attacks by aircraft the ship reached Batavia (now Jakarta) a few days later. After the refugees were disembarked the *Ping Wo* took on coal and stores for the onward voyage to Australia.



The odd looking Chinese steamer Ping Wo



HMAS Vendetta

#### HMAS Vendetta

Given wilt 1917 and commissioned as HMS Vendetta. Served in the last years of WW I, and in November 1920 escorted the body of the Unknown Soldier from Ostend to Dover. In October 1933 Vendetta was loaned to Australia, and commissioned as HMAS Vendetta. Length: 312.1ft Beam: 29.5ft Draft: 9.7ft Tonnage: 1,470 (fully loaded) Engines: Brown-Curtis turbines, twin screws, 27,000hp giving 34 knots speed.

At the outbreak of WW II HMAS *Vendetta* was sent to serve in the Mediterranean. After almost two years continuous service *Vendetta* was sent to Singapore for a refit, arriving in November 1941. The engines had been dismantled as part of the refit, so *Vendetta* could do nothing when the Japanese attacked Singapore except provide antiaircraft fire. At the beginning of February 1942 the immobilised *Vendetta* was towed by HMS *Stronghold* to Palembang in Sumatra, suffering many attacks by enemy aircraft en route. From there HMAS *Yarra* towed the destroyer to Batavia. On 17 February 1942 the *Ping Wo* took *Vendetta* in tow for Australia, a voyage that averaged only 3 knots.

The two ships arrived at Fremantle on 3 March, leaving the following day for Albany which they reached on 24 March. At Albany the authorities considered that as an old river boat the *Ping Wo* was not sufficiently seaworthy enough to take the tow across the Great Australian Bight. The steamer *Islander* towed the *Vendetta* to Melbourne, arriving on 15 April. This had been a nightmare voyage for those on *Vendetta*, with mountainous seas, no power in the stripped out ship, no sanitary arrangements and the crew having to live entirely on tinned food.

The *Ping Wo* sailed in company with the *Islander* and *Vendetta*. It was lucky to make Melbourne, as at one time HMAS *Vendetta's* commander noted that the river boat had disappeared in the huge waves, and was last seen 'running before a gale like a surfboard'. The total voyage of the *Vendetta* had taken 72 days, 40 of which were under tow. The distance covered was about 5,000 miles, and is the longest sea-going tow in Australian naval history. Incidentally, the gold was taken off when the *Ping Wo* arrived at Fremantle,



HMAS Ping Wo in Madang, PNG

and sent to Melbourne by train, and from there to storage in Broken Hill.

Both ships underwent refits and served throughout the remainder of the war. On 22 May 1942 *Ping Wo* was commissioned into the RAN and initially based at Port Stephens, NSW. There it served various roles including training in amphibious warfare and the transport of water and supplies to the Army training units in the area. The training centre was closed in October 1943, and HMAS *Ping Wo* sailed to Milne Bay in Papua New Guinea, where it was used as a repair ship. This necessitated a refit which, because it would now be in a war zone, included the fitting of a 12-pounder gun, two 20mm Oerlikon guns and four .303 machine guns.

At the end of the war HMAS *Ping Wo* was based in Madang on the north coast of PNG, where it was used as a stores issuing ship until late February 1946. HMAS *Ping Wo* then sailed to Hong Kong where, on 24 June 1946, the ship was decommissioned and returned to its original owners. In September 1947 the ship was sold to the Hong On Steam Navigation Company Limited and based at Shanghai. That company changed the name from *Ping Wo* to *The On*, and it remained at Shanghai until 1949 when it came under the control of the People's Republic of China. All trace of the vessel was then lost.

HMAS Vendetta's refit took until September 1942 when it sailed from Melbourne to Sydney for further work to be carried out. The destroyer was then based in Queensland and was used for escort duties and anti-submarine training, until sent to Papua New Guinea in February 1944. Serving at Milne Bay, Madang and other PNG ports as convoy escort and troop transport, it went as far west as Morotai in Indonesia. In September 1945 Vendetta was in Rabaul for the formal surrender of the Japanese South-East Area Forces under General Imamura.

*Vendetta* arrived in Sydney on 3 October 1945, was paid off for disposal in November and sold in March the following year for scrapping. The stripped hull was scuttled off Sydney Heads on 2 July 1948.



### **A Tale of Two Restorations**

#### **By David Nicolson**



The original photo of the painting rescued by Ross Shardlow of the motor launch Petrel

This story starts in 2018 at an MHA book club meeting. It was Ross Shardlow's turn to speak on a nautical subject which had caught his interest since the last get together. As outlined in the September issue of the MHA Journal, he had come across a painting of the Steam Launch *Petrel* which he was lucky enough to have saved from a skip. Ross went into great detail about his chance finding of this painting, and as he did, the vessel's name triggered something in my memory. Surely this wasn't the same boat that I had help crew from Bunbury to Perth in January 1970? As it turned out, the answer was yes.

Ross, in his usual inimical style, thoroughly researched the origins of the *Petrel* and this full account can be read in the September 2019 MHA article. Suffice to say she was built in England in 1895 then shipped to Albany in 1897 to be used as the Harbour Master's launch, pilot boat, tug and Customs launch. In 1960, after a stint as a training boat for the Bunbury Sea Scouts, she was driven ashore during a storm and abandoned in 1969. Enter George Mardon, a local manual arts teacher who bought the derelict craft for \$600 with a view to restoring her and using her as a house boat.

I met George Mardon in 1961 when I was a first year high school student in his wood and metalwork class at Brigetown Junior High. My father had been posted there as Deputy Headmaster to the school in the same year. A close family friendship began with George and his wife Margaret that continues to this day. George was a real character who loved anything to do with the sea and an excellent craftsman to boot. He has built and restored numerous yachts and launches and is still active in the sailing fraternity albeit now in his late seventies.

In 1969 I was studying engineering at the University of WA when out of the blue I received a call from George with a request to join him and others to sail the *Petrel* from Bunbury to Perth. George had managed to refloat the stricken craft and get its engine working again. (This was typical of George's abilities.) George, helped by his brother John, used two heavy duty cranes and a bull-



dozer to get her clear of the sand. After some initial repair work, he spent several nights on board to let her timbers swell and confirmed she was ready for the trip. At 5am on Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1970 we commenced the 140 mile trip to Perth. I have to confess my memories of most of the trip have been lost in the mists of time, but I do recall us going aground off Waikiki Beach on



The restored image of the painting



By Christmas he was ready to put the old boat back into the calm waters of Koombana Bay. The chances were that he would sink — but she lidn't.

 M.L. Petrel at her Koombana Bay moorings before her 140-mile trip to Perth at the weekend. About four months work by new owner George. Mardon went into her to make her seaworthy for the ocean voyage. The vessel will be reconditioned and made into a houseboat.

South Western Times *newspaper photo dated 13 January 1970* of Petrel *ready to sail from Bunbury to Fremantle* 

, the first night and also being used to shield a Police launch in the Mandurah Estuary so that it could jump out and knap speeding boats. Time with George was never boring. He even made us put up a jury sail to see if it would make the *Petrel* go faster! (It didn't.)

My voyage to Perth Water was the last of my involvement with the boat, however I do remember seeing her moored in the Canning River on many occasions. Unbeknown to me, after George had completed the restorations, he used it to entertain school children and the public, including appearances at the Borabilla Festival and WA Week celebrations. In typical George Mardon style he had fitted the *Petrel* out as a Mississippi river boat complete with fake stern paddle wheel and twin funnels.

As recounted on Ross's article, George sold her on in 1973 and after more restora-



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In case of any accident, occasioning loss of life or serious injury to any person, or any material damage affecting the seaworthiness or efficiency of the vessel, either in the hull or in any part of the machinery, a report by letter, signed by the Owner or Master, is to be forwarded to the Chief Harbour Master within twenty-four hours after tion and use on the Swan River, she was eventually scuttled off Rockingham as a dive site.

This now brings me to the second restoration story, the painting Ross rescued from the skip. Once I recognised that the painting was of the same vessel I had been involved with I was keen to see what I could do get the picture back to its former glory. Although there were some pretty bad stains, they seem to have missed the hull and super structure so I was reasonably sure I could get a good result using Photoshop. And such was the case. After some feedback from the Shardlows concerning the final colour, the end result is presented here for the first time. And so ends the story of a remarkable coincidence, typical of those which happen in Western Australia.

Left: Harbour and River Certificate issued to Petrel on 8 February 1930 for Port of Bunbury only

Below: Petrel dressed for the Borabilla Festival and Western Australia Week celebrations



### **Buoy Bells**

e recently had some bellringers visiting from Alderney. In the course of conversation one of them alerted me to the fact that some ex Trinity House buoy bells are enjoying (?) new careers as church bells. A flurry of research followed (I'm easily distracted by these sorts of things) and I thought it might be an article. But it turned out to be a bigger job that I had thought and would mainly be about bells, not maritime matters.

So here are the bare facts of this little story:

Advances in technology have meant that buoy bells are largely a thing of the past, and many, but not all, redundant buoy bells are sold off for scrap. Some buoy bells have qualities that make them suitable for a second career as either changeringing or chiming church bells. The Keltek Trust, a UK charitable trust that rescues and rehomes redundant bells, has found new homes for a number of ex Trinity House buoy bells. Three of them have found new homes in Australian churches. The Uniting Church in Bowral, Holy Trinity in Orange and the Holy Family of Nazareth Church in Lindfield all have a ring of bells that contains one ex Trinity House buoy bell. (As an aside, the Keltek Trust has supplied a number of bells to sites in WA including the Roundhouse in Fremantle and Karrakatta Cemetery.)

Incidentally, Taylor's bell foundry in Loughborough recently cast a new batch of buoy bells for Trinity House. (Not sure of the finer details as this seems to contradict the point that most buoys don't have bells these days!)

Julie Taylor

Editor's note: In August this year the US Coastguard offered a reward for information regarding the person/ people stealing the bells from the buoy bells in Penobscot Bay, Maine. Nine bells had been stolen in the preceding nine months. The last bell stolen weighed 371lbs (168.6kg), presumably the others were of a similar size. Tampering with navigational aids in the US is a federal offence, and if convicted, those involved face a year in gaol or a \$25,000 fine.





Lines of the Canadian fishing schooner Bluenose

### The Loss of the *Crofton Hall*

This is a follow-up to Geoff Vickridge's article in the June 2016 journal of the loss of the British barque *Crofton Hall* on Sable Island in 1898.

HA recently received this email from Canada: I recently came across a copy of the MHA Journal from June 2016. In it was an article entitled The Loss of the Crofton Hall written by Geoff Vickridge. I found this article of particular interest as it contained photos of the ship that I have never seen, but mostly because the Ship's Master was my Maternal Great-Grandfather. Sadly, the article has his first name as 'Ronald' when in fact it was 'Roland'.

I've included a photo for you of a brass plaque that, from what I am told, was mounted on a medicine cabinet onboard ship. It is now mounted on wooden base with a copy of newspaper clipping from the day after the wreck. I do not know for sure, but I believe the newspaper was the Chronicle Herald, published in Halifax, Nova Scotia. It now hangs proudly in my dining room.

Thanks for publishing the article. Doug Barnes Nova Scotia, Canada The newspaper article briefly describes the vessel and its loss, and includes the information that the crew were taken to Halifax by the Government steamer *Newfield*. Captain Thurber's telegram sent from Halifax to the owners reads:

The ship got on shore at Sable Island morning 17th day April. It was a dense fog; all hands are saved. All running gear, sails, stores &c. saved. Will be brought here for sale. 'Tweendeck beams broken, mainmast settled five inches. The tide flows in and out of her. Ship is gradually breaking up. She is a total wreck.

Editor's note: A.J. Wright & Company, Limited advertised the business as:

Wholesale Medicine Chest Replenishers. A large assortment of the Improved Medicine Chests always in stock, and fitted in the various Languages upon the shortest notice.





**O** n 14 January 1834 ten convicts at Sarah Island, Macquarie Harbour on the west coast of Tasmania seized the brig *Frederick.* Six weeks later they arrived in Valdivia in Chile. They had scuttled the brig offshore and used the ship's boat to sail to shore. They tried to pass themselves off as shipwrecked survivors. Some went to America while four remained in Chile. Two years later a new governor in Valdivia was suspicious of the story given by the men, and advised the commander of HMS *Blonde* of his suspicions. The four were arrested, shipped to England and then back to Hobart, arriving in March 1837.

They were put on trial for piracy, which was an offence carrying the death penalty. The presiding judge was the Chief Justice, Sir John Lewes Pedder, renowned for his absolute belief in the letter of the law. At odds with most judges at that time, he also believed that it was his role to protect prisoners' rights. He was also reluctant to pass the death sentence, although he had previously done so on many occasions. This appears, however, to only be because the strict letter of the law allowed him no other choice. In his summation to the jurors before they retired to consider their verdict, Justice Pedder asked them to consider whether the charges in fact constituted piracy. He brought up two technical points for their consideration:

1. The *Frederick* had not been officially launched, and therefore could not be recognised as a ship. Instead it was claimed to be a quantity of wood and other materials so fastened as to possess the means of becoming a brig—but possessing no one constituent necessary to justify those materials being then so called.

2. The hijacking took place within Macquarie Harbour, and not on the 'high seas' which was part of the legal definition of piracy, and nobody had yet been placed in command of the *Frederick*.

Despite the fairly obvious effort on the part of the Chief Justice to have the four men found not guilty of piracy, but rather of theft of the materials of which the brig was built, the jury brought down a verdict of guilty of piracy. Instead of sentencing the men to death as the law required, Justice Pedder wrote a report to the Executive Council expressing his doubts as to whether this was legally a case of piracy:

...because the evidence showed that the offence was committed not upon the high seas...the consequence of which would be that the offence itself was not piracy but robbery.

Debate in the Executive Council, together with the beginnings of a movement in England to abolish transportation delayed sentencing. Newspaper articles supported the men's actions in trying to escape from the extremely harsh conditions of Sarah Island, and there was a growing consideration that the great number of convicts in Tasmania was discouraging further free settlers. Eventually some two years later the Executive Council came to the decision that the finding of guilty of piracy would remain, but instead of being hung the men would be sent to Norfolk Island. The four convicts remained there for a few years, and two were then returned to the mainland, William Shires and James Porter to NSW, and Charles Lyon and William Cheshire were sent back to Tasmania.

Peter Worsley

The convict settlement on Sarah Island





Please include your name when making a payment.

#### **Toilets - A Submarine story.**

#### By Lloyd Blake OAM, RAN Submarines Rtd

▶ sing the head (toilet) in a submerged submarine is serious business. In early Submarines the high pressure submarine head was a complicated device that directed waste from the toilet bowl through a series of chambers to an airlock where, with a blast of compressed air, it was expelled from the boat into the sea. i.e. each head was operated as a one-man-band. Later design added a large collective sanitary tank where waste was held until an opportune moment to discharge. Next to learning how to escape from a sunken Submarine one of the most important items for trainee Submariners was learning to use the Submarine head. Indeed, a blunder in the heads can sink a Submarine. Depending on your Navy the heads vary slightly in design. Flushing with sea water and discharge to sea by high pressure air principals remain common to all. The head looks like a normal toilet bowl, and was made of stainless steel, often with a wooden seat and the all important ball valve or flap seal at the bottom.

Ready to flush ?....stand up and pull the ball valve, bowl fills with seawater, ball valve opens connecting the toilet with the sanitary tank and waste flows down into the reservoir. Alternative model being to fill the bowl from a sea water hose, step on flap seal to open and the contents flow into the sanitary tank. Clearing the sanitary tank is done by loading with a blast of 700–900 psi air and discharging to the ocean. During this operation heads have signs posted on them like :

#### DO NOT USE BLOWING SANITARY DO NOT FLUSH

For those who do not see the sign or fail to check conditions – they will receive a 700–900 psi blowback in the face. In one class of Submarine it was common practice to open the ball valve when seated on the throne to merely let in the flush water. However to open the ball valve while seated during a sanitary blow was likened to a sailor experiencing a ping pong ball on top of Old Faithful ! If a toilet valve is opened during the blow; water and solids take the easiest route ......

#### Down by The Head.

Flooding through a head blowback sank German U-Boat *U1206* in 1945.

Cruising at a depth of 200 feet ten miles off Peterhead North East Scotland, Commander Karl Schlitt (yes!) needed to go to the head. Commander Schlitt told a German researcher that the head malfunctioned. The more widely reported version says the Captain refused to call a crew member to help, and tried to operate the head himself. He got it wrong. Schlitt found himself showered with fresh high pressure sewage and sea water which was rapidly flooding the compartment. Until the hull valve was shut seawater



gushed through the head into the battery space below. Water coming into contact with the battery acid formed highly toxic chlorine gas. To vent the chlorine gas from the Submarine Schlitt was forced to surface. As Schlitt's boat surfaced off Peterhead she was spotted by a British aircraft and bombed. Damaged and unable to escape, Schlitt was forced to scuttle his submarine ......down by the head.

> U1206 and a submarine's toilet

## The First Cheynes

ost Western Australians know of the whale-chasers Cheynes IV on display • at the Albany Whaling Museum, and Chevnes II ashore near Point Posses-

sion. In 1982 Chevnes III was scuttled in King George Sound west of Michelmas Island. But what about the first whale-chaser named Chevnes?



The whale-chaser Toern

The whale-chaser Toern was launched in June 1929 from the yard of Akers Mekaniske Verksted, Oslo, Norway, for Bryde & Dhals Hvalfangersalskip A/S, Sandefjord, Norway. The vessel had a length of 115.7ft, breadth 23.9ft, depth 13.2ft and was 248 gross tons. It was powered by a triple expansion steam engine producing 765HP giving the chaser a speed of 10.5 knots.

At the outbreak of WW II Toern was in Curaçao in the Dutch Antilles, and on 5 July 1940 was requisitioned by the Royal Netherlands Navy. The following year it was leased to the Royal Navy for use as a minesweeper. The Royal Navy armed the *Toern* with a 3 inch gun and two Lewis machine guns plus Asdic, minesweeping gear and four depth charges.

On 21 August 1945 Toern, then in St Johns, Canada, was returned to its Norwegian owners. That company sold the chaser on 18 December 1951 to the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company in Albany who re-named it Cheynes. In 1961, after ten years of service in Albany, Cheynes was stripped of anything of value and scuttled between Michelmas Island and Herald Point in King George Sound.

Peter Worsley

![](_page_17_Picture_10.jpeg)

Two photos from the MHA Collection showing the scuttling of the whale-chaser Cheynes, ex Toern

![](_page_17_Picture_12.jpeg)

# A Contrast in Sailing Ship Crew Numbers 1815–1932

Signature for the crews required to man sailing ships.

In 1815 the East Indiaman *Earl of Balcarra* (1,417 tons) carried a complement of 130: Commander 6 mates Surgeon and assistant Purser 6 midshipmen Gunner and 2 gunner's mates Bosun and 2 bosun's mates Master-at-arms Armourer Butcher Baker Poulterer Cooper and cooper's mate 2 stewards

2 cooks Caulker and caulker's mate Carpenter and 2 carpenter's mates 6 quartermasters Sail-maker 7 servants for the afterguard 78 seamen

By contrast, in 1932 the 4-masted barque *Parma* (3,047 tons) carried a compliment of 29: Master 3 mates Sail-maker Carpenter Cook Steward 4 Able Bodied seamen 7 Ordinary seamen 7 apprentices 3 boys

# Question

On the Canning River downstream from the Shelley Bridge is Prisoners Point. Does any reader know why the point was so named?

#### **Imperial Japan's Last Floating Battleship** An article by Assistant Professor Robert Farley, University of Kentucky

nly one of the Imperial Japanese Navy's first class battleships survived to see the end of the Pacific War.

HIJMS *Nagato* entered service in November 1920. She displaced 33,000 tons, carried 8 x 16" guns, and could make 26.5 knots, a combination that made her the world's most powerful and versatile warship. *Nagato* and her sister *Mutsu* were the first two ships of Japan's 'eight and eight' program, designed to provide the IJN with eight modern battleships and battlecruisers, and ensure Japan's regional dominance. The Washington Naval Treaty entered into force shortly after *Nagato*'s commissioning, freezing battleship development and extending her reign at the top.

After undergoing a pair of interwar reconstructions, HIJMS *Nagato* served as the flagship of the Combined Fleet until the commissioning of the battleship HIJMS *Yamato*. Admiral Isoruku Yammomoto gave the final order to attack Pearl Harbor from the bridge of *Nagato*, even though the ship did not participate in the task force that launched the raid.

*Nagato* served in, and survived, most of the important battles of World War II, with the exception of the Guadalcanal campaign. Because of her symbolic role in the Pearl Harbor attack, the USN made a special effort to find and destroy *Nagato* in the last months of the war. The Japanese successfully camouflaged the ship, however, and it survived the huge air raids that sank the rest of the surviving battleships of the IJN. *Nagato* was on hand for the Japanese surrender on September 2, 1945.

As the U.S. fleet entered Tokyo Bay, some officers worried that fanatics aboard *Nagato* might

![](_page_19_Picture_0.jpeg)

take the opportunity to fire a suicidal last salvo. Relations remained peaceful, however, and *Nagato* was surrendered to American control after a brief scuffle over lowering the IJN flag.

Nagato was far too old to serve usefully in the United States Navy, which had a surplus of aging battleships. The United States wanted to ensure, however, that the ship would not become a focus for revanchist Japanese nationalism in the future. Like many ships seized from Germany and Japan, along with a fair portion of the older cohort of USN ships, Nagato would meet her end at the Bikini atom bomb tests. The USN used the Bikini tests to understand the impact of atomic weapon strikes on fleet concentrations. The Navy used a variety of older capital ships and support vessels, including battleships, carriers, cruisers, and smaller ships. Many of the ships allocated to the tests survived, often for later use as targets for more conventional explosives. Nagato did not.

In early 1946 an American crew took possession of the battleship, and worked her up sufficiently to get underway towards Bikini Atoll. *Nagato*'s condition was poor before the tests began, as age, battle damage, and poor maintenance had resulted in leakage and seaworthiness issues en route to the testing area. Nevertheless, she survived the first test (Test Able) on July 1, 1946. The second test, on July 25, left *Nagato* with a list that worsened over the course of a week, until she capsized and sank.

Thus *Nagato*, like the war and Japan's dreams of empire, ended with a nuclear explosion. A more considered policy might have taken *Nagato* as a prize, and left her in Pearl Harbor, near the USS *Arizona* Memorial, where she likely never would have become a focal point for Japanese nationalism. On the other hand, battleships and memories of empire may both be best left at the bottom of the sea.

Editor's note: Two ships to this design, Japan's first purely Japanese designed battleships, were built in Japan, *Nagato* (completed November 1920) and *Mutsu* (completed November 1921). Displacement was 33,800 tons normal and 38, 500 tons full load. They were 700ft overall, breadth 95ft and depth 30ft. Fitted with both oil burning and coal burning boilers providing steam to four turbines totalling 80,000shp they had a speed of 26.5 knots. This mixture of fuels required bunkers for 3,400 tons of oil and 1,600 tons of coal, giving a range at 16 knots of 5,500 miles. *Mutsu* was sunk in June 1943.

Reference: Gray, R., 1985, *Conway's All the World's Fighting Ships 1906–1921*. Conway Maritime Press Ltd, London.

![](_page_19_Picture_8.jpeg)

Printed by Inkspot, 2/12 Tindale St., Mandurah. Phone: 9581 3100. Email: inkspotprinting@bigpond.com