

MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

Volume 25, No. 3. September 2014

Website: www.maritimeheritage.org.au

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

**C/o: The Secretary (Marcia van Zeller),
59A Wanneroo Road
Tuart Hill W.A. 6060**

**Editor: Peter Worsley.
12 Cleopatra Drive, Mandurah, W.A. 6210
Email: mha.editor@gmail.com**



*The Fall of Nelson, Battle of Trafalgar, 21 October 1805
by Denis Dighton (1792-1827), c1825.*

See article page 8



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

All of the Association's incoming journals, newsletters, etc. are now archived with Ross Shardlow who may be contacted on 9361 0170, and are available to members on loan. Please note that to access the videos, journals, library books, etc. it is necessary to phone ahead.

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

Material for publishing or advertising should be directed, preferably typed or on disk, to:
The Editor, 12 Cleopatra Drive, MANDURAH, Western Australia, 6210. mha.editor@gmail.com

Except where shown to be copyright, material published in this Journal may be freely reprinted for non-profit purposes provided suitable acknowledgment is made of its source.

The MHA is affiliated with the Royal Western Australian Historical Society (Incorporated)

www.maritimeheritage.org.au

MHA End of Year Windup & Book Launches

When: 10 am Sunday 30 November 2014

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

For catering purposes please let Doris know if you will be there.

Email: hicksmaritime@bigpond.com

Tel: 9451 6828

Did You Know?

In 1876 the 160-foot HMS *Alert* (Captain George Nares) was surveying off the coast of Greenland when the vessel was driven inshore by a large ice floe. The ship grounded forward at high water, and as the fourteen-foot tide fell it heeled over with the bows high and dry. At the next high water the kedge anchor was lowered onto a small ice floe which was then towed astern to a suitable position by one of the boats. The ice floe was then blown up, laying the anchor exactly where it was required. *Alert* was then hauled off stern first.



The Ditty Bag

An occasional collection of nautical trivia to inform,
astound, amuse and inspire.

(The inspiration could take the form of contributions to this page!)



In 1844 John Murray, seaman on the New Bedford whaler *Milton*, received his payment after a voyage lasting some years. It amounted to 10 cents. He had received a 1/160 lay of \$9,568. His account read "To amount ship's bill, \$25.05; share of medicine chest, 42 cents; discharging ship, \$1.50; Cook & Snow bill, \$32.73. The balance of ten cents made his share \$59.58."

Robert Livingstone, accomplice to the notorious pirate William Kidd, had a grandson who was a signatory to the American Declaration of Independence.

The first British medals for gallantry were authorised during the Crimean War. They were the Distinguished Conduct Medal (Army) and Conspicuous Gallantry Medal (Navy). Two years later in 1857 the Victoria Cross was presented, inscribed 'For Valour'.

In mid-1829 Commander Mark John Currie, RN, arrived in Western Australia on the *Parmelia*. His position was that of Harbour Master, and his salary was £100 per annum.

Ballast-ports: Square holes cut in the sides of merchantmen for taking in ballast. But should be securely barred and caulked in before proceeding to sea (Admiral Smythe, 1867).

Mr. William Mills late master of Mr. Crowther's schooner, Sea Bird, and formally of the Water Police, in which force he served for upwards of eight years, has been appointed Chief Constable or Coxswain of the Water Police, in the place of Mr. Thomas Wardle recently drowned.

Perth Gazette, 31 October 1873: 3.

The Abrolhos map entitled *Houtman's Abrolhos near the W. Coast of New Holland from Van Keulen* was published according to an Act of Parliament by A. Dalrymple in August 1782. It was part of a set of plans and charts, some of which were purchased by and others issued to John Septimus Roe in 1828.

The sail-makers hand stitching the huge sails on the sailing ships of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sewed six stitches to the inch.

On board a ship bells are always 'struck' and never 'rung', except when at anchor in a fog.

Sailing ships loaded with heavy cargo which did not fill the hold before the vessel was down to the plimsoll line became stiff, and had a quick, heavy roll. To counteract this by raising the centre of gravity, empty casks were buried low down in the cargo.

Ports on the west coast of South America where sailing ships discharged coal were usually open anchorages and subject most days to large swells. The second mate supervised the discharge of the coal and the apprentice called out the weight of each basket of coal as it came up from the hold. The weight was noted by the buyer's agent. However, the apprentice was quietly told beforehand to wait until the ship rose on a large swell before stating the weight. The inertia of the basket caused the scales to register more than the actual weight.

Lee wheel: The title of the extra helmsman who took the lee side of the wheel on a sailing ship during heavy weather. The helmsman always stood on the windward side of the wheel.

2 September 1943—The *Krait* sailed from Exmouth at the start of Operation Jaywick, the attack on Japanese ships in Singapore Harbour by men in kayaks.

There were only 13 steel sailing ships built in North America. Eleven of these were built by Arthur Sewell & Co. of Bath, Maine. The company built the first, *Dirigo* in 1894.

17 July 1867:—While being careened at Emu Point, Albany, the barque *Lady Lyttleton* slipped, was unable to return upright because of the tackles used to heave her down, and consequently filled and sank. The remains of *Lady Lyttleton* still lie in the Emu Point channel.



The Race

The following article, subtitled 'The Coasters', describes a race which took place on Saturday 6 June 1868 between some of Fremantle's best known coasting vessels.

Soon after 9 o'clock on Monday morning, the Jetty was thronged with a dense crowd of both sexes and all ages. The Committee must have been very active for every thing was prepared; there was no delay, no bustle. Precisely at 10 a.m., the gun was fired for the Coasters to get ready.

A Warp stretching North and South was attached to two buoys, and to this Warp the vessels were to be moored for the start. The crews had been busy getting the craft into the best possible trim the short notice given would permit, and all things considered they looked much better than could have been expected.

As they hauled into their positions; all hands on deck and alert, every sail loosened and prepared for trimming the moment the start was given, the scene was animated and exciting. The *Twinkling Star* was the first to get into position taking her place on the outside at the North end of the Warp, the *Swan* came next, then the *Emily*, the *Maud*, and outside at the North end the *Water Lily* – the last at her berth.

Lieut. Croke having seen them all properly placed hailed "All ready!" and getting the response "All ready," the gun was fired. Quick as thought the warps were let go, the sails trimmed, and gracefully bending to the breeze the vessels sped away upon their trial of speed. There was a trifling delay caused by the *Swan* and *Emily* fouling, but it was nothing, the nimble crews soon cleared the vessels and it in no way affected the issue of the race. The *Twinkling Star* at the start ran away far to leeward, the others all keeping as close to the wind as possible. The *Maud* was the first to round the flag boat followed closely by the *Twinkling Star*, the others standing on, the following order in the *Water Lily*, the *Swan* and the *Emily*. Between the flag boat and Scott's Ledge the gallant little *Maud* still kept the lead, and tho' all was done that could be done by the Master of the *Twinkling Star* he could not reduce the distance between them.

The *Emily* tho' getting a bad start, and heavily laden and unable to carry one of her gaff topsails was enabled, after rounding the flag boat, to overhaul

the *Swan* and *Water Lily*, and had she been in better trim would not have allowed the *Twinkling Star* to walk away from her as she did. Great credit is due to Mr. Harford for his spirit and pluck in entering his vessel under such disadvantages. Between the flag boat and Scott's Ledge, the *Twinkling Star* and *Maud* had got such a lead of the others that it was apparent the contest must lie between those two, and after gallantly struggling to pull up and gain lost ground, the others withdrew from the race and came to anchor. It was not, however, until they saw their chance was hopeless that they gave in.

After rounding Scott's Ledge the breeze fell off, and though the *Maud* was then a long way to windward of the *Twinkling Star* it was evident the lofty sails of the latter would give her an advantage over her tiny opponent. Gradually the *Maud* fell to leeward, and when the two boats put about on the opposite tack, and the wind still got lighter, the backers of the *Maud* felt alarmed. From this time the race was evidently the *Twinkling Star*'s, but the *Maud* still struggled manfully on, tho' the fates were against her, and after as plucky a chase as we ever witnessed, the *Maud* was compelled to come back beaten, but not disgraced. The *Twinkling Star* rounded Hall's Bank, and returned to the Jetty at 5.17 p.m. having been 6 hours 57 min. in getting over the course.

Both the *Twinkling Star* and *Maud* were beautifully sailed, the former displayed sailing qualities she was not supposed to possess. She has cleared herself of the imputations made against her and has proved herself the best sailing coaster. She is the property, of Messrs. J. & W. Bateman, and was built by Mr. B. Von Bibra.

The conditions under which the race was sailed, will scarcely justify us in giving an opinion as to the sailing qualities of the vessels engaged; possibly under conditions that would place them on a nearer equality with each other, the result might be different, and next year we hope the Regatta will take place under proper rules and regulations.

Reference:

The Herald, Saturday 6 June 1868: 3b-c.



Note:

Twinkling Star was a 60-ton schooner, built by Benedict von Bibra in 1867.

Maud was a 32-ton cutter, builder unknown.

Emily was a 40-ton schooner, built by Robert Wrightson in 1868.

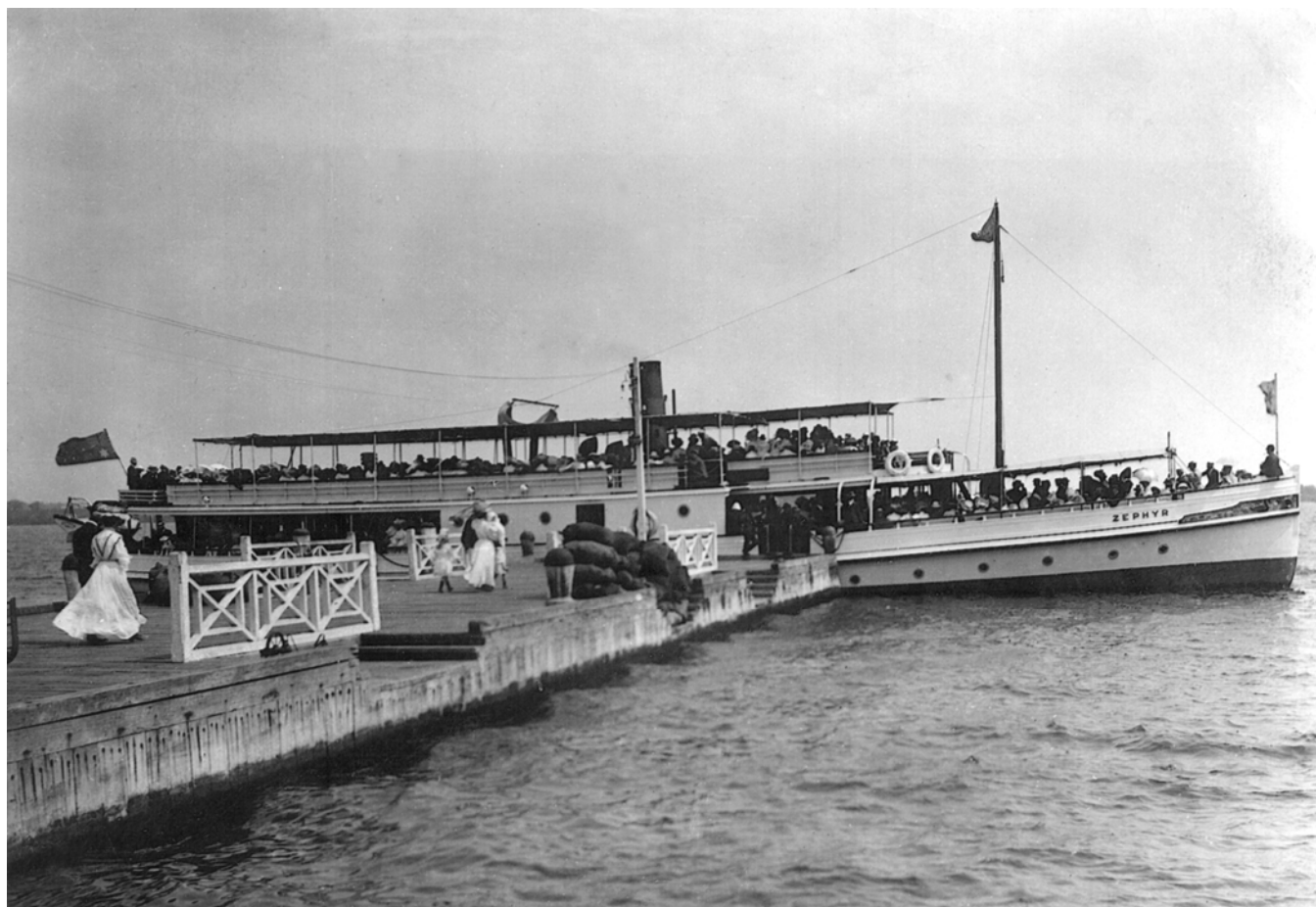
Water Lily was a 28-ton cutter, builder unknown.

Ron Parsons

The Maritime Heritage Association sends best wishes to Ron Parsons who is presently suffering ill health. Ron has been a leader for decades in researching and publishing information on the maritime heritage of Australia. His many published works include *Australian Shipowners and Their Fleets*, *Australian Coastal Passenger Ships*, *Sail in the South: A Selection from the A.D. Edwardes Collection of Shipping Photographs in the State Library of South Australia* and *Steamers in the South*.

Where and When?

Can you date this photo of the twin-screw steamer *Zephyr*, and say to which jetty it is tied?



Note:

Zephyr

O/No. 120017 (Registered Fremantle 9/1906)

Built: R. Blackman, Brisbane Waters, NSW.

Length: 126.2 feet

Breadth: 28.5 feet

Depth: 7.7 feet

Tonnage: 100.9 tons

Engine: Triple expansion steam, 95 hp.

Owner: Alfred E. Tilley & Co.



MORE SELF INDULGENCE

Nick Burningham

A year back I wrote about a model I'd built representing the type of perahu I used to sail around on back in the 1970s and early 1980s. It was the first model I'd built for my own satisfaction in many years. It's given me considerable pleasure, just looking at it, so I decided to make another model of that type of perahu (the perahu lambo). This one represents the style that was in some ways the most elegant and finely finished.

There was a small fleet of *perahu lambo* from a very small island called Sapuka that brought live turtles to Bali. Between 1975 when I first saw them and the mid-1980s when the last of them were built to operate without engines there was considerable evolution. Back in 1975 the Sapuka perahu were already the most impressive of the turtle-carriers that could be seen anchored at Tanjung Benoa in Southern Bali. I remember going aboard one and being impressed by the neatness and the strength of the construction and the wide spacious decks. I was also impressed by how deep the hull was – she had a lot of deadrise, and even had a tween deck so that the weight of the turtles didn't crush the ones at the bottom of the hold. I still have a few photographs of that perahu. Looking closely at them recently I was surprised to see that her deckhouse had a thatched roof and wasn't particularly neatly built.

Within a few years, all the Sapuka perahu lambo had very carefully constructed deckhouses with panelwork sides and wide, flat coachroofs. I believe the wide roofs were intended to collect rainwater. Sapuka is really just a sandbank out in the middle of the Flores Sea. The wells there yield brackish water in the dry season and all *perahu* returning to Sapuka were expected to bring freshwater. I spent some time living on a similarly waterless island, Jinato, about 100 miles to the east.

In a photograph of a Sapuka perahu sent to me by Jeffrey Mellefont there are plastic tubes fitted to the "scupper" holes at the aft edge of the coach roof, and there are big plastic water drums lashed along the aft end of the deckhouse which would be topped up from the cabin roof if there were any rain. There are two large dugout canoes carried on top of the cabin. Usually dugout canoes were carried upside down so they wouldn't fill with rain or spray, but on the Sapuka perahu they were right-ways up to collect any rain.

The population of islands such as Sapuka, where water was in short supply and there were no agricultural prospects, were necessarily maritime oriented. Indeed it was expected that a significant part of the population would spend the entire dry season away at sea, on trading voyages and collecting voyages. I don't remember whether I asked Sapuka men did they hunt turtle among the islets and reefs that their home lies

amongst – it is one of the Pulau Pulau Tengah or "Middle Islands" that sit right out in the middle of the sea. I suspect they went on long voyages to areas where turtles were still relatively plentiful and corralled live turtles in sheds built on the inter-tidal parts of beaches until they had a full load.

The Sapuka turtle perahu were certainly better fitted out for the comfort of the crew than any others that I saw. There were racks for their toothbrushes on the aft end of the deckhouse. The galley or firebox on the foredeck was large and had a rack on one side in which several bottles of sauce were arrayed – there must have been chilli sauce, soya sauce, sweet soya sauce, oyster sauce and tomato sauce.

The Sapuka perahu built in the last decade of sailing perahu were broad beamed with relatively low freeboard. They had wide spacious aft decks covered by canopies, and the wide deckhouses had lights (windows) with sliding covers and sliding doors at either end. They were better lit and better ventilated than those of other perahu, and they were spotlessly clean.

A Sapuka perahu would have been an ideal vessel for turning into a yacht for cruising in the tropics, and we knew it, but they were not for sale at anything like a price we could afford. And they had alarmingly tall rigs with long bowsprits and booms that projected way beyond their long counter sterns.





QUIZ

Answers to June

1. The first named is a humpback whale, the second a sperm whale. The main difference between them is that the humpback is a baleen whale, while the sperm whale has teeth.
2. The lines are from *The Inchcape Rock* by Robert Southey. The last two verses read:
*Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair,
 And beat his breast in his despair;
 The waves rush in on every side,
 The ship is sinking beneath the tide.*
*But even now, in his dying fear,
 One dreadful sound could the Rover hear –
 A sound as if, with the Inchcape bell,
 The fiends in triumph were ringing his knell.*
3. Captain Charles Fremantle (pictured here) was in command of HMS *Challenger*. He landed on 2 May 1829, and took formal possession of the west coast of New Holland.

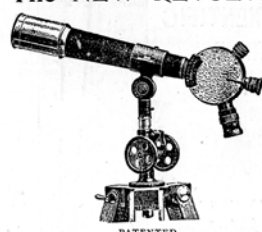


Quiz

1. In 1826 the brig *Amity* carried Captain Edmund Lockyer and party to establish a colony at King George Sound. Who was the captain of the *Amity*?
2. Mangles Bay lies at the southern end of Cockburn Sound. After whom was the bay named?
3. What is the difference between a flood tide and an ebb tide?

ZEISS TELESCOPES AND FIELD GLASSES.

The NEW REVOLVER TELESCOPE.



Each Telescope has three eye-pieces, giving a choice of Magnification in the

Small Telescope, $\times 12, 18, \& 24$,
 PRICE .. £18 15s.

Large Telescope, $\times 12, 25, \& 40$,
 PRICE .. £25.

Prices include strong Wooden Tripod and Leather Case for the Telescope.

Full Descriptive List of Stand Telescopes on application to

The Well-known STEREOSCOPIC BINOCULAR FIELD-GLASS.



Of handy size, with large field, brilliant definition, perfect achromatism, and very decided STEREOSCOPIC effect, and which, when once adjusted, are always ready for use.

Price, including Leather Case, £6 10s. to £11.

Hints on selection will be found in our Complete Descriptive Price List of Field-Glasses, sent free on application to

ALL LEADING OPTICIANS, AND **CARL ZEISS, 29, Margaret Street, Regent Street, LONDON, W.**

The Dreadful View

This is the entry for 4 June 1870 in the journal of John Forrest, Government Surveyor, when he reached the cliffs on the Great Australian Bight some 20 miles east of Point Culver. One of W.A.'s most famous explorers obviously had nerves of less than steel!

June 4th. – Started at dawn and travelled in a southerly direction for 9 miles, when we found a rock water-hole containing 1 gallon and had breakfast. Continuing for 4 miles, we reached the sea-cliffs, which fell perpendicularly into the sea, and although grand in the extreme, were terrible to gaze upon. After looking very cautiously over the precipice, we all ran back quite terror-stricken by the dreadful view.

Forrest, John, 1871, *Journal of an Expedition to Explore the Country from West Australia to Port Eucla, and thence to Adelaide, South Australia*. Royal Geographical Society.



From Trafalgar to Pinjarra

Is the man who shot the man who shot Lord Nelson, buried in Western Australia?
Part 1 of a thought provoking article by Geoff Vickridge.

Introduction

On the most significant date in the annals of the Royal Navy, 21 October 1805, a midshipman serving in HMS *Victory*, John Pollard, is said to have despatched the French sniper responsible for the fatal shot which took the life of Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar. Firing at a range of about 15 metres¹, the marksman onboard the French ship *Redoubtable*, hit Nelson's left shoulder, the bullet passing through his spine at the sixth and seventh thoracic vertebrae, and lodging 5 centimetres below his right shoulder blade in the muscles of his back.²

Pollard was one of 21 midshipmen onboard HMS *Victory* at the Battle of Trafalgar and, at 18 years of age, was one of only three of that rank who was under the age of 21 years. At the time, HMS *Victory* had a crew of 821.

It is maintained by some that after his death on 7 January 1848 at the age of 62 years, John Pollard was laid to rest in the grounds of St John's Anglican Church in Pinjarra, Western Australia. But there is a second contender for the honour of avenging Nelson's death; another John Pollard, who died in Greenwich in 1868 aged 81 years; the two men were born in 1785 and on 27 July 1787 respectively.

Did John Pollard Shoot the French sniper?

The preliminary question must be, did a midshipman named John Pollard shoot the man who killed Vice Admiral Nelson?

In a book published in 1826 purporting to be the autobiography of the French Sergeant Robert Guillemard he claimed that he shot Nelson.

On the poop of the English vessel was an officer covered with orders and with only one arm. From what I heard of Nelson, I had no doubt that it was he. He was surrounded by several officers, to whom he seemed to be giving orders ... I fired at hazard among the groups I saw of sailors and officers. All at once I saw great con-

fusion on board the *Victory*: the men crowded round the officer whom I had taken for Nelson. He had just fallen, and was taken below, covered with a cloak. The agitation shown at this moment left me no doubt that I had judged rightly, and that it really was the English admiral.³

Clearly, had Guillemard been alive in 1826, then neither John Pollard or anyone else for that matter would have been responsible for killing the French sniper. To this day the claim is still believed and frequently repeated, despite the fact that one J.A. Lardier admitted in a letter to the editor of the *Annales Maritimes* in October 1830, that he wrote the book, and that Guillemard was a fictitious character. The author's object appears to have his readers believe that the man who shot Nelson survived the Battle of Trafalgar which, from contemporary evidence, does not appear to be the case.

After the general peace between Great Britain and France in 1815, a contemporary of Lord Nelson, Colonel Drinkwater Bethune, lived in Paris and employed an artificer who served in *Redoubtable* at the Battle of Trafalgar. He told Bethune that he knew the man who killed Nelson and that he lived in Paris. If this story is to be believed, then, again, nobody on board HMS *Victory* shot the man who killed Vice Admiral Nelson.

In a speech made some years after the Battle of Trafalgar, Major Louis Rotely RM serving in HMS *Victory* at the time claimed that after the death of his superior officer '...the first order [he] gave [to the Marines] was to clear the mizen top [of the *Redoubtable*], ...and in five minutes not a man was left alive in it ...I know the man was shot in five minutes after Nelson fell.'⁴

In a variation to these words, he is also ascribed to have said, 'I saw the mizen of *Redoubtable* crowded with marines, firing at a particular part of the deck of *Victory*. My men vollied into them but we were too late to prevent the fatal shot, and I saw Lord Nelson fall.'

¹ The anonymous author 'Tertius' calculated the distance as being 23 metres. ('The Bullet That Killed Nelson'- The Nelson Dispatch Volume 2 Part 11 July 1987, p205.)

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horatio_Nelson,_1st_Viscount_Nelson

³ Lewis, Jon E (ed): The Mammoth Book of How it Happened (Carroll & Graf, New York, 2005, p174). It would appear that Lewis was unaware of J A Lardier's letter to the editor of *Annales Maritimes*.

⁴ Reprinted from the October 1944 edition of 'The Navy' magazine. Refer also to 'Sheet Anchor' Vol VIII No 1 (pp 2-4) and No 2 (pp 28-30)



He seemed to intimate that only Royal Marines fired at the mizen top but there is no reason to suppose that the firing was restricted to the muskets of Royal Marines.

In a letter dated 30 October 1805⁵, William Wilkinson, master of HMS *Sirius*, wrote to his uncle that "...the Marines [in HMS *Temeraire*] shot everyone as they came down from the Tops and among them the Villain that shot Lord Nelson."⁶ His assertion is not supported by any other contemporary account. The well known Nelson authority, David Shannon, wrote that, "At the time, neither Wilkinson or *Temeraire*'s marines would have known that Nelson had been shot but they obviously told Wilkinson what they had done..." Shannon does, however, admit that he lacks hard evidence for his assumption and therein lies the problem.⁷ To his credit, Shannon does state that his theory, for such it must be, 'must be based on probability' and goes on to state that if he were a gambling man, 'my money would be on the marines – out of sheer probability.'⁸

The only mention which Mike Pinchen made about the death of Nelson in his article, "The Royal Marines at Trafalgar"⁹ was, "...[His] Lordship met his untimely end as a result of the actions of a French marksman firing from a fighting top." One would have thought that had a Royal Marine avenged the Vice Admiral's death, then Pinchen would have stated it as a fact.¹⁰

Surgeon Beatty, who attended on Lord Nelson after he suffered the mortal wound, wrote:

There were only two Frenchmen left alive in the mizen top of the *Redoubtable* at the time of his Lordship's being wounded, and by the hands of one of these he fell. These men continued firing at Captains Hardy and Adair [Royal Marines], Lieutenant Rotely of the Marines, and some of the Midshipmen on the *Victory*'s poop, for some time afterwards. At length one of them was killed by a musket ball: and on the other's then attempting to make his escape from the top down the rigging, Mr Pollard (Midshipman) fired his musket at him, and shot him in the back [and] ...he fell dead from the shrouds, on the *Redoubtable*'s poop.¹¹

A contemporary account of the incident is found in *The Naval Chronicle*, Volume 14 (July-December 1805) where it is written that:

The man who killed Lord Nelson was observed in the act of firing, by a [nameless] midshipman on the poop of the *Victory*, who fired at, and killed or wounded him as he immediately fell down on the deck of the *Trinidad* (*sic*).¹²

The same source, however, contradicts the statement only 49 pages later where it is recorded that:

Our brave Admiral (Lord Nelson) in the very act of ordering a signal to be made for close action, although he had five ships upon him at this time, and a French 80-gun ship lashed close to the *Victory* on her starboard bow, was wounded by a musket shot, by a man in the top of the French 80-gun ship, who was immediately shot by a corporal of Marines from the quarterdeck of the *Victory*.¹³

One of Nelson's earliest biographers, Robert Southey, acknowledges that he drew on Beatty's work to describe the Battle of Trafalgar. He wrote of the events which followed the shooting of Admiral Nelson thus:

...it was not long before there were only two Frenchmen left alive in the mizen-top of the *Redoubtable*. One of them was the man who had given the fatal wound: he did not live to boast of what he had done. An old quarter-master had seen him fire; and easily recognised him, because he wore a glazed cock hat and a white frock. This quarter-master and two midshipmen, Mr Collingwood and Mr Pollard, were the only two persons left in the *Victory*'s poop; the two midshipmen kept firing at the top, and he supplied them with cartridges. One of the Frenchmen, attempting to make his escape down the rigging, was shot by Mr Pollard, and he fell on the poop. But the old quarter-master, as he cried out, "That's he – that's he," and pointed at the other, who was coming forward to fire again, received a shot in his mouth, and fell dead. Both the midshipmen then fired at the same time, and the fellow dropped in the top. When they took possession of the prize, they went into the mizen-top, and found him

⁵ The letter was not published until 2001.

⁶ 'Nelson's Avenger – A Re-Examination' by David Shannon in *The Nelson Year Book*, 2004 Edition, p34

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp34-35

⁸ *Ibid.*, p35

⁹ 'The Nelson Dispatch: Journal of The Nelson Society', Volume 8 Part 8, October 2004, p489.

¹⁰ In a somewhat, paradoxical twist, Mike Pinchen recorded that the French Marines celebrated the Battle of Trafalgar as it was a French Fusilier Marin who had shot Lord Nelson; indeed, the after dinner toast was, "Le Mort de Nelson".

¹¹ Beatty, William: *The Death of Lord Nelson* (The War Library, Birmingham, 1894, 2nd ed., p55)

¹² *Ibid.*, p 413 footnote

¹³ *Ibid.*, p 462



dead, with one ball through his head, and another through his breast.¹⁴

William Laird Clowes wrote in his 1900 publication, 'The Royal Navy, a History From the Earliest Times to the Present'¹⁵ that,

The man who shot the Commander in Chief seems to have been ultimately shot by Mr (later retired Commander) John Pollard, a signal midshipman of the *Victory*. The attention of Mr Pollard was arrested by a number of soldiers whom he perceived crouching in the tops of the *Redoubtable*, and directing a destructive fire on the poop and quarterdeck of the *Victory*. He immediately seized a musket, and, being supplied by the signal quartermaster, King, with ball cartridges from two barrels kept on the after part of the poop for the use of Marines (*who at the time were elsewhere engaged*)¹⁶, continued firing at the soldiers every time they rose breast high in the tops, until not one was to be seen ... Thus originated the belief that it was he who shot the man who killed Lord Nelson.

William O'Byrne's, 1849, 'A Naval Biographical Dictionary' takes the matter further by including the anecdote that, "Mr Pollard used also to relate that after the action Captain Hardy in the *Victory*'s Wardroom publicly congratulated him upon having avenged the death of the Vice Admiral."¹⁷

A series of letters to *The Times* newspaper in May 1863 debated the role played by John Pollard at the Battle of Trafalgar and whether he avenged the death of Nelson. Eventually Pollard was drawn into responding to set the record straight.

One correspondent wrote that he had met Pollard and when asked if he was the Pollard mentioned in Southey's biography of Horatio Nelson as being the man who shot the French sniper [*sic*] responded, "I am the Pollard, then a mate in the *Victory*, that you allude to."¹⁸

Three days later a second letter was published; the correspondent cited an extract from O'Byrne which gave an account of the exchange of fire between those on the poop and the quarterdeck of *Victory* and the tops of *Redoubtable*: "When the action terminated Mr Pollard was the only officer left alive of those

who had been originally stationed on the poop; and thus, in the manner we have described, originated the belief that it was he who had shot the man who had killed Lord Nelson."

On 12 May, a third writer to *The Times* newspaper alleged that Midshipman Collingwood was a participant in the honour of avenging Nelson's death. He cited Sir Nicholas Harris as the authority:

Two midshipmen, Messrs. Collingwood and Pollard, then not more than 16 years of age, [*sic*] fired at and shot him in the back, when he fell dead on *Redoubtable*'s poop. His companion then came forward again. "That's him! that's him!" cried the quartermaster, pointing at him and at the same moment received a shot in the mouth, which killed him on the spot. Both the midshipmen fired at the same time, and the man dropped dead in the top. When they took pos-



A portrait said to be of the former Midshipman John Pollard

²⁰ See footnote on next page.

¹⁴ Southey, Robert: *Life of Nelson* (Ward, Lock and Co., London, nd, pp 399-400). It appears that Southey wrote this account before 1820 so certainly had access to contemporary accounts other than that of surgeon Beatty.

¹⁵ Volume 5, p142, footnote 3

¹⁶ Author's italics

¹⁷ p 913

¹⁸ *The Times*, 4 May 1863.



session of the prize they went together into the mizen-top and found him lying there, with one ball through his head and another through his breast.¹⁹

The last word appears to have come from John Pollard himself with the following letter:

It is true my old shipmate Collingwood...did come in the poop for a short time. I had discovered the men crouching in the tops of the *Redoubtable*, and pointed them out to him, when he took up a musket and fired once; he then left the poop... I remained firing till there was not a man to be seen in the top; the last one I saw coming down the mizen rigging, and he fell from my fire also.

King, the quartermaster, was killed while in the act of handing me a parcel of ball cartridge, long after Collingwood had left the poop.

...I was ushered into the ward-room, where Sir Thomas Hardy and other officers were assembled, and complimented by them as the person who avenged Lord Nelson's death, *which fact was gazetted.*²¹

man that killed the marksman that shot Horatio Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar.

The truth is we will probably never know as a matter of certainty who shot the French marksman but the evidence certainly favours a Midshipman John Pollard for he is the only one of *Victory's* ship's company who is generally named as being the likely man. It seems reasonable to assume that any person who shot the French sniper who fatally wounded Lord Nelson would be known and hailed as a hero and Pollard seems to be the only person who fits into this category.

The second intrigue is whether the John Pollard who migrated to Western Australia in 1841 and settled in Pinjarra, served as a midshipman in HMS *Victory* at the Battle of Trafalgar or the second John Pollard who continued to serve in the Royal Navy.

The National Archives of the United Kingdom notes on the Pay Muster of HMS *Victory* that, 'John Pollard is generally considered to be the

Part 2 of this article will appear in the December Journal.

¹⁹ Harris, Nicholas: The Dispatches and Letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson 1844-46, Vol VII, p 244

²⁰ ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Pollard_\(Royal_Navy_officer\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Pollard_(Royal_Navy_officer))) An element of doubt is provided by the fashionable dress, which looks to be late 1820s, when Pollard (1787-1868) would have been about 40 – much older than the sitter appears. The artist is unknown. Comparison of the miniature with a photograph of Pollard in later life is inconclusive although a brass plate on the front of the surround is engraved 'Mid. J. Pollard R.N./H.M.S. *Victory*/Trafalgar 1805.'

²¹ Author's italics. To date there does not appear to be any evidence of this alleged fact. By 1863, the 'Pinjarra' John Pollard had been interred for 15 years.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!!

Coming soon - the most important book you will ever have the pleasure of reading and ingesting!!
"MUM'S GREY HAIR", subtitled "THE LIFE OF A MERCHANT SEAMAN. "

This journal depicts the amazing life of your fellow member and maritime historian, Rod Dickson, from his birth in Melbourne, school days - primary and secondary and then he's off to sea as a young deck apprentice with a tanker company sailing from the Persian Gulf to all parts!

Then came cargo passenger ships of differing sizes and types. Paying off in London's K.G.V. Docks. He then joined the British Post Office Deep Sea Cable Laying vessel, H.M.T.S. MONARCH, laying cable from Guam in the Marianas to Madang, New Guinea. Back to London for more cable and out east again to lay the last of the cable from Madang to Cairns in Queensland. And then came my time with the Royal Navy, where I was Chief Fireman on the Flight Deck working with Wessex Mark 5 Helicopters and Buccaneer Mark 2 Jet Fighter Bombers.

Back to W.A. and A.B. on State Shipping Company cargo vessels working the coast. Followed by a stint on a 128,000 ton tanker running to the Persian Gulf during the Gulf War.

After a number of vessels I joined the last one in 1995, the S.S. NORTHWEST STORMPETREL, one of the gas carriers running from Karratha to Japan.

After 50 years of wandering the world's oceans from the Arctic to the Antarctic I have retired to write Maritime History.

Please help an old retired ratbag by purchasing your own copy complete with numerous photos.

Cheers to all - Rod Dickson, a.k.a. Sir Rodney the Rotten.

The books are available from another member of the Association, Mr Peter Bridge of Hesperian Press.

65 Oats Street, Carlisle, W.A. 6101.

Open Tuesday & Friday - 1 to 5 pm. Ph. 9 362 5955



EARNSLAW A Coal-fired Steamer still carrying Passengers!

BEFORE CHRISTMAS 2012, I found myself with an excellent excuse for visiting the Central Otago wine region of New Zealand's South Island. It's an outstandingly beautiful area: craggy snow-capped mountains, verdant valleys and the magnificent Lake Wakatipu made it ideal for filming *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*.

Lake Wakatipu is more than 80 km long and very deep. In the mid-19th century a significant goldrush to the Queenstown-Arrowtown area on the northern side of the lake disrupted the sheep farming which was developing there. A railway line to Kingston at the southern end of the lake was pushed through from Invercargill by 1878, and in 1911 New Zealand Railways commissioned the construction of a twin screw steamer for service on the lake.

EARNSLAW was built in Dunedin and then dismantled. The quarter-inch steel plates and every other element of her structure were freighted up to Kingston to be reassembled and launched in 1912. More than 100 years later *EARNSLAW* is still in service on the lake. These days she carries more tourists than sheep, making regular passages between Queenstown and Walter Peak High Country Farm.

I strongly recommend a voyage on *EARNSLAW* to anyone who finds themselves anywhere near Central Otago. It would be a fine trip on something no prettier than a Swan River cruiser, just for the scenery; but *EARNSLAW* really is something very special. She's the only coal-fired vessel left on Lloyd's Register. Her twin screws are driven by two triple expansion engines. Every



day a truckload of coal is delivered to her bunkers, and from a catwalk over the engine room you can watch the stokers shovelling the stuff into the roaring furnaces that heat her boilers. At her cruising speed of 12 knots (120 r.p.m. at 160 p.s.i.) she burns about one tonne of coal per hour. Cranked up to 19 knots in her heyday she burned three times that much.

Just about everything onboard seems to be original and accessible. There's the steam-driven steering gear, the winches on the foredeck, and the brass telegraphs for conveying orders from the bridge to the engine room.

Being 51.2m in length and only 7.315m in breadth *EARNSLAW* has a fairly wide turning circle. Her captain and crew handle her handsomely and lovingly, belching amazing, thick, coal-black clouds of smoke into the famously clean, clear air of that mountain region.

Nick Burningham

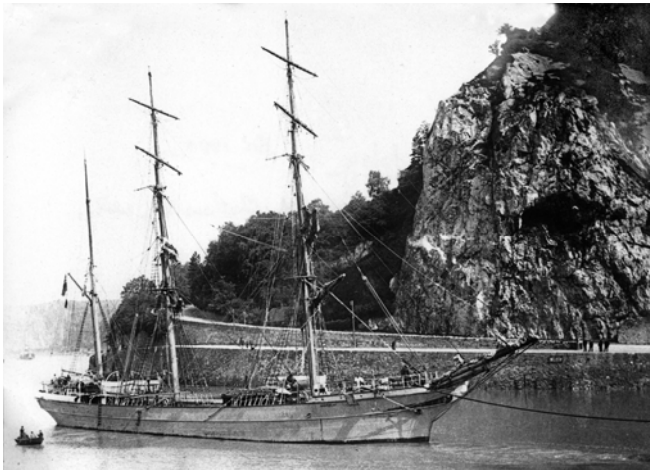




The Nicholas Delfs Story

Following the receipt of an email from Neville Young, Jill Worsley has written a further article on Nicholas Delfs who went missing in 1912.

In 2011 I wrote a short article bringing to the attention of readers *The Strange Case of Seaman Delfs*, and this was subsequently published in the Journal Vol. 22, No. 4 of that year. Now, three years later, the case is again arousing interest as Mr. Neville Young came across the story while browsing past journals, now available in PDF form. He contacted Ross and Barbara Shardlow, as he felt that he could throw further light on the mystery, having come across the skeleton of a horse while working for the (then) Forest Department in the general area where it is presumed that Nicholas Delfs went missing in 1912.



Mr. Young's information was passed on to me, along with a newspaper article of which I had not previously been aware. I had based my Journal story on information given in P. Johnstone's self-published article (2010) titled *Shannon Times: An Anecdotal History of a Timber Town*. Information given by Mr. Young, when considered alongside the information given by P. Johnstone and also information in an article published in the Western Mail of 31 August 1950, makes the Delfs story even more intriguing.

We must first consider the *facts* as reported by the stockmen who came across Nicholas Delfs' deserted camp. This was situated somewhere along the faint drovers' track between what is now known as Mandalay Beach and the very new settlement at Manjimup, where he had been expecting to purchase supplies. Assuming that the stockmen saw what they said they saw, the camp was deserted and Delfs' campfire out and cold. They

found that his boots and belt were still beside the bed. His horse's tether had been cut with a knife.

Now let us consider the *assumptions* they made. They assumed that the missing man had awakened during the night to find that his horse had been spooked by dingoes, and was frantically trying to break its tether. As it was in danger of strangulation, Delfs had to act quickly. Partly dressed, he rushed out and cut its tether. The horse then bolted into the bush, with Delfs following in the dark, trying to recapture it. Unable to do this because his campfire was out, or perhaps because he had rushed out of sight of it if it was still burning, in his haste tragically Delfs lost his way back to camp and consequently lost his life in the bush. His body has never been found.

There are further *facts* given in the Western Mail, in an article written by R. Monkhouse. This article was drawn to my attention by the Shardlows, who had been approached by Mr. Young following his discovery of the short article in the MHA Journal. (We have lots of sleuths who read the journal, and either add to the information given, or keep us on the 'straight and narrow' by pointing out our mistakes!)

The searchers mentioned by Monkhouse had been told of foot tracks seen in the sandhills near Windy Harbour, so while it was necessary to also search this area, they *assumed* (and I concur) that these were unlikely to be the tracks of our missing seaman.

The information given by Mr. Young makes this story even more intriguing. His *facts* are as follows: in 1974 he found the skeleton of a long-dead horse some 100 metres off the South Western Highway, 'not far south of where the event with Nicholas Delfs supposedly took place'. The skeleton still had most of its harness intact, in fact Mr Young took the blinkers home with him. His father said that no horses had been reported missing in the Shannon area for many years, though the story of Delfs and his horse was still known in the district. Since the dingoes had not scattered the remains found by Mr Young (and *assuming* that they were the remains of Delfs' horse), doubt must be cast on the assumptions made by the stockmen who found the camp. But the question



then arises – why did Delfs cut the tether around the horse’s neck?

A sinister explanation occurs to me – PERHAPS THE DINGOES TURNED THEIR ATTENTION FROM THE HORSE TO THE MAN – and that is

why his skeleton has not been found. He may have done better to stay on board the *Mandalay* for a few more days, delaying his trip to Manjimup to a more fortuitous day.

Jill Worsley

Albatross at Carnarvon

Thanks to Sue Graham at Carnarvon for the latest information, complete with photographs, on the naval cutter *Albatross*. The Carnarvon Heritage Group Inc. has now put *Albatross* into their display at the One Mile Jetty Interpretative Centre. It only just fitted through the doors, and was pulled inside by a ride-on lawnmower!

Catania, MLA, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Water & Forestry and Member for North West Central, carried out the ceremony.



Editor’s note:

Readers are directed to these MHA Journals for previous articles on *Albatross*.

Vol. 16, No. 3-September 2005.

Vol. 16, No. 4-December 2005.

Vol. 17, No. 3-September 2006.

Vol. 24, No. 4-December 2013.

Albatross has been set up with the interpretive signs hiding much of the trailer, and with the steps and platform in position to allow visitors to see inside the cutter. *Albatross* faces the *Kormoran* lifeboat, and the complete display can be seen in the photo at right.

Although the display has been open to the public since 7 May, there was an official opening ceremony of the interpretative centre and the associated restaurant held on 12 July 2014. The Hon. Vince





Ships of the State Shipping Service

By Geoff Thompson.

No: 34 *Pilbara* IMO Number: 386183

The third of three similar roll on /roll off cargo vessels was bareboat chartered from the Danish company, K/S Difko 1. Commenced building as the *Hamlet Arabia*, the vessel was launched as the *Hamlet Ariadne* at Burmeister & Wain, Copenhagen (Yard No. 877), and on charter to the State Shipping Service was renamed *Pilbara* in September 1981. The ship was 10,014 gross registered tons, 12,600 deadweight tons, 132.9 metres overall, 20.5 metres breadth with a draught of 9.4 metres. Two B&W Alpha 12U281U diesels of total power of 6,360 bhp gave a service speed of 16 knots via a controllable pitch propellor.

On the 10th October 1981 *Pilbara* arrived at Fremantle to commence operations with the State Shipping Service.

On the 26th November 1981 on her second voyage northward *Pilbara* severely damaged her hull when running aground on an uncharted sand bank approaching Derby jetty. Temporary repairs were

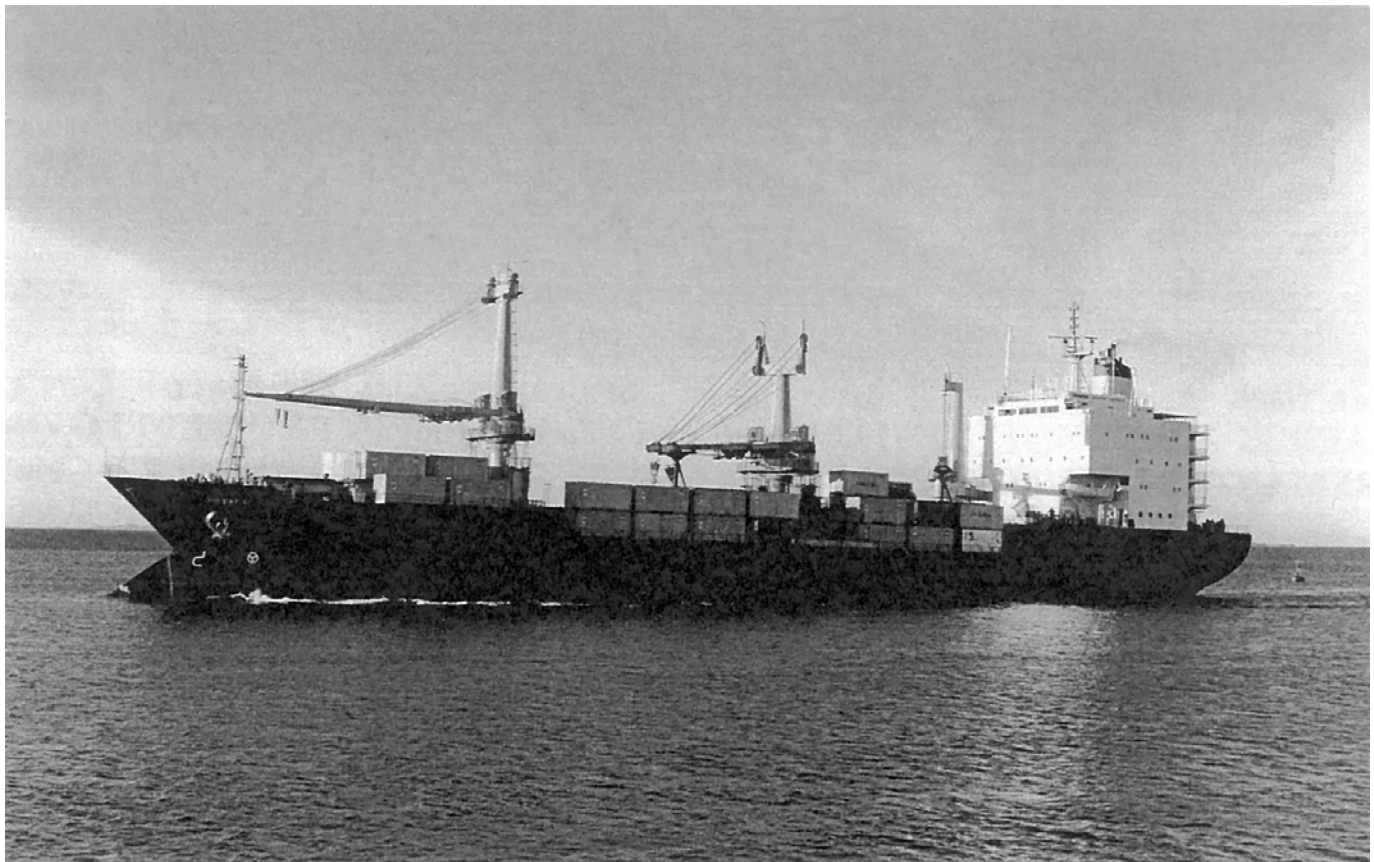
made to the hull to enable the ship to proceed to Darwin to unload cargo, including bulk cement. Permanent repairs to the hull were arranged to be carried out in Hong Kong by Hong Kong United Dockyards. The Dutch vessel *Angela Smits* was then chartered as a replacement ship to operate in her place from January to April 1982.

Pilbara arrived back at Fremantle from Hong Kong after repairs on 17th May 1982.

On the 1st August 1990, *Pilbara* arrived in Singapore on her final voyage for the State Shipping Service. The vessel was then returned to her owners and renamed *Algenib*, to operate under the Panamanian flag.

Further renamings occurred as following : 1991 - *Hamlet Arabia*, 1991- *Medcaribe I*, 1992 - *Hamlet Arabia*, 1996 - *Asia Express*, 2005 - *Asia Express I*.

Her current owners are PT Perusahaan Pelayaran Equinox, Panama.



From Robin's Shed – another Possum Net



Robin and Barry Hicks at work on another 'possum net' – otherwise known as a helideck net. Laid out flat on the helideck of a ship and hauled tight, it is used under certain weather conditions as an aid to landing, particularly if the vessel is rolling and moving about.

photo David Nicolson

LAST TIME WE LOOKED in on Robin he was fashioning a new jibboom for the *Leeuwin*, a laminated Oregon pine spar 10.5 metres long, 280mm in diameter at the heel, and weighing 500-600 kilos. Now finished, it has replaced the original jibboom built in 1986 by the late Ray Miller. After 24 years of hard work in all weathers, and the odd 'nudge' with a jetty, the old spar had done exceptional service. But it was talk of a 'possum net' that attracted our attention. Ross Shardlow interviews Doris Hicks who gives an account of what the boys have been up to:

Barry has always had a passion for boats and rope and from an early age our son Robin inherited this. *The Ashley Book of (3,000) Knots* was the most read book in their library. They didn't have to learn how to make bell ropes, Turk's heads, monkey's fists,

decorative mats and nets and rope ladders – they simply studied what was there and it just came naturally. Within two years of Barry and me being married he spotted a coil of rope in an auction. It was tarred sisal, 120 fathoms long. He HAD to have this and said he would pay up to five pounds for it in the auction. Since that was almost a week's pay for him I was naturally worried. Imagine my reaction when, at the auction, he bid five pounds ten, five pounds fifteen, six pounds before finally securing it for seven pounds ten shillings. It was his most treasured possession and it made many towropes, tug of war ropes, bell pulls, and the like. We came to Australia 45 years ago on the last day of December 1968. About a year later Barry bought a six-inch pulley block from J N Taylor's in Fremantle and he sat with it in his lap all the evening just running his hands all

over it. It cost \$9 and his wage, as a bricklayer, was about \$100 a week, with rent being \$33 of that. After work Barry used to pick up our son Andrew from day care and take him down to 'the big house' – that was the Fremantle Museum. That, and the six-inch pulley block, was how Barry's museum started and I had no idea at all that that was in his mind.



Robin and Barry delivering the 'small' helideck net.

photo Doris Hicks

When Robin left school he trained for three years in traditional sail making with George Huxford in Fremantle, but his real love was woodwork. His mentor was the late Ray Miller and he also had many shipwright friends and over many years he acquired all the best tools and equipment needed to produce a first-class job. In his business, which includes all types of canvas and rope work, he also makes ship's wheels, gratings, pulley blocks, all manner of ship's carpentry, and makes tools for boatbuilding, rigging and caulking. In their respective workshops Barry and Robin have showcases of 'knotty problems' and many examples of decorative mats and fenders of all types and sizes. Robin and Barry together have made many pilot and disembarkation ladders – six with the last order, each 32 metres long, together with equally large nets and Jacob's ladders mainly for the mining and shipping industries. They have many orders for cyclone nets and people think that these are available 'off the shelf' and wait till the first cyclone of the season threatens before ordering. But there are so many sizes needed for anchoring down vulnerable objects that each has to be made separately and this sometimes creates a panic in the workshop.

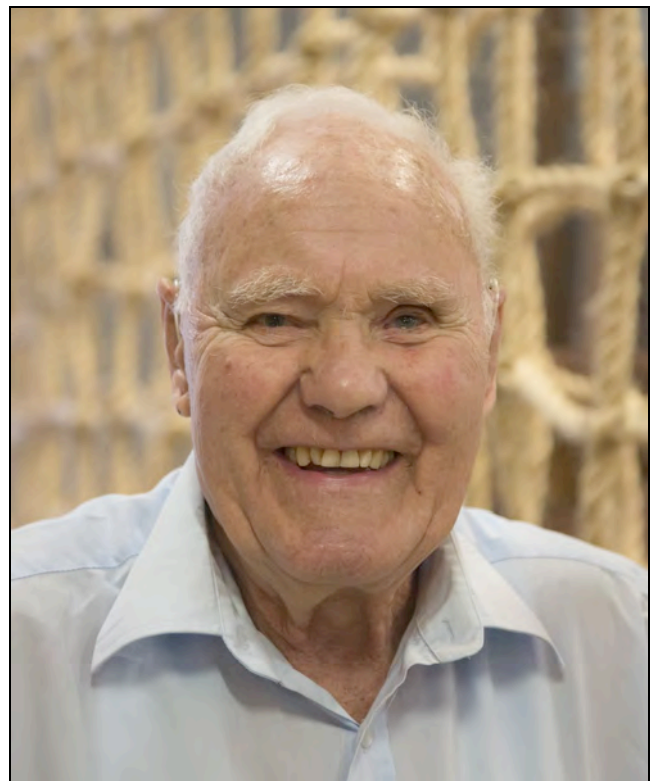
THE POSSUM NET

Last year they were asked to make a possum net to allow possums to cross a river because they can't swim. They thought it was a joke at first. The net was for a conservation group in the south west and was a very expensive operation in that, as well as making the 40 metre by one metre net, it had to be fixed to steel posts with strainer wires set in concrete. It was

quite deep in the forest and high up and it was meant to function as an escape route for the animals in case of a bush fire.

THE OTHER POSSUM NET

In recent times they were asked to make a helideck net, 15 metres square – a very tall order. But it was no problem to either of them. The hardest part was rolling it up for transport to its destination – the total length of rope used was just under 3,000 metres with a finished dry weight of approximately 800 kilos. Recently they had an order for another helideck net and this one was 'only' 12 metres square, which, after the last one, should have been a 'little doddle'. However, the rope was hairy sisal with a hard lay, which had absorbed moisture at some stage and was very stiff to use. Countless pairs of gloves were worn out in the process, together with (almost) two pairs of hands! After a very worrying start they completed the task in 165 hours between them.



Barry Hicks, taken out of retirement, turns 89 this year.

photo David Nicolson

In December 2012 Barry decided that he would retire – again. This spelt panic, not only to Robin but also to his rope supplier who is also his best customer. The retirement date extended to February 2013 and left Barry with a few weeks of summer and all autumn to rearrange his museum, thoroughly clean everything and even paint the floor. That was it – as his services were required again Barry came out of retirement and went back to work; after a couple of long ladders to re-orientate him, he started working on the helideck net! What next?



A New Threat to Ironclads?

Rod Dickson came upon this item in the *Daily News*, 15 November 1894: 2h-1

A SUBMARINE TORPEDO BOAT.
A NEW TERROR FOR IRONCLADS.
REMARKABLE AUSTRALIAN INVENTION.
TRIED IN MELBOURNE.

Jules Verne has inspired an inventive Australian to construct a torpedo boat which realises all that modern inventors have sought in that destructive engine of war, and which hitherto they have not managed to attain. A boat has been built so far submerged that only the conning tower remains above water, as the Nordenfeldt torpedo boat was so constructed that it could be submerged completely and raised again. Mr. C. Seymour Allen, of Sydney, has, however, designed and completed in working model a torpedo boat which not only moves as rapidly under water as on the surface, but can be sunk on an even keel to the bottom and raised at pleasure, or, more wonderful still, sunk to any given depth and driven along without the slightest ripple or curve on the surface to show the passage of a boat beneath. The possibilities with such a boat are enormous either for the destruction of ironclads, for counter mining to clear a passage for heavier vessels entering a hostile port, or for blockade running. A trial of the working model was recently given at the City Baths in the presence of His Excellency the Governor, Captain White (the Naval Commandant), Commander Kingsford, Commander Collins (secretary of Defence), and a number of other gentlemen. Placed in the water the little 8ft. model—which for the purpose of the trial had to be connected with a pliant electric cable to a shore battery—was the perfection of a craft built for speed, and the inventor claims 60 knots an hour as one of the possibilities from a full-sized boat. Only a slight fin appeared above water, and on one touch of an electric key the little boat sank out of sight, and being lit up with electricity on the instant she sank the onlookers were able to see her going down and resting on the bottom of the baths in 8 ft. of water. Another turn of the key, and just as promptly she rose evenly and steadily to the surface again. “She will do anything you tell her,” said the inventor; and in response to requests by His Excellency, by Captain White (who was much interested in the trial), and by Colonel Dean Pitt, the model sunk and rose by the head or stern as required, was submerged to depths of 2ft., 3ft., or 4ft. as required, and there either remained stationary or was driven about, reversed, and manoeuvred while keeping her

depth. Captain White's opinion was very much that of Admiral Bowden-Smith, who on seeing the trial in Sydney said, “If you can build a full sided boat to do the some work as the model, you not only have a huge fortune at command, but you will revolutionise naval warfare.” His Excellency the Governor was also much pleased with the invention, which he was satisfied fully realised the inventor's claims.

It was certainly a remarkable sight, and to those who understood the possibilities in destruction, rather alarming. As one Naval Officer put it, life on an ironclad would not be enjoyable with such things darting about the sea floor. The boat carries torpedoes both in the bow and stern, and the facility for rising slightly either by the head or stern is, of course, invaluable in discharging a torpedo at the bottom of a ship which the boat may be approaching or leaving. She has other torpedoes of a still more unpleasant type. These are deck torpedoes, which while the submerged boat is passing directly under the keel of a hostile ship can be released, and rise automatically. Being fitted on top with strong magnets they attach themselves to iron or steel hull like limpets to a rock, and on the submerged torpedo boat retreating to a safe distance are fired. Every detail of this wonderful boat had been fully thought out and tested. Air can be stored sufficient if required to last for three days under water. The depths below the surface at which it may be desired to drive the boat is regulated automatically by water pressure, and there is a patent sounder registering the distance both from the surface and the bottom. It would be difficult to follow a purely technical description of the fittings of this remarkable vessel, and to realise what she can do one must see her, as at this trial, working in the water. A full-sized vessel would be about 80ft. long, with a displacement of 127 tons.

The power of sinking and rising so rapidly and remaining at any depth that may be desired, is without doubt the marvel of the invention. The Nordenfeldt boat was sunk by letting water in, and it had to be pumped out before she would rise again, but this boat, in response to so slight an apparent control as the touching of a small electric button does all these things instantly, and with automatic accuracy. Lieutenant Tickell was especially pleased with these traits in a torpedo boat. “Will you come down with me on the first



trip?" Mr. Allen asked, and Lieut. Tickell answered without any hesitation, "Build your boat, and I'm perfectly willing to make one of the crew for the first run." Indeed after seeing this brightly illuminated, little craft moving about under water—suggesting, save for the wriggle, a small shark that had supped on incandescent lights—the idea of going down into the depths of the ocean hermetically sealed in a racing diving-bell loses half its horror. The one objection raised by the naval experts present was as to the possibility of steering a straight course to a ship under water, but it was explained that by taking the bearings before sinking the boat, a fairly direct course may be taken, and the boat can at any time be brought either close to the surface or up to her ordinary sailing position for an observation through the glass look-outs of the conning tower in which all the controlling levers for the different operations are grouped. The perfection illustrated in this trial—and which only served to verify many private experiments as well as public exhibitions given in Sydney - has not been gained without long and anxious experiments. Mr. Allen commenced with a very crude model and clock work as a motive power. It was on the suggestion of Mr. Edward Manvillo, M.I.E.E., that he applied electricity, and he has worked nearly thirteen years in bringing it to its present perfection, at a cost, all told, of not less than £7,000. The full-sized boat would cost about £10,000 to build, but the amount is infinitesimal in comparison with the outlay on the iron mammoths it is intended to destroy. All the present devices for defence, such as torpedo net-

ting and search lights, fail utterly against this new enemy of men-of-war. One of the officers who saw her, yesterday expressed the opinion that in an ordinarily rough sea-way the fin of the boat, which is the only thing above water in the normal position, would not easily be noticed at any distance. Immediately the boat sinks she is safe, as a shot striking the water above her goes off on the ricochet. Nor would a single hit sink her, as the boat is built in water-tight compartments. Now that something of the remarkable qualities of this invention are known, it is rather a pity that a public exhibition of her powers cannot be given on a larger scale. As a general rule it may be taken for granted that the completed invention will do better than the working model, and a great deal of interest is certain to be displayed in the building of the first full-sized boat.

Mr. Allen does not intend to take his invention abroad. His idea is to build a full-sized vessel here, go down in her, take her through the Heads, and torpedo a hulk at sea, without giving anyone on shore an idea of his whereabouts. Such of the great powers as are interested in the invention—and which of them will not be?—may send their representatives here to see the boat tried in Australian waders. To simply hear what this boat can do sounds like a Jules Verne romance or an inventors dream, but seeing is believing; and, though an Australian in Mr. Brennan has contributed one great engine of destruction to naval warfare, Mr Seymour Allen, it would certainly appear has devised a greater one.



Nordenfeldt submarine

Editor's note:

I know of no photo of Mr Seymour Allen or his submarine model. The Nordenfeldt boat mentioned in the article was one of a number invented by the Swede Thorsten Nordenfeldt (1842-1920). One of his earliest, *Abdülhamid* (one of two similar boats belonging to the Turkish navy) was, in 1886, the first submarine in history to fire a torpedo while submerged. The 30m submarines were powered by steam while on the surface, and used 'accumulated' steam when submerged. They were fitted with two torpedo tubes. Once underwater, sudden changes in speed or direction triggered – in the words of a US Navy intelligence report – 'dangerous and eccentric movements.' However, good public relations overcame bad design; Nordenfeldt always demonstrated his boats before a stellar crowd of crowned heads, and Nordenfeldt's submarines were regarded as the world standard.

Both submarines were in Istanbul in 1914 and were considered for harbour defence, but found to be too corroded.



The Floating Forest

MHA member Tony Duvollet wrote the following after seeing the cover and reading the associated article on the abandoned steamer *Ayrfield* in the June journal

It is with mixed emotions that I pen this note. I was both amazed and aggrieved at the stunning photo on the front cover of MHA journal Vol. 25 No. 2. Amazed and enthralled by the beautiful, and unusual, composition (well done Rebekah). But aggrieved that this once proud plumb stemmed, countersterned and tall funnelled vessel is now nothing more than, dare I say it, a “shrub tub”.

I was very familiar with the S.S. *Ayrfield*, for as an apprentice shipwright with the now defunct Morrison and Sinclair Yard on the end of Longnose Point, Balmain, mid-1960s, I would often (and frequently on overtime) work in the empty hold to lift up the ceiling (which was on the floor – to “ceil” is an archaic term meaning to conceal) so that the boilermaker could weld up yet another set of sprung rivets after yet another gruelling trip pounding into the prevailing South-easterlies.

I was fortunate enough to do one voyage on her, albeit from the Jubilee Yard (now defunct) Longnose Point to the swing mooring off Cockatoo Island to “swing the compass”. I was fascinated by the coal-fired triple-expansion steam engine, but I was somewhat discon-

certed by the seemingly excessively vibrating funnel caused by excess steam hitting one of the funnel stays. “The romance of steam”? I am not so sure about that, because what I saw was a noisy, hot, dirty and dusty engine room which today would be totally against OHS standards, let alone EPA standards, polluting the atmosphere! How innocent we were then!

I did not realise it then but I was witnessing the end of an era. This was the time of dramatic changes on the waterfront. S.S. *Ayrfield* and her fellow colliers S.S. *Branxton* and S.S. *Teralba*, along with the steam tug *Heroine* and MSB VIP vessel *Lady Hopeton* were soon to be made redundant. The colliers were replaced by coal transportation by rail, tug *Heroine* by non-descript diesel tugs and the lovely Edwardian *Lady Hopeton* is now an exhibit at the National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour.

It was a time when clinker lifeboats were being replaced by the then new “you-beaut” fibreglass, twin derricks replaced by single hydraulic cranes, and of course the now ubiquitous shipping containers were just on the horizon, thus changing the profile of the traditional shipwright’s scope of work, and the face of working ports for ever.



Maritime Heritage Association Inc.

PO Box 1080, Guilderton,, Western Australia, 6041.

