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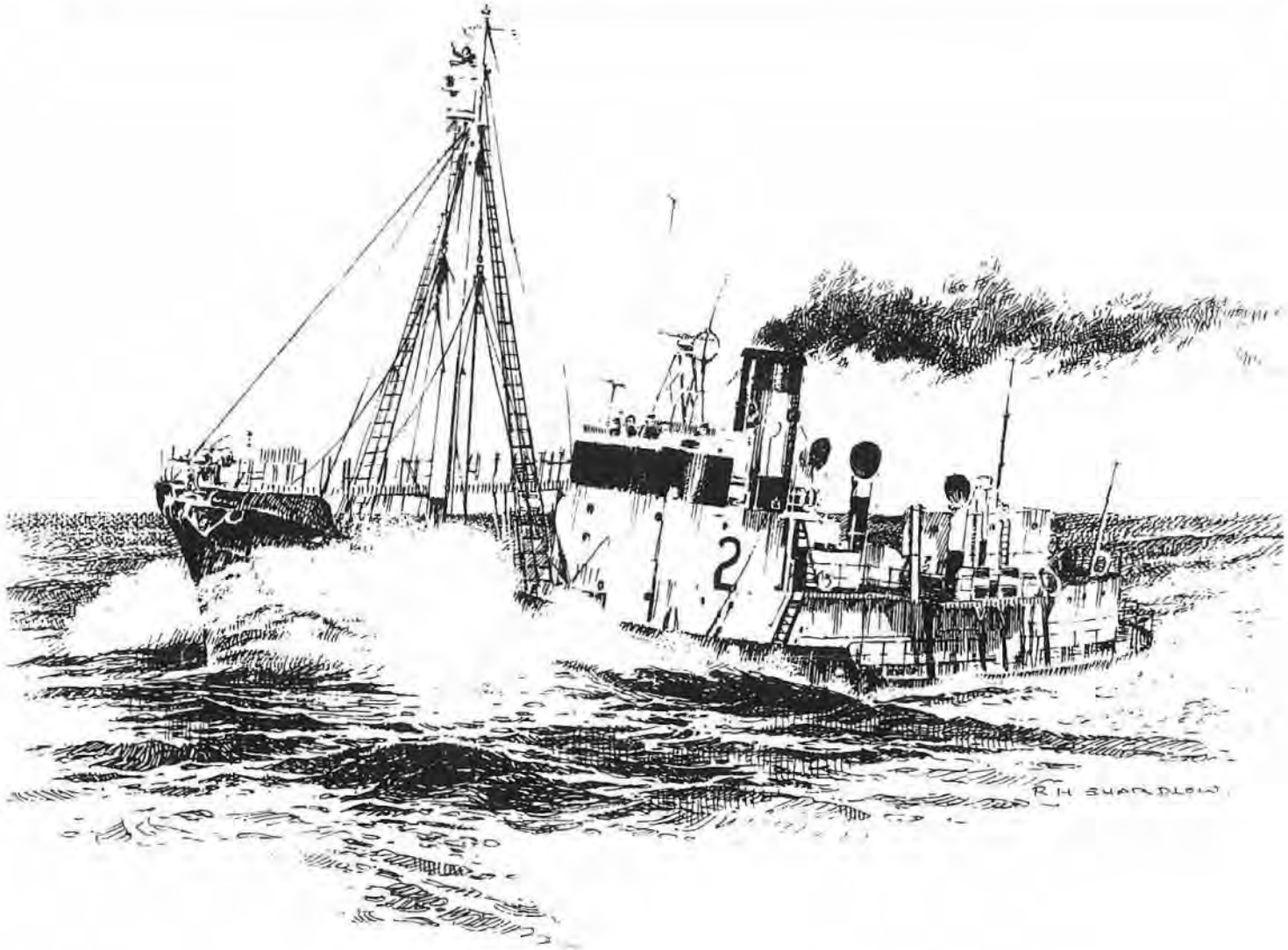

In her prime, the whalechaser CHEYNES II "with a bone in her teeth" – a scene by Ross Shardlow in complete contrast to the vessel's current predicament and prospects. (*See feature article, page 10.*)

Schedule: S.T.S. LEEUWIN ADVENTURE VOYAGES

No.	Departure	Arrival	Remarks
17/94	Broome 9/8/94 Tue.	Dampier 19/8/94 Fri.	Visiting Port Hedland and Dampier Archipelago.
18/94	Dampier 23/8/94 Tue.	Geraldton 2/9/94 Fri.	Visiting Ningaloo Reef, Abrolhos Islands.
19/94	Geraldton 6/9/94 Tue.	Fremantle 16/9/94 Fri.	Visiting Abrolhos Islands. Fully booked.
20/94	Fremantle 20/9/94 Tue.	Fremantle 30/9/94 Fri.	Visiting Abrolhos Islands.
W2/94	Fremantle 30/9/94 Fri.	Fremantle 2/10/94 Sun.	Whale watching weekender.
21/94	Fremantle 4/10/94 Tue.	Fremantle 14/10/94 Fri.	SCHOOL HOLIDAYS Visiting Busselton (minimum age 15 years.)

For information on all voyages, contact:

THE LEEUWIN SAIL TRAINING FOUNDATION
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Never Mind the French, You Might Have Been Speaking ... Dutch!

We can forget the old story that West Australians might have been speaking French if the British had not slipped in first by a short head, according to Albany Maritime Heritage Association researchers Les Johnson and Adam Wolf. They revisited a long overlooked historic event and found that we also escaped speaking Dutch.

Purry's Bright Idea ...

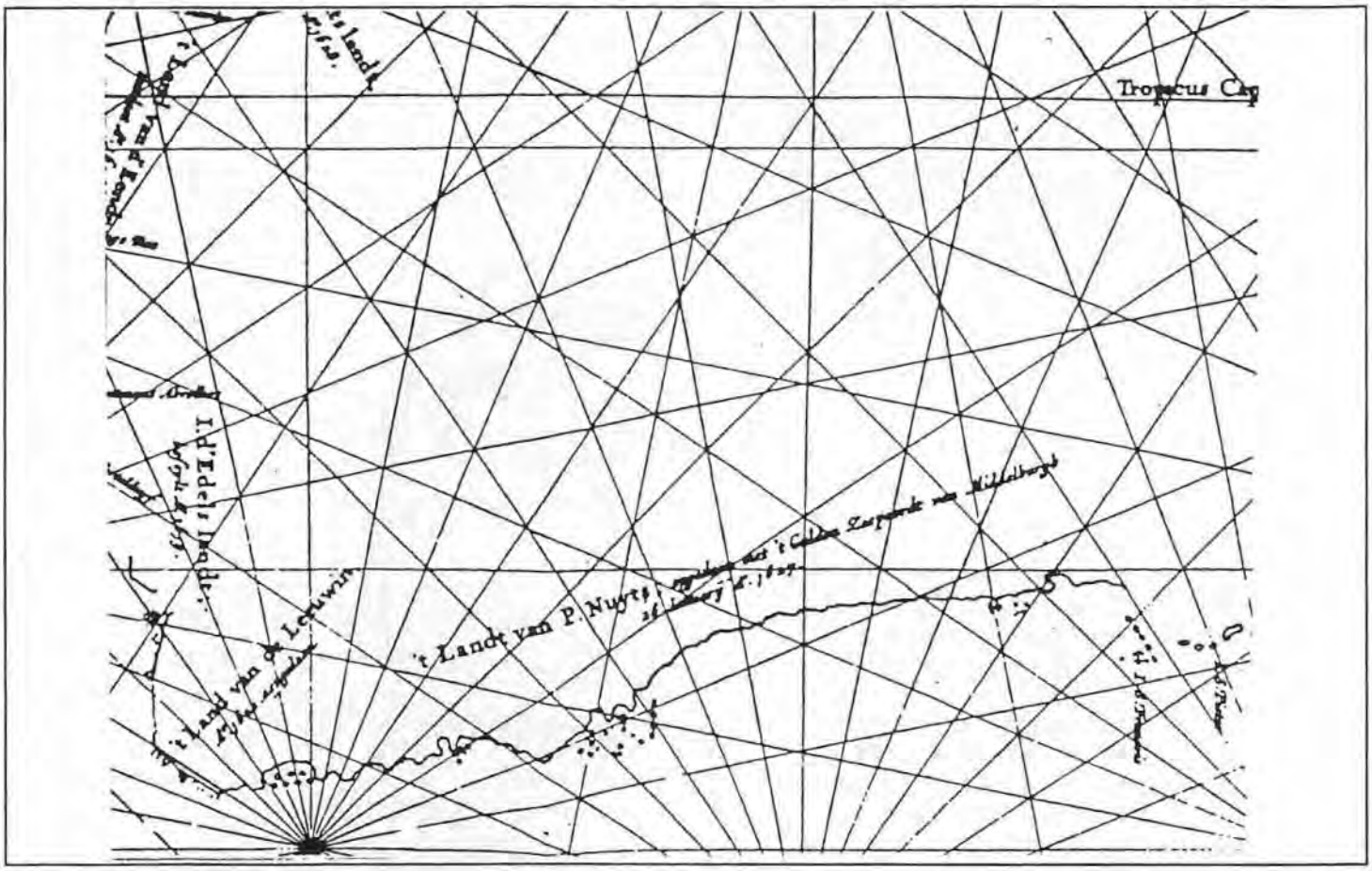
Old Kaapstad, known to British and European seamen of the 17th and 18th centuries as a welcome way station on the sea route to the Indies and the Orient, reflected the great age of Dutch navigation and maritime trade. But another nation of seafarers, the English, took the Cape of Good Hope and its safe haven from the Dutch, and called the place Capetown. Fate stepped in to bar the Dutch from adopting a proposal to develop another link in the Netherlands chain of seaboard mercantile colonies, far to the east of Capetown along almost the same latitude, containing one of the world's great natural harbours ... the port which became Albany.

European notions of a Great South Land were 2000 years old and a famous chart, the Dauphin Map – indicating Portuguese voyages along the northern and eastern coasts – was already in a past century, when the first known sighting by Dutch seamen was recorded. A Governor General of Batavia (modern Djakarta), the great Indonesian trading base of the Dutch East India Company, and known to Netherlanders as the V.O.C., had ordered ships to follow a new time-saving route from the Cape, through the Indian Ocean, to Java.

The new track ran to the east across two-thirds of the Indian Ocean before turning north. Some ships overdid the easting, in this era of comparatively primitive navigation. The result was a series of accidental sightings, landings and shipwrecks – and charting – on the coastline of not-yet named Western Australia.

The shores of the future Albany region were first recorded in 1627 from the deck of the GULDEN ZEEPAARD (*the GOLDEN SEAHORSE*), a V.O.C. ship. No evidence

survived in company records to say that anyone from the ship set foot ashore but a "running survey" of the coast attributed to the voyage appeared in a chart of Dutch discoveries, published in 1628. The chart only hinted at the vast sound – named by Vancouver almost 150 years later after England's King George III.



Portion of Hessel Gerritsz's chart, published in 1628, showing "t Landt van Pieter Nuyts" – a portion of the south coast as chartered by the VERGULDE ZEEPARD in 1627.

Skipper Frans Thyssen sailed his shallow-draft "flute" 1600km along the coast of the region which the company named "t Landt van Pieter Nuyts" – Nuytsland for short – after a high-ranking company official on board. His name also would be given to the region's glorious golden Christmas Tree, *Nuytsia Floribunda*.

And then nothing for another ninety years, when a man born far from the sea, Joan Pieter Purry (the "Joan" was a variation of Johannes), a Swiss who had been a servant of the Dutch east India Company, wrote a proposal which might have changed the world of the Indian Pacific Rim.

In 1718, ten years before the birth of James Cook – the navigator-hero of Australian history – and fifty-four years before St. Allouarn claimed WA for France but was ignored (or sixty years before the First Fleet and seventy-three years before Vancouver and his claim of possession), Purry drafted a plan for the Dutch settlement of Nuytsland.

The proposal was published in a book through the Amsterdam printing house of R and G Wetstein, under the title:

AANMERKINGEN
Betressende de Kust der
KAFFERS
En het Landt van
PIETER NUYTS

Purry wrote that the climate was good, discoveries of gold and silver were likely, and Indonesian labour (he favoured the Javanese) could be imported to cultivate

crops. He also predicted accurately but half a century early that France and England would show ambitions for the region, and argued that this could be halted by Dutch settlement.

There may be no evidence of old Frans Thyssen, Pieter Nuyts or anyone else in the period having landed on the beaches of Nuytsland, to walk the summer hills and view the inland promise, but someone almost certainly did. Prime needs on any ship included water for drinking and firewood for cooking, and somewhere, sometime, someone like seamen on far coasts around the world before and since, ran a boat through the surf, to replenish supplies. How else the firm conviction of Purry that here was an attractive land begging for exploitation, in a bearable climate? He was, after all, a practical Swiss with a background in Dutch trade, possibly the most formidable admixture of hard-headed commercial acumen in mercantile history. He knew that Company consideration began and ended on the acquisition of profit.

The Purry proposal went to the Heren XVII, the council of seventeen men who ruled the consortium of chambers of commerce, merchants and shipowners who made up the mighty company. They rejected the idea.

History has suggested that the rejection was less a matter of commercial judgement than a lack of political will.

The company regarded as one of the most powerful organisations in the world, instrumental in defining Australia as a fact rather than a legend, was already slipping into slow decline. Empire and influence, reaching, at a peak, from the Americas to Japan, were shrinking. Great riches amassed in the past century had been sapped by the cost of rising competition and devastating wars – particularly against England. Too often for the Dutch, the writing on the company wall was the english of an island nation which had emerged as a rising maritime force. England had sailed into the 18th century with 3300 merchant ships and would record a five-to-sixfold increase over the next one hundred years. English naval battle honours read like a dutch history.

But very likely, paper descriptions of Nuytsland were simply misjudged by men who had no personal knowledge of the green and pleasant south, but knew more than enough about the treacherous west coast, the harsh and arid north west, the hot and humid north, and the sometimes horrific dangers of Torres Strait and its cannibals – and regarded them all as one.

Almost certainly for Holland, the vision of Joan Pieter Purry was too much, and too late.

Les Johnson

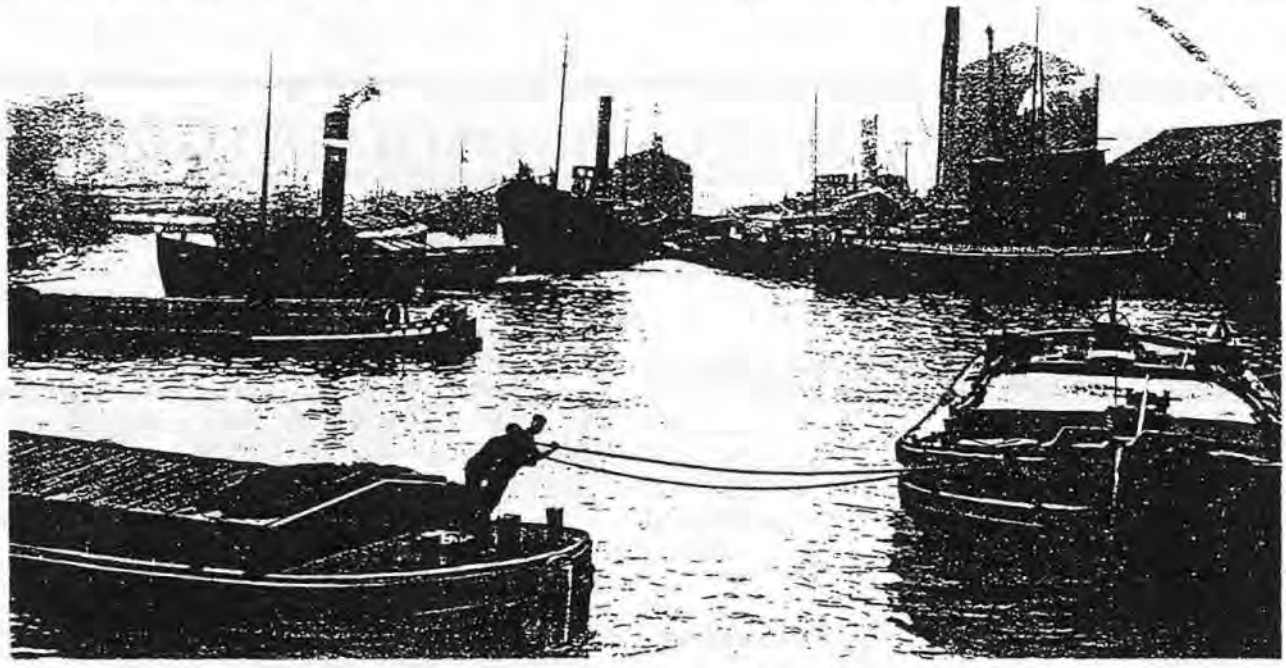
WORKING ON THE SLOOP RHODA B:
A Conversation With Harold Gibson

The age of the engineless cargo-carrying vessels has almost passed. To our north, in Indonesia, a few fleets remain, but in the developed western nations there are very few people who remember vividly the skills and the daily toil of pre-mechanised navigation. Amongst that few, and living in Western Australia, is Harold Gibson.

Harold was brought up in the city of Hull, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, England, and left school at the age of fourteen shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War. He took an apprenticeship as a fitter with a company called Barracloughs, whose fleet of small cargo vessels included a number of the sailing barges – known (and rigged) as sloops – on the Humber estuary and the rivers and canals feeding the river Humber. At Barracloughs it was felt that some experience on the unmechanised barges was a useful part of a fitter's apprenticeship. Harold was therefore assigned to the steel-hulled sloop RHODA B and, probably because of the labour shortage created by the war, he stayed with her until, in 1942, he misrepresented his age and was taken into the Royal Navy to train as a landing barge Coxswain.

Rhoda B set a large gaff mainsail and a single foresail on a mast that was stepped in a tabernacle (called a *lutchet* by the Humber bargees) so that it could be lowered for passing under bridges. The mast was raised and lowered using a four-part purchase on the forestay, with the fall led to a winch positioned abaft the anchor windlass on the foredeck. Sail was used mainly on the broad Humber estuary. On smaller rivers, once the mast was lowered to pass under a bridge, it was unlikely to be raised again unless a fair breeze and a long run to the next bridge were promised.

By 1939 quite a number of the sloops had been motorised, these prestige vessels being known grandly as *packets*. Sailing sloops would frequently take a tow from a packet on the rivers and canals where sailing



Bargees propelling a lighter using their stoures; in the right-hand background a keel dries her square topsail.

RHODA B could load about 110 tons of cargo with her side decks awash, yet she was handled by a crew of just two: young Harold and the skipper, with the superb name of Nabs Horsefall, who was a Lincolnshire man as were many of the bargees. Like all Humber sloops, was impractical but, even if the packet belonged to the same company, the tow had to be paid for. The skipper and his mate were not paid wages but received a third of any profit from each voyage so they were anxious to make at least one paying voyage per week and also to

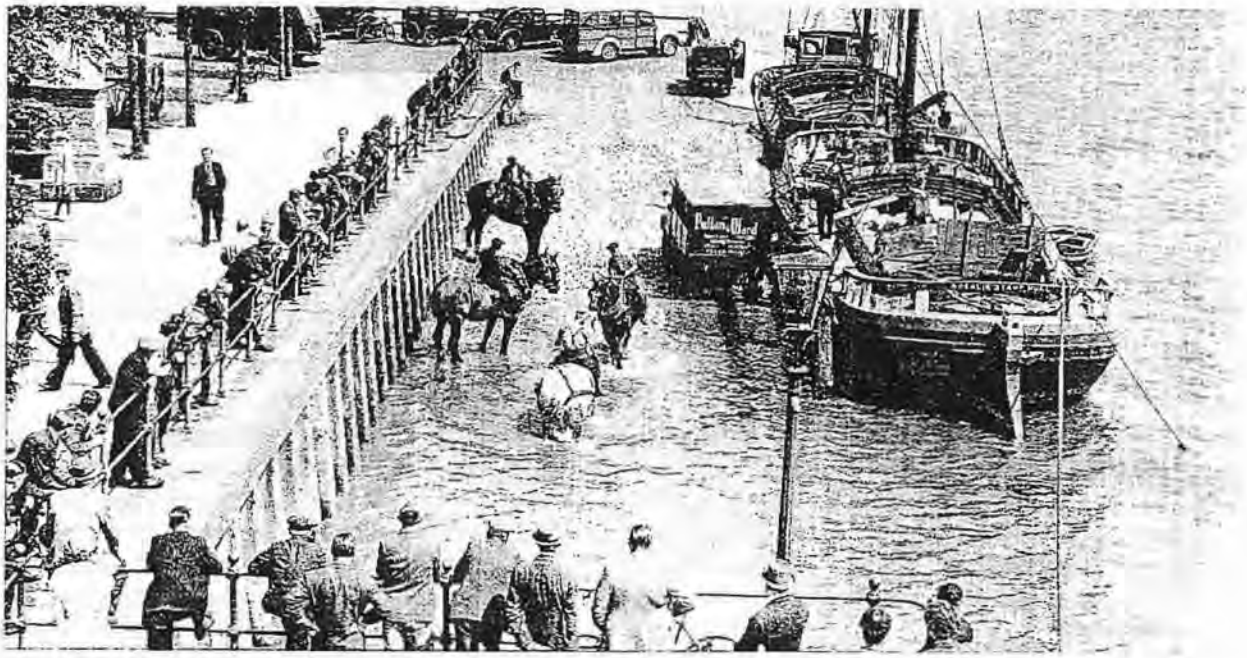
keep costs as low as possible.

There was a wide range of cargoes and destinations available to the sloops. Coal was loaded from a number of places and the high quality house coal from Thorne on the river Don was required almost everywhere. Coal had to be loaded and unloaded by shovelling it into baskets and then manually winched in or out of the hold: this laborious use of the winch was known as *whipping* in the bargees patois. In one place, the coal had to be carried ashore on a wheelbarrow balancing on a narrow gangplank; Harold recalls loosing more than one barrow load. A cargo of *cliff* was chalk that was loaded from South Ferriby. Copper ore, which was hard, extremely heavy, and came in irregular sized lumps, was the most arduous cargo to load and unload: it had to be handled with special small shovels, because a coal shovel would just bounce off a pile of the ore.

Slippery linseed could not be shovelled at all. The smooth, oily seeds would just run off a shovel like water, so they were scooped up into 18 stone sacks (about 115kg) using *scuttles* that were shaped like large two-handled woks. Brown sugar for Rowntree's confectionery factory, from the docks at Hull, all the way up the Ouse to York, was probably a more popular cargo. Harold recalled unloading a cargo at the Humber horse wash (a kind of dip where horses could be washed) and seeing there some of the last of the square-rigged Humber keels carrying market produce from inland farms. The keels were generally smaller than the sloops, timber- hulled and were frequently family affairs sailed by a husband and wife or father and son.

On the rivers Hull, Aire, Ouse, Don, Trent and Derwent, as well as the Humber and its estuary, the tides were critical for any passage. The Humber probably has fiercer tides than any other major river in the United Kingdom. At Keadby on the Trent, Harold saw a lighter swept on to the abutment of a bridge and then, trapped broadside-on to the tide, swept right under. Sometimes the sloops could be *dropped up* or *dropped down* the rivers stern-first on the flood or ebb tide, dragging the kedge anchor to keep the sloop head-to-current and to give steerage. Manoeuvring in docks and canal locks was done mainly with two long ashwood poles. The longer pole, called the *stoure*, with a hook at one end and a wooden pad called a *shoulder button* at the other, was used mainly for pushing, while the shorter boathook pole was used to catch on to any convenient line, chain or piling to pull the sloop along.

A typical trip would see the RHODA B sailed up the Humber estuary from the port city of Hull to the inland port of Goole on one flood tide, even if they had to tack against a head wind, raising and lowering the heavy leeboards on every change of tack. They could spend the night at Goole and, if they were bound up the Aire and Calder Canal to the flour mill or the coal pit at Knottingly, they would have to set out very early the next morning with the mast lowered. The canal had a tow path intended for horses to tow canal barges, but sloops like RHODA B hired no tow horse. "Beau", as Nabs Horsefall called his young mate, was set in a hessian halter at the end of the half-inch diameter



The Horse Wash – and attendant sightseers, in the 1940s. The sloop ROSALIE STAMP is alongside.

plaited-cotton line made fast to the winch, and it was his job to tow the sloop the miles up canal to Knottingly. This process was known as *bow yanking*. The skipper helped get the vessel underway by poling with the stoure, although Nabs Horsefall, who had a hernia that hung out like a half inflated football, couldn't have been too much help. Once underway, it was possible to keep the sloop moving at a slow trudge. Any following wind was a help and sometimes the large plank, called the *lutchet board*, which sealed the hatch aft of the tabernacle when the mast was stepped, was stood on end to serve as a small sail. The only respite came at the *lock pits* where Harold had to help the lock keeper operate the sluice gates for *penning up* or *penning down*, and where the tow path was interrupted by road bridges – here the tow line could be cast off for a minute while the skipper poled the sloop under the bridge. There were no other stops until Knottingly was reached at the end of a very long day because anywhere they put a line ashore they had to pay. Fortunately for Harold, the canal was shallow so RHODA B could load little more than 80 tons when bound to or from Knottingly. Unloading grain at Knottingly Mill was not done by hand. An ancient and very slow grain elevator dragged the cargo out of the hold, but it was a stationary arrangement and the barge had to be manoeuvred back and forth under it to get most of the grain out.

In spite of the incredibly hard work, Harold Gibson enjoyed much of his time on the RHODA B. The aft cabins on the sloops were cosy and well fitted – no doubt the crews slept well. Harold returned briefly to the Humber sloops after the war before finishing his apprenticeship. The un-motorised sloops did not last long after the war. The last under sail was the SPRITE. As a lad just out of school in 1939, Harold was, at first, intimidated by the skipper of SPRITE who he remembers as a colourful and dapper man, customarily dressed in a spotless blue guernsey and sporting a fine, sweeping moustache. Listening to Harold Gibson reminisce about life on the Humber sloops is a remarkable window into another era. In an age when rowing a dinghy more than a couple hundred metres is regarded as a somewhat pitiable or eccentric activity (unless the person doing it first puts on a multi-coloured lycra uniform), *bow yanking* more than a hundred tons of sloop and her cargo up a canal is virtually incomprehensible.

The local scene

A large number of sailing barges and lighters once plied Cockburn Sound, and the Swan and Canning rivers, providing the Perth region's main means of bulk transportation during the first hundred years after settlement. It is a facet of regional maritime history that deserves research. Does anyone recall Swan River barges in operation?

Nick Burningham

ORIEL: The Restoration Saga of a Born-Again Gaffer (Part Eight)

by Mike Igglesden

October, 1991

Fitting the coamings was an interesting exercise. The only part of the coamings amongst the pile of bits and pieces which came with the boat was the for'ard section. It gave me great satisfaction to be able to fasten it back into its rightful position since the attached builder's plate gives the boat a sense of history.

The new side and after-coamings were then made up from 9" x 7/16" teak which, when varnished, matches the original so well it is difficult to realise that there is a forty-year age difference between them. Such are the qualities of that incredible timber. A small deviation from the original design was made and, in deference to a modicum of comfort, the side coamings were angled back about 10^0 on the after ends, twisting to vertical where they meet the for'ard corner posts. The curve, which follows the shape of the boat fore and aft, when combined with this twist, made for a awkward cold bend and necessitated working from a plywood pattern to ensure a good fit. The desired shape was achieved with the aid of plenty of "g" cramps (it is, of course, virtually impossible to have too many cramps in a workshop), some strategically placed 1/4" stainless steel bolts, together with counter-bored and plugged 1" x 12 gauge monel screws and well fastened corner posts. Many a time since have blessings been bestowed on these great works by helmsmen who have had the luxury of a relatively comfortable steering position.

We sometimes get things right. A 1/2" x 3/8" lipping, glued and nosed-off around the outside top edges, provides extra strength and a pleasing finish. "ORIEL" arching across the aft coaming in 2" high carved lettering was inspired by boyhood memories of such niceties, which were common in years gone by.

December, 1991

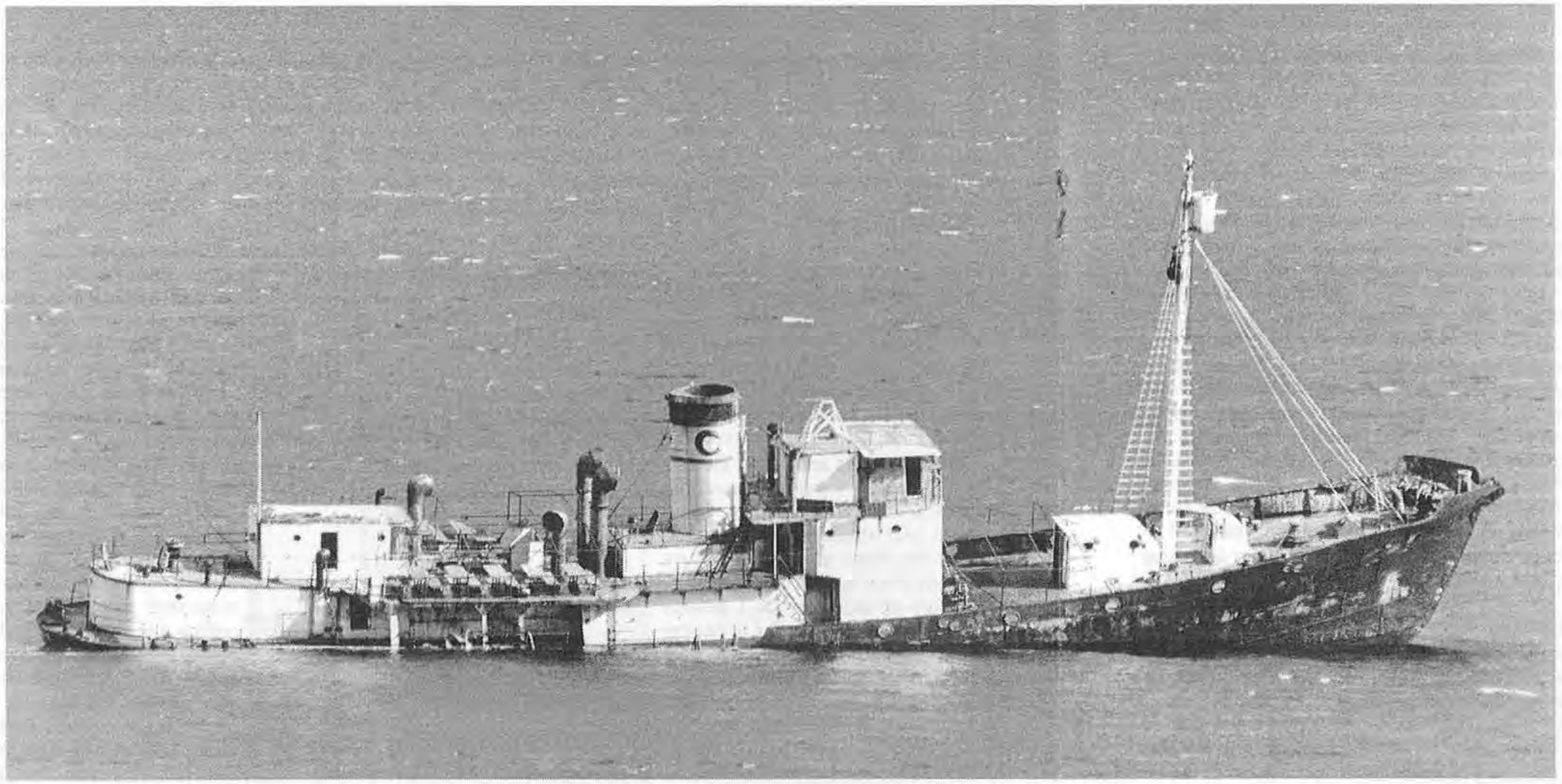
In about 1960 I had been given a beautifully created teak tool chest which has been used since then for storing sails, life jackets and sailing gear. I believe "created" to be the most accurate description as its construction had obviously been a labour of love. Secret dovetails joined the ends and sides. The top and bottom were beautifully housed in place, a great brass hasp and staple adorned the lid and the front panel, whilst two ornate brass hinges completed the picture of opulence. Do I destroy this work of art in order to pander to my yearning for an-all teak boat? Engine box – *must* have a teak engine box. Days of "yes, no, yes, no". One morning I was in a "yes" mode: bash, bash, bash – each hit with the mallet tore at my conscience.

To enable easy access to the Stuart, the box is built in three parts. The top is held to the sides of the lid with stainless steel buttons, similar to the system used on a solid timber tabletop. This enables expansion and contraction of the timber and reduces the possibility of any splitting which may have occurred had it been hard fastened to the sides. When complete, I felt the sacrilege I had wrought on the tool chest had been at least partly justified as, in its new guise, it looked good and was a functional, integrated part of the boat.

Mention must be made of the Stuart. At one stage in her life, the P5, which was the 1950 installation, was replaced with the P55 version (8hp). The motor was in running condition when acquired but there was reason to believe it had been "swimming" within living memory. Corrosion! It was extremely difficult to part the head from the block. Once parted, prodding and fishing with bent lengths of wire revealed almost no water passages were free of heavy rust. But patience and hours more prodding cleaned them out satisfactorily. Bearings for the water pump were very sick, as was the clutch assembly. Almost everything on the motor required attention of one sort or another. I quickly acquired four-and-a-half old Stuart P55's in various states of non-goingness: most of these had the same problems in the same places as the original but all their better parts found their way in, on and around the reborn motor. (Plasti Bond was used to build up the corroded faces of the head and block and has given no trouble over fifty hours running.)

Re-assembled, painted, installed in the boat, but not yet lined up with the shaft, it was connected up to a heat exchange system. Eight feet of 1" copper pipe running alongside the keel on the starboard side which, together with a copper header tank and a coolant mix, works well and causes less corrosion than the sea water cooling. A small problem arose when I gave it a short trial run in the shed – I had not keyed on the flywheel properly and the keyway was wrecked. In short, the motor had to be removed and stripped right down again to replace the crankshaft and, whilst at it, "new" main bearings selected from my old motor parts collection were installed. This work was done by a friend who has the necessary expertise, and to whom I am extremely grateful. I have been most fortunate in that I possess some very skilful friends! They have been so helpful in the metal-working department of the restoration, in a multitude of jobs beyond my capabilities. A rebuild of an old boat trailer was another of these projects.

The boat now lives on a mooring in a sheltered bay about a mile from home. The tailored-to-suit trailer makes slipping easy and, also – if the need arises – she can be brought home for periodic tender loving care. ORIEL is a delightful dayboat, both on the river and on short overnight voyages up and down the coast.



Courtesy: Albany Advertiser

CHEYNES II

Western Australia's Last Steamship On Her Knees

by Gary Tonkin

Today the faithful old whaler CHEYNES II rests on a bank in the shallow water of Princess Royal Harbour, Albany, Western Australia. Though she has the historic distinction of being both the last whale ship in Australia and the last registered working steamship in Western Australia, she lies in a battered state, neglected and vandalised. The water line is about a metre deep over her starboard waist. Her engine is almost totally submerged. Many mariners, historians and local people find her situation difficult to comprehend; until recently she was an intact ocean going steamship. The Albany Port Authority have recently called for expressions of interest to establish what the people of Albany want to do with their ship.

The steel whale chaser and her sister ship were built in 1947 at South Bank on Tees, Middlesborough, England, by Smith's Dock Co. Ltd. which specialised in the construction of whale chasers. Both ships were built for Byrde & Dahl's Hvalfangerselskap A/S (Whaling Co. Ltd.), of Sandefjord, Norway. The company was managed by the firm of A/S Thor Dahl. The two ships were named THORBRYN and THORGRIM and were destined to remain together throughout their working lives.

These two ships, later to be renamed CHEYNES II and CHEYNES III, were built with lines that evolved from years of whaling in the Antarctic. A feature of the whaler was an extremely high bow which gave added buoyancy and enabled the ship to ride up and over the waves rather than through them. The deck was shaped with a strong sheer running steeply down to a low waist, consequently giving little freeboard amidships. This served two purposes, one was to quickly shed any seas shipped over her bow, the other to assist in handling whales brought alongside. A small fo'c'sle was built into the head of the bow, serving as a gun-deck for the harpoon gun. The large protruding bow and high gun-deck allowed the skipper, who was also the gunner, a clear view and accurate shot. The bridge was set high and provided a clear view of the whale and fore-deck operations. The high bridge also allowed easier communication between the deckhand in the barrel (crow's-nest) and the crew on the bridge. A narrow catwalk led from the bridge to the fo'c'sle, enabling the captain to run to the harpoon gun. The harpoon gun had a 90mm bore, while her steel harpoons, weighing over 70kg, carried a hazardous 9kg grenade head.

Lloyd's specifications:

Gross tonnage:	440 tons
Net tonnage:	153 tons
Length (overall):	154 ft
Length (b.p.):	144.3 ft
Beam:	27.6 ft
Depth (moulded):	14 ft
Engines:	3 cylinder triple-expansion (1850 hp)
Boilers:	2 water tube
Fuel:	oil

The CHEYNES II had a triple-expansion steam engine, two water-tube Babcock and Willox oil-fired boilers with two burners on each boiler.

From Norway to Tangalooma, to Albany

As a base for whaling operations which extended to Antarctic waters, Sandefjord in Norway was significant in whaling history. THORBRYN and THORGRIM worked for the Norwegian Thor Dahl group for fifteen years. Sometimes calling at Rio de Janeiro, Capetown or South Georgia, the ships sailed the Antarctic whaling grounds working in conjunction with a floating factory ship. During the 1950-51 season, THORBRYN'S gunner, Ragnar Bjornevagen, one of Norway's top Antarctic gunners, shot a blue whale measuring 93 feet long. Later that season, THORBRYN operated off the coast of Peru. After each season the ships usually returned to Sandefjord to lay up for repairs and maintenance.

In 1962, Thor Dahl's Hvalfangerselskap A/S sold THORBRYN and THORGRIM to the Australian company Whale Products Pty Ltd which operated the Tangalooma whaling station on Moreton Island off Brisbane, Queensland. The two ships were renamed LOOMA II and LOOMA III, replacing the aging KOS I and KOS II, which were later scuttled.

The 1962 season proved to be devastating for the company, only 68 humpbacks being taken compared to 258 for the same period the previous year, which

had also been a poor year. Tangalooma consequently closed on 5 August, 1962, their new chasers only completing a few months service.

By 1963 the humpback whale fishery had also collapsed on the west coast of Australia and the Nor'west Whaling Company on Babbage Island, Carnarvon closed down. The Cheynes Beach Whaling Company, which had been operating at Frenchman Bay, Albany, since 1952, anticipated the decline in humpbacks and concentrated on their sperm whale fishery. The company's Chief Engineer, Neil Howard, went to Tangalooma to inspect the LOOMA II and LOOMA III. They were subsequently purchased in 1963 and renamed CHEYNES II and CHEYNES III. Interestingly, they replaced the old Thor Dahl chaser KOS VII which, in 1956, had also been purchased from Tangalooma by the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company. She was eventually scuttled off Rottnest Island in 1968. The third chaser in the Cheynes fleet at this time was the Norwegian built CHEYNES IV.

A Day Whaling on CHEYNES II

The working day for the CHEYNES II commenced from her berth at the Town Jetty, Albany. Around 0300 hours Bob Wych fired up her boilers and by 0330 hours he would be able to turn her engine over. Single men often stayed on board, others returned on board ready to depart at 0400 hours. The skipper would be on the bridge as she cast off. He took her out of Princess Royal Harbour through the channel and into King George Sound. Once in the Sound, a deckhand took the wheel on the bridge accompanied by a mate - the skipper went below. The CHEYNES II would steam out around Bald Head and set course for south west of West Cape Howe. The cook began his day around 0600 hours and the crew surfaced before 0800 for breakfast. The first watch commenced at 0800 hours, "four hours on, four hours off". The CHEYNES II steamed at about ten and a half knots to the edge of the continental shelf with one burner going on each boiler. On the three-hour trip to the edge of the shelf the crew often put out a jig to catch a tuna for the galley, being careful not to jig an albatross by mistake.

Two ships worked as chasers while a third was employed as a duty ship. On reaching the edge of the continental shelf where the depth drops from 100 to 2000 fathoms, they steamed eastward about five miles [8km] apart and slowed down to four knots. At daylight, the spotter plane would be searching for whales. Well-known pilots, John Bell or Mick Walters would be working overhead. They radioed the ship of any pods sighted and give details such as size and sex. This information was important due to restrictions and quotas imposed by the Department of Primary Industry. From 08:00 the skippers radioed their positions every two hours to the shore station. Their reports, referred to as "scheds", reported their position, last whales caught and number, which also helped preparations for the following day's flensing.

The information for these schedules came from visual sightings, the sonar room and messages from other ships and the spotter plane.

The Chase

When a pod was sighted and "a chase" was on, all the crew were on deck. The tempo on board changed dramatically. The skipper would order approximately 13 knots on the telegraph. Bob Wych would fire all four burners to keep her "on the red line" with a full head of steam. Her top speed was 15 knots, although skipper Paddy Hart, when questioned on this stated "Oh no, if you kept that up the engine would fall to bits". In fact she had beautiful machinery according to Bob, "not a thing would go wrong all season".

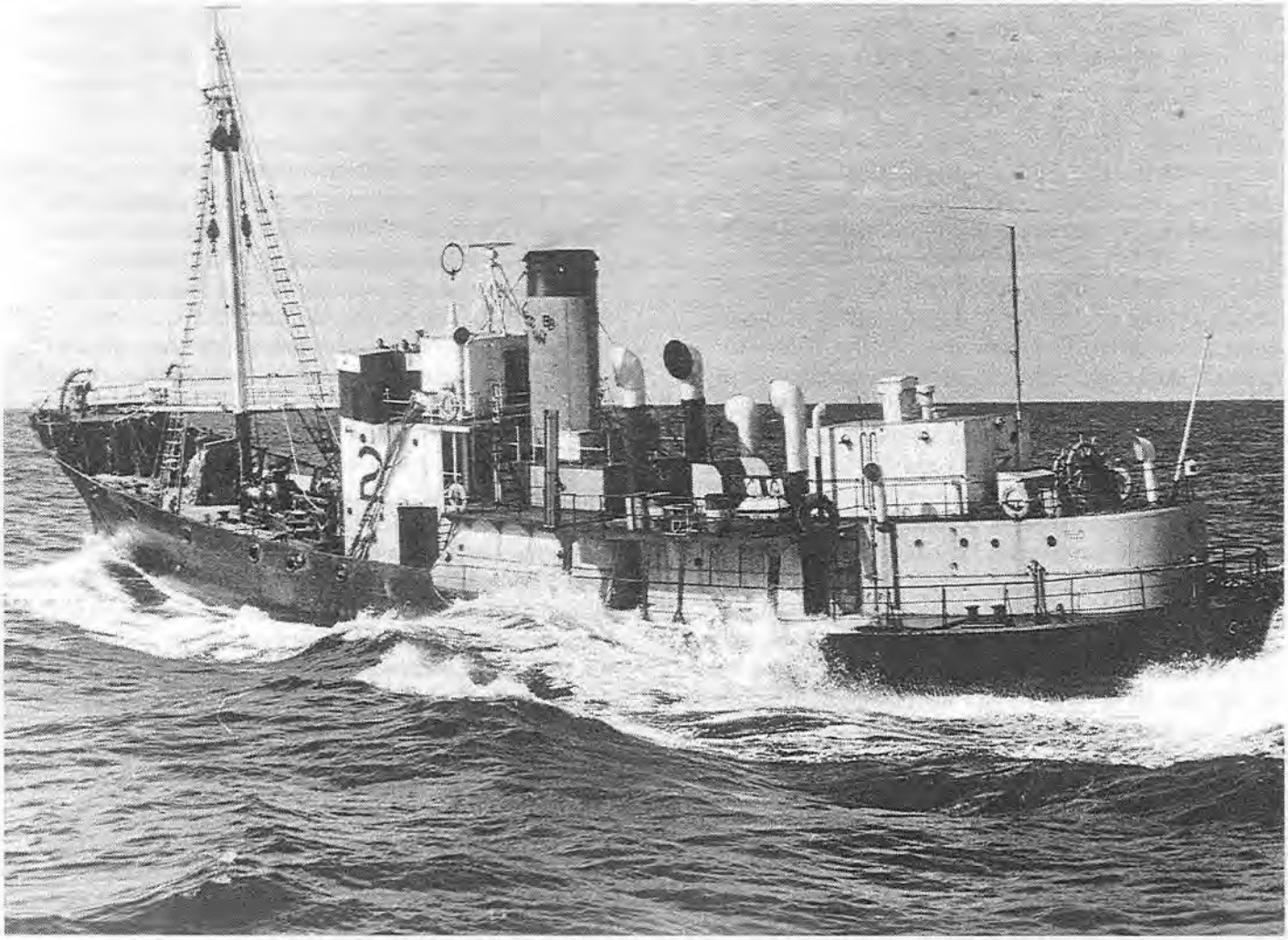
One deckhand would be on the bridge at the wheel and one would be in the barrel on the masthead. They would rotate within their four hour watch. The skipper and the mate would be alongside on the bridge. Information would come in from the spotter plane, the deckhand in the barrel and from the sonar room. The skipper would move quickly down the narrow catwalk to the gun-deck from the spotter plane via the bridge. The information would be how-many ship lengths from the whale and the depth to the point of surfacing; for example, three lengths "coming up", two lengths "coming up". The information was vital to assist the skipper in being prepared for a good shot. He would direct with hand signals to the wheel and bridge for manoeuvres. Quite often he would rely on the call from the deckhand in the barrel as he had a better view and was close at hand.

When he fired the gun and hit the whale, the call from the bridge would be "fast fish" by voice tube to the engine room. Bob Wych would already have heard the gun and stopped the engine dead by putting her into "mid-gear". This was very important as the ship could overrun the whale. On many occasions the harpoon line fouled the prop. The call "fast-fish" also meant the engineer had to have his steam compressor ready to inflate the whale when it was brought alongside. As soon as this was completed, "full away" would be registered in his log. The whale would be referred to in "scheds" to base by sex and size; for example, bull, mid to late 40's (over 45 feet). A notch would be cut in the trailing edge of

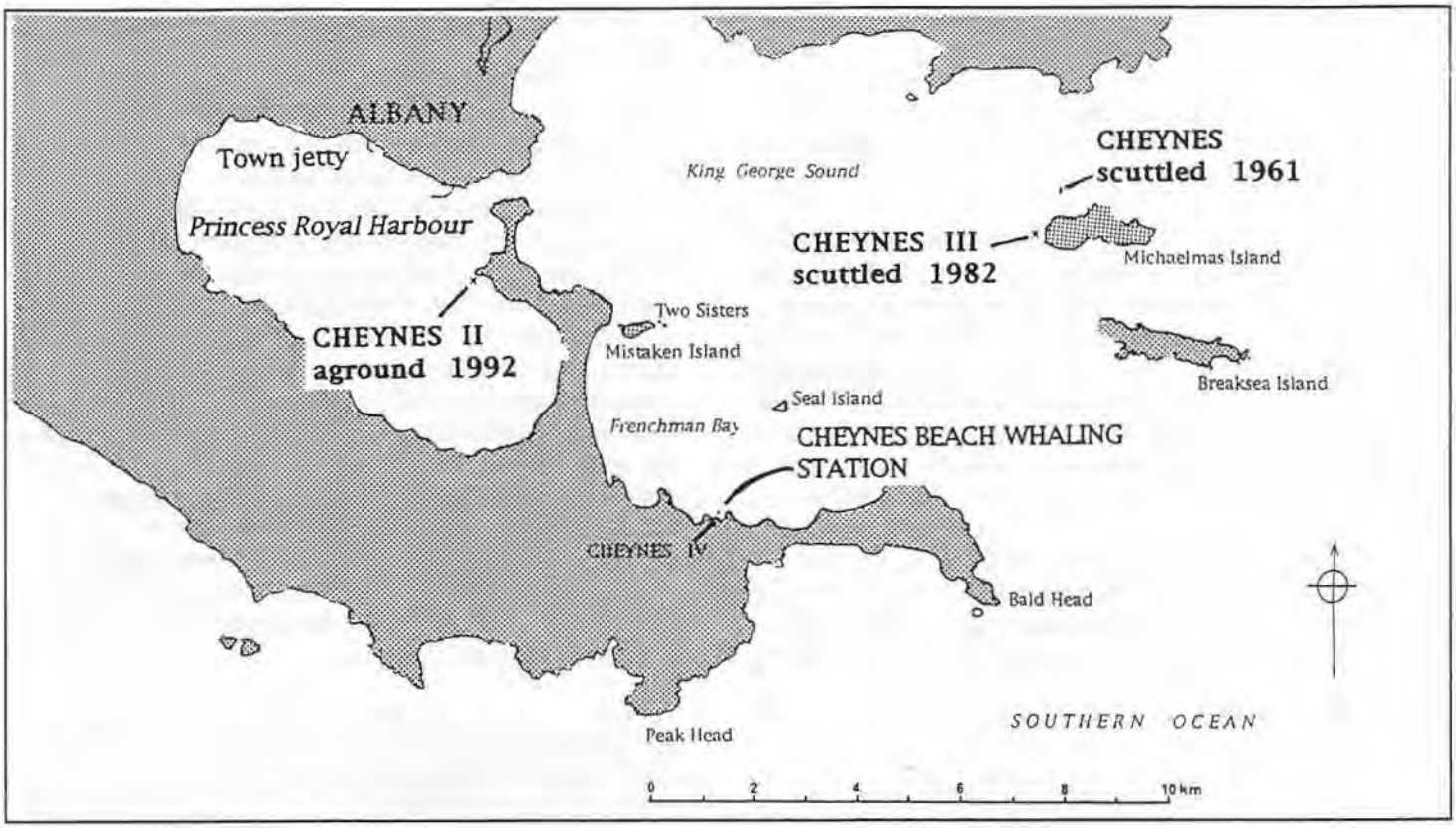
the tail fluke for CHEYNES II. The number of notches indicated how many whales had been caught. A tail strop for the tow boat at shore was put on, a marker with flags and buoy line were left on the whale. The CHEYNES II marker had a red flag over a yellow flag.

The chase and harpooning manoeuvres were most dangerous. Rapid decisions had to be made involving a large harpoon, a gun, explosive grenades, fuses, harpoon shell and charge, lines and winches – all of which were on the foredeck. Naturally, in a heavy swell, a lively ship such as the CHEYNES II would make the task more difficult. Tensions could run high if mistakes were made during the chase and harpooning.

Towards the end of the day the duty ship would return to pick up the whales. The spotter plane would be of invaluable assistance. Sometimes a marker with a transmitter was used should whales be taken late in the day or in a large group. The other two vessels would sometimes assist with extra whales. After the CHEYNES II and III dropped their whales at the shore station pontoon it was not uncommon for them to race each other back to the town jetty. Sometimes they cut a fine course "shaving the sisters" - two rocks off Mistaken Island. First whaler back got the best position and had the pick for the next day of the harpoons and tail strops on the jetty rail trolley. The CHEYNES II was always considered faster than her sister the III. The tail strops and harpoons were put aboard for an early start the next day. The chasers did not usually get in until after 20:00. In some cases where many whales were taken and towed a long distance, the chaser wouldn't arrive until next morning, passing the out-going vessels. The local radio station would broadcast the estimated arrival times of vessels and announce requests for flensors at the station next morning. These broadcasts in themselves were unique.



Courtesy: Ed Smidt



Incidents on the gun deck

Some of the incidents on the gun-deck are recalled by skippers Paddy Hart and Cees van der Gaag.

Paddy recalls an incident where a harpoon passed clean through a whale before the killer harpoon grenade exploded. "Hit the deck" was the order and the crew could recall the shrapnel whizzing overhead and hitting the bridge. Large dents in the steel were evidence of the dangers of whaling.

When a harpoon bounced off a whale and exploded it was extremely dangerous for the deckhand in the barrel. He had to keep his head down.

Another incident involved a fuse-pin on a Japanese harpoon. The fuse-pin on the harpoon was connected to the gun by a line. As the harpoon was fired from the gun, the line pulled the pin from the fuse and activated the charge. On this occasion the deckhand used exceptionally long line. As a consequence, when the gun went off with a deafening noise, the pin flew back and hit Paddy Hart in the head. He cupped his hands over his face as it started to go numb down one side. When he removed his hands they were covered in blood. Paddy recalls "I really thought I'd blown the bloody side of my head away". The result was 14 stitches to the forehead.

Sharks, including white pointers, were part of whaling life and were not uncommon around dead whales. The crew of CHEYNES II often carried a bullock's liver as bait. The liver was placed on a large hook on a cable trace with an eye spliced at one end. Much to the horror of Paddy Hart, a new English deckhand had the eye of the trace around his wrist and a baited hook in the water beside a whale. "Can you imagine a fourteen-foot pointer on the other end?", Paddy exclaimed. He soon put the greenhand straight.

Skipper Cees van der Gaag found himself in an awkward situation on the gun-deck on CHEYNES II. He positioned himself behind the gun-deck and heard a hissing sound. The fuse on the explosive head had been set off! Two deckhands jumped for safety onto the fore-deck and the other, Peter Johnson, headed up the catwalk for the bridge, hotly pursued by Cees. Peter claims he still has Cees' footprints in his kidneys. The grenade blew out sections of the two inch wooden gun-deck.

Bob Wych, the engineer on CHEYNES II, describes the bang when a bull whale dived under the ship. He came up and hit the prop, taking off one of the large blades and breaking the thrust block and the tail shaft. The CHEYNES II had to be towed back to port and was out of commission for three weeks.

The CHEYNES II had many skippers of mixed nationality during her whaling days in Albany, including Ches Stubbs - Australian (relief), Gordon Cruickshank- Scot (relief), Axel Christensen Dane, Paddy Hart- Irish, Cees van der Gaag Dutch, Reo Simojoki - Fin.

End of an era

The CHEYNES II worked hard for fifteen years until the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company closed down on 20 November, 1978. It closed as a result of steady reductions in quotas and increased size limits due to diminishing whale stocks, plus increasing anti-whaling pressure from conservation groups.

The last whaling station in Australia became a major tourist attraction. The CHEYNES IV was preserved as a land-based monument. The CHEYNES II's sister, CHEYNES III, was scuttled off Michaelmas Island in King George Sound as a dive site, her engine preserved and put on display at Whaleworld.

In 1979 the CHEYNES II was given to the Tasmanian Maritime Museum. On her departure the people of Albany gave her a ceremonious farewell. Flying a traditional paying off pennant and festooned with flags and streamers from well wishers, she steamed out of Albany with a crew of volunteers, including the II's old skipper, Axel Christensen, who went along as mate to see her to her new owners. The voyage to Hobart took eight days, with only one stop at Portland, Victoria.

Volunteers required to maintain CHEYNES II at the museum in Hobart were not forthcoming. Before long she fell victim to vandals and became a financial burden to the museum. She was then sold to fisherman Bob Barnett who had plans to use her for an environmental research expedition in Antarctic waters. In 1983, CHEYNES II set out from Hobart bound for Heard Island, Australia's most western territory. The extraordinary story of that expedition will be printed in the December issue of this Journal.

On her return from Heard Island the CHEYNES II was repossessed by a finance company and laid up at Albany. Plans to convert her to a barramundi fishing mother ship were drawn up but nothing came of it. In 1984 she was sold to a restaurateur, but this venture also failed. She was then purchased by a scrap dealer who intended using her as a floating office in Fremantle. He too ran into financial difficulty.

Eventually, CHEYNES II broke from her berth at the town jetty and went ashore. To avoid her becoming a hazard to shipping she was taken across Princess Royal Harbour and moored near the old quarantine station. Again she broke free, bilged, and settled – where she remains today.

Back charges, mooring and towing fees have not been met and the Albany Port Authority cannot find the owner. The Port Authority is taking action to seize the vessel through the Crown Law Department. In anticipation of receiving CHEYNES II, the Port Authority have called for expressions of interest for the future of this significant symbol of Australian maritime history.

What could have been an icon for Albany has been raped and pillaged. CHEYNES II made an important contribution to the economic and social history of Albany. Many families of the region benefited from the whaling industry. She is the last of her breed, the last whaler in Australia and the last registered working steamship in Western Australia.

Now she is waiting on her knees in the mud, with her bow focused directly on the town of Albany. Will she stand as a national monument - or will she join her sister CHEYNES III below the waves?

Acknowledgments:
Special thanks to Janet West and Rosemary Graham for detailed research; Les Bail; and to skippers Paddy Hart, Cees van der Gaag and Gordon Cruickshank; John Bell, Bob Wych, Peter Johnson and the crew of CHEYNES II.

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The World of Whales, by Sally Foy
Whaling Around Australia, by Max Colwell
The Ship that Shouldn't Have, Independent Productions (video)
Heard Island Odyssey, by Kirsti Jenkins-Smith
Great Western Steamship Co., by Gerald St John
Irish Lives, by Bernard Neary
Albany and Great Southern Weekender
Albany Advertiser

Editor's note:
The December issue of the Journal will follow the CHEYNES II on a dramatic sea rescue off the dangerous cliffs at the Natural Bridge near Albany; and on her problem-dogged expedition to Heard Island in 1983 from which the media dubbed her "the ship that shouldn't have".

ISIS – *The Last Gasp!*

Completing a Replica Victorian River Launch

by Mike Beilby

Well, at last issue, ISIS did not have the promised cockpit awning, after all. This may surprise you but it doesn't surprise me. After getting a project to the working stage I am notoriously slow at completing finishing touches. Still we finished the summer in most enjoyable fashion with a couple more runs on the Upper Swan, one on the Canning and a long tow to Albany where we explored the Kalgan and Oyster Harbour.

The Kalgan trip provided more photo opportunities and it became clear that although ISIS looked nice, one could see a lot more countryside than boat - she certainly needed the awning, visually.

The awning actually ended up pretty expensive because I was unable to do much of it myself – almost all the work was down to foundries, metal finishers, stainless steel workers and canvas workers. My big worry was decision making. How on earth did these things originally go together? The only detail I could get from photographs suggested that the legs usually plugged into cast stanchion bases bolted to side decks outside the cockpit coaming, so that was the way I went.

The only stanchion bases commercially available were expensive, usually chrome plated and square-based. ISIS has a lot of deck camber~ and too big for the 3/4" tube I planned to use. Even a call to America failed to turn up any thing better. So I did my own pattern-making for stanchions and jack-staff bases using various sizes of dowel and car body filler. The base flanges were all angled to allow for deck camber and the rake of the stern jack-staff, although they were eventually mounted on small mahogany wedges to achieve precise verticality. Sadly, after all that work on my part, the foundry did not do a very good job, with numerous blow holes, but, after a good skimming by a machinist and polishing (yet another separate trade) it's hard to see the faults. The casting material turned

out to be manganese bronze which is extremely hard and I later broke at least four drill bits on it – but it does polish up nicely.

The awning shape needed to match the elliptical opening of the cockpit precisely and to drop down just outside it for towing. I toyed with the idea of bending the tubing up myself and paying to have it argon arc-welded but a sample weld from a nearby firm was a bit heavy-handed and the price was high enough that there was no saving against having the whole job done out at a factory in Willeton which made yacht pulpits and such. So, again, that was the way it went! It has four cambered cross-beams, and three pairs of short stubs hang down vertically to plug into the legs which are of polished brass. (The main frame is stainless steel - it's covered by the canvas - and won't have to be kept polished.) There are very subtle bends in all three planes - I'd have made a real mess of it.

The canvas top is of fairly solid material in a (what else?) green and white stripe, with a wavy edge fringe. I can't tell how they were traditionally fastened to the frame but I was mindful of the need to dismantle it on the water in a hurry if the wind got up. The result is a row of plastic caravan hooks stitched to a tape about 3" in from the edge and laced to the frame. With a bit of a stretch, the lacing can be pulled off first one and then the rest of the hooks without tedious unlacing - the idea came from utility tonneau covers.

Assembling the whole lot for the first time in the workshop took about three days! Location for the stanchion bases was determined with the awning sitting down on the cockpit, then little wedges were glued down and individually shaved so that the uprights were vertical in all planes when checked with a spirit level. The polished brass tube uprights were cut to about 1m long at the time of purchase and recut to give the awning a little less shear than the deck and a little less rise at the bow. Although there are generous clearances where everything plugs together, all slack disappears with the inevitable misalignments and there is no movement other than the flex of the uprights themselves, and this doesn't seem excessive.

So that the top doesn't take off like one of Lillienthal's gliders, some sort of fastening was required. The steam launch JESSIE EDWARDS uses threaded plumbing fittings at each end of her uprights and everything screws together (and uses extra turnbuckles to triangulate all the corners as well) but I'd already gone another way. Eventually I settled on 1/4" grub screws at the bottom. The base castings were solid enough to take threads and the grub screws go right through one side of each tube and lodge up against the other, giving a positive lock even if the screw works loose and locking up the last of any movement without crushing the tube. The same grub screws lock down the top for towing. At the top, the long pegs from the top frame are sufficiently stable in the tubes so that I just cross-drilled for clevis pins (as are used on trailer hitches) although something smaller and neater in stainless steel would be nice.

Jackstaffs were made up for bow and stern with a 3' W.A. flag to fly from the latter. (The hell with propriety, flag etiquette and the rest, at least Richard Court and Lang Hancock would approve.) For a burgee at the bow, Marg got out her screen printing gear and produced a very individual heraldic arrangement which, although it may have looked more at home on the walls of Camelot or the field of Agincourt, is certainly eye catching.

At the time of writing, the awning has been in use only once but erection at the launch site turned out to be mercifully easy for two people. The top is removed, inverted on the ground, the legs clipped in, it's returned to upright and, carrying it by the centre legs, the awning is manoeuvred over the boat while still on the trailer, and the legs jiggled into the stanchion bases.

We've already got the Victorian picnic hamper, now we just need the straw boaters, striped blazers and champers. See you on the river ...

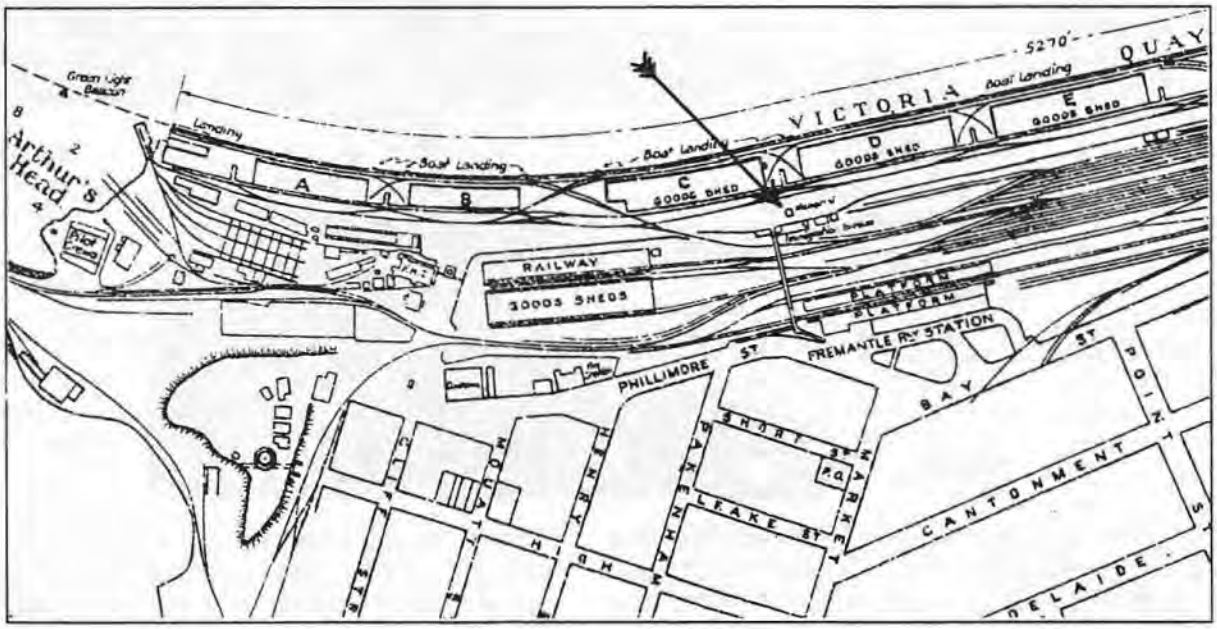
Victoria Quay Precinct – *Update*

In the June edition of the MHA Journal we outlined the proposals put forward in the Fremantle Port Authority's Victoria Quay study. Following are some of the developments which have since taken place.

1. Road Access:
Plans for the realignment of Cliff Street have been drawn up and include a roundabout designed to preserve the very attractive weighbridge building near the corner of Phillimore Street. The walls, barriers and gates that have blocked access to Victoria Quay will soon be coming down.

The C.Y. O'Connor statue, currently standing in front of the main entrance to the FPA Building, will have to be relocated to accommodate the Cliff Street realignment. It is planned to put the statue back in its original position in front of the C.Y. O'Connor Centre between C- and D-Sheds. (*See diagram below.*)

Alternatively, it is possible could be incorporated in the relocation of E-Shed proposals.



Original location of the C.Y. O'Connor statue relative to C- and D-Sheds. Note also railway goods sheds and extensive sidings, etc. (From "Handbook of Information Relative To The Port Of Fremantle, Western Australia. 1935" – Fremantle Harbour Trust, September 1935.)

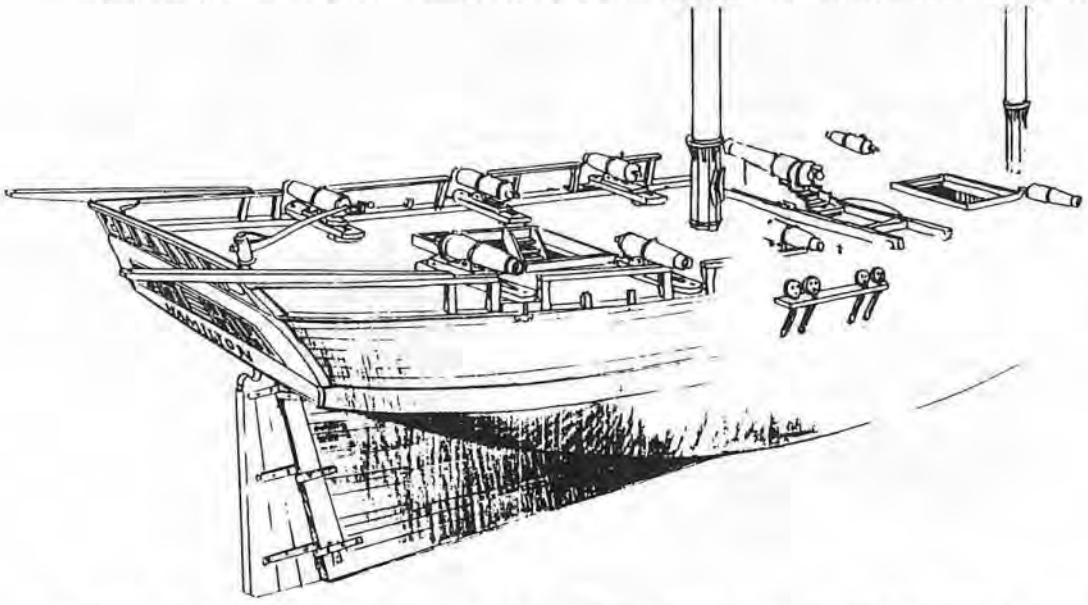
2.The Western End:
The public access area has been extended to the eastern end of D-Shed. The security fence separating the Western End from the Port Operational Area has already been constructed. The fence runs down Victoria Quay Road, allowing public access to the Western End from Gate No.2. Although the fence has been built down the middle of Victoria Quay Road there is still adequate room for normal car, cycle and pedestrian traffic and with enough space for street parking.

3. E-Shed:
Several proposals have been submitted for the dismantling and relocation of E-Shed into the public access area. The deadline for submissions was extended to allow proponents more time to prepare their proposals. Final presentations will be made to the E-Shed Relocation Advisory Group on September 7.

4. Ferry Terminal:
A Rottnest Island commuter service will commence

operations this September. Called "Rottnest Express", the service will operate between A- and B-Sheds on a trial basis for twelve months. A new 220-passenger ferry is high enough to operate direct from the side of the wharf. Other than a ticket office (which in itself will be kept "in style"), no modifications need to be made to the wharf. A more permanent terminal will be considered, perhaps between B- and C-Sheds, should this service prove successful.

SCOURGE and HAMILTON



In April, 1990, under the direction of Dr. Robert Ballard, of recent TITANIC fame, a team of Canadian, American and British experts surveyed the now well known SCOURGE and HAMILTON shipwrecks in Lake Ontario, Canada. The dazzling state of the old US Navy schooners' preservation – resting as they are, about 500 metres apart and some 90 metres down on the cold, dark, silty fresh-water lake bottom – never fails to capture the imagination. Arguably "time capsules" in the fullest sense, their hulls are intact after 181 years under water, main masts still stand and fittings and artefacts are either still in-situ or lie strewn about their decks or buried in the surrounding sediment.

Best left Undisturbed?

Since located in 1973 by amateur archaeologist Daniel Nelson, the wrecks have presented a tantalising problem that must eventually be addressed: just what to do with them. The problem is now all the more pressing in the light of the Ballard team's identification of clear evidence of their slow but inexorable deterioration. At the conclusion of the survey, carried out by the JASON remotely-controlled submersible, Dr. Margaret Rule declared that the wrecks would continue to deteriorate if left on the lake bottom, though the precise rate had not as yet been determined.

SCOURGE and HAMILTON's particular value lies in their being a looking glass into the social history of the period they represent – quite apart from the value of the fabric of the ships themselves – and together they have

a wealth to offer. However, before either could be considered for bringing to the surface, extensive work would have to be carried out on the wreck sites, in locating, identifying, retrieving, preserving and cataloguing artefacts on or around the ships.

The temptation to raise at least one of the vessels is tempting to say the least; however professional opinions differ widely on this point. Though their planking may appear little the worse for wear, they are nevertheless extremely fragile relics: none of the timbers could be expected to remain intact on dry land without first being subjected to time-consuming and costly conservation. To preserve such wood, it must first be stabilised in a cool, damp environment, treated with preservatives, and the water within the wood replaced with a bulking agent – usually polyethylene glycol, a synthetic wax. Preserving a single marine artefact is enough of a challenge for a qualified conservator – preserving an entire ship is an enormous undertaking. The WASA and MARY ROSE are examples in point.

There is broad consensus among maritime archaeologists and historians that the ships should *not* be raised – at least for the time being. The case for raising one or both is however given impetus by the clear deterioration that has taken place even since they were first photographed as recently as 1982. Current-driven sediments have literally sanded away several millimetres of wood from the hull of the HAMILTON; pieces of timber are falling away and there is more rust on metal than archaeologists are accustomed to seeing on Great Lakes shipwrecks of comparable age. The badly polluted state of Lake Ontario can only compound the problem.

The future of SCOURGE and HAMILTON now lies in the hands of a special steering committee, comprising representatives of the Canadian Parks Service, the Ontario Heritage Foundation, the provincial Ministry of Culture and Communications, and the City of Hamilton and its Hamilton-Scourge Foundation. Whatever eventuates, one thing is certain, it certainly won't happen quickly.

(Adapted from *Archaeological Dilemma*, Canadian Geographic, December 1990/January 1991. Illustration by author: from an original by Ian L. Morgan, and taken from *Ghost Ships*, by Emily Cain: Foundation Press, 1984.)