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MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL



The Australian hospital ship *Manunda* entering Fremantle Harbour with the first casualties from the North African campaign, circa April 1941

Watercolour by Pat Rodriguez

See article page 12

- * *Lenita*
- * Great Circle Sailing
- * A Little Know War Loss
- * Vale Rod Dickson

STOP PRESS

MHA Christmas get-together
Sunday 21 November
Details closer to that date



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EDITORIAL

Production has kicked off for a new six-part documentary series *Shipwreck Hunters Australia*. The series is the first Australian documentary for Disney+, with principal production investment from Screen Australia in association with Screenwest and the Western Australian Screen Fund.

Filming is taking place off Western Australia's vast coastline, often referred to as the 'Treasure Coast', the resting place for a predicted 1,600 shipwrecks. There, a team of highly skilled divers and underwater filmmakers along with expert maritime archaeologists from the Western Australian Museum, will dive into one of the planet's most spectacular ocean environments, showcasing thrilling discoveries and looking to solve some iconic shipwreck mysteries. Combining new evidence, the latest technologies and archival research, *Shipwreck Hunters Australia* is a fresh and vibrant journey into the mysterious past led by modern day ocean adventurers.

Screen Australia, 6 May 2021

More details can be found on the Screen Australia website.

Member Tony Duvollet, a highly experienced

shipwright, is currently out of retirement and overwhelmed with boat restoration work in NSW. For several years Tony has demonstrated the art of caulking at the Wooden Boat Festival in Hobart. He recently sent me the following as part of a personal email:

A good caulker can make the job look quite easy. The basics are quite simple. However, the skill comes into knowing just how tight to caulk the seams, as there are many variables, such as; how long has the boat been out on the hard? Whether the planking is softwood or hardwood, etc. Like any job, or sport, the skill comes with practice. I left Geraldton carrying traditional shipwrights tools such as the aforementioned caulking mallet and irons, adze, roving punch, even a pair of calipers for spiling planks! So I was pleasantly surprised when asked, well, more of a directive, to caulk the 100 year old river workboat. I got a lot of pleasure working on her, thinking about the old shipwrights building her not far from here and even more surprised that she didn't sink upon re-launching!

I look forward to Tony returning to WA when Covid restrictions are lifted. He may then have time to again contribute articles to the Journal !

Did You Know?

The history books tell us that the 650-ton barque *Scindian* brought the first 75 convicts to Western Australia in June 1850. This completely disregards the 234 'juvenile government immigrants' who arrived in the 1840s. These boys between the ages of 10 and 20 years were convicted of crimes in England, and shipped to Western Australia from Parkhurst prison for periods ranging from 7 to 15 years, and were euphemistically called Parkhurst 'apprentices'. The first European legally executed in Western Australia was a Parkhurst boy, John Gavin aged 15 years. Just outside the Roundhouse in Fremantle he was hanged for murder. He had been sentenced to 10 years 'larceny of a dwelling'.



Can You Help?

In November 2005 Tom Saggars helped to salvage a wooden boat from a soon to be demolished house in Claremont. It was originally considered to be a wooden bodied motor vehicle, but when after considerable effort it was finally extracted from under the bushes it proved to be a turtle back speed boat. Tom put it on his trailer and it was subsequently donated to

MHA.

Does anybody know where the boat is now?
Does anybody know the history of the boat, e.g. designer, builder, owners?

Some of you may recognise the grey haired lady, and the gentleman in the photo below



Almost out of the bushes

See next page



Finally secure
on the trailer



Turtle Fishery at Point Peron

The rocky peninsula of Point Peron offered little attraction to anyone except ardent anglers, but its sandy approaches provided good bathing beaches and safe anchorage for fishing boats. In 1923, they also proved an inspiration to a Scotsman whose mouth had watered at the thought of all the soup that could be made from the great turtles found in the north of Western Australia. He decided to import some of them to Point Peron, build breeding pens and a factory, and make hundreds of gallons of luscious turtle soup every year. He selected a suitable site on the northern side of the point, built his pens and his factory and imported his turtles. Then he invited practically everyone in Rockingham to a grand dinner at the Rockingham Hotel, at which, needless to say, the piece de resistance was to be the first fruits of his Turtle Factory. Imagine his utter consternation and chagrin when he discovered that his pens held not a single turtle. To the last one they had fled, burrowing under his netting fence to escape his soup pot. In disillusion and disgust he abandoned both his factory and Rockingham.

Until 1930, the Turtle Factory remained desolate and empty. Then A.H. Woods leased it,

renamed it Peron House, and opened a boarding house which proved much more profitable than had the Turtle Factory. Finally, the building was sold to the Sisters of Notre Dame des Missions, who, in May 1948, opened a parish school in it. This continued until 1973, when a new parish school was opened in Farris Street, just behind the Rockingham High School.

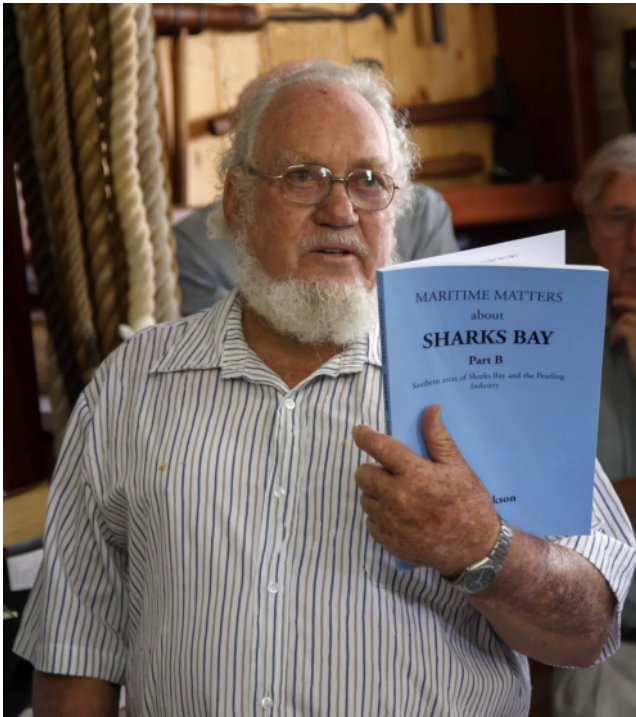
Some idea of the slowness with which Palm Beach developed may be gained from the fact that, when in 1939, George Grigg bought the fifty acres of land extending from Railway Terrace to Samuel Street, and Thorpe Street to the sea, there were only eight cottages in the whole area. The whole fifty acres cost only £4,500 ... £90 per acre. Except for the Peron Road, there was not even a bush track, no water or electricity supply and no sewerage. Before he could sell the land, Grigg was obliged to clear a laneway between Florence and Samuel Streets, to give his prospective customers access to the blocks he hoped they would buy.

Taggart, N., 1984, *Rockingham Looks back: A History of the Rockingham District 1829–1982*. Rockingham District Historical Society, Rockingham.



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

This re-print of a 2003 MHA article is offered as a tribute to the late Rod Dickson
Past President and friend



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

After a bit of fishing for crays and prawns and hunting turtles I went back deep sea on the *Rhodesia Star*, paying off in KG V docks in London. Part of the cargo we carried in No. 2 hatch was premium Aussie wines, some of which, by some mischance, seemed to end up in the crew's quarters almost every night, which caused some horri-

ble heads in the mornings. We also, on the way "home" called at Aden and transferred the gold from the banks there to the Bank of England in London due to the transfer of power. The strange thing about that was that when loading it was guarded by half the British bloody Army and yet at London there was only ONE London Bobbie to supervise the unloading.

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

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



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

On the *Regent*, probably because nobody knew what to do with me, I was sent from Belfast to *H.M.S. Phoenix*, a shore training establishment at Portland to partake in the Nuclear, Bacteriological and Chemical Defence course run by the Navy. This was great fun, especially the fire fighting drills, shipboard, helicopter and fixed wing aircraft dummies were set alight in great blazes just so that we could attack and extinguish the fires. The C.P.O. in charge was a bloody pyromaniac and set off some of the best fires I have ever seen and run away from, along with the rest of the class. I could go on for ages about the "school" but best leave it to memories.....When I returned to the ship I was made Chief Fireman on the flight deck as we had our own helicopter on board and we had flying duties virtually every day. In port I was the liberty boat coxswain and ran either the 36 footer for the crew or the Captain's gig when he had official engagements ashore.

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

I was given a plane ticket to Bangkok and a railway ticket back south to Surot. Then came a short bus trip to the coast at Surot Thani. Two days there and a ferry ride out to Ko Samui to join the *Mediterranean Seal*, an American flagged seismic survey vessel. She was working for Philips Petroleum in the Gulf of Thailand. The Yankee skipper was a bloody lunatic, when sober he was continually bible bashing and preaching about the evils of strong drink and loose women, (what else did seamen live for???) and yet on his own leave he was completely drunk for the whole time. After ten months and many madcap stories I finally left and flew back to Australia, supposedly on my way back to Melbourne, but once again the grog got

me and I ended up with another job in W.A., this time at Barrow Island on the landing craft running from the Island to Onslow carrying the supplies and anything else needed. In 1974 came an interesting job on one of the barges, the old *Tern*, renamed *Ternable*. This was the very last explosive seismic job in the world. In a matter of 6 months we exploded 32,000 50lb depth charges no more than 50 metres from the stern. Every week we had to beach the old girl and re-weld the hull and change propellers as we "blew" a number of blades off them. I have a favourite slide from that era in which a shark is shown 40 feet in the air having stupidly swum over the top of the charge just as it was detonated. We also had fun with the silver gulls, chuck a bit of garbage out to drift astern just as the first bomb went off and the gulls would be seen heading south at a rapid rate of knots!!!

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

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

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



Synopsis of Tom O'Brien's research into the 1658 landing of the Dutch ship *Elburg*

By Leslie O'Brien, daughter of Tom O'Brien

In researching his book *Some Abridged History of Bunbury 1658–1995*, Tom O'Brien found a map reference to a 1658 landing of the Dutch ship *Elburg* at, or near, what is now the port of Bunbury. Tom was keen to establish whether or not the citation was correct. If it were, it would challenge the popular and published understanding that the French, in 1801, were the first Europeans to have landed there.

Tom wrote to a wide range of relevant institutions and maritime authorities seeking further information. Amongst other responses, the General State Archives of the Netherlands (the Archives) sent him excerpts from a number of books concerning Dutch maritime history. These mentioned the *Elburg* having sheltered and landed at 33° 14' S latitude. Some authors included English-language extracts from the original source of the data, a December 1658 letter from the Governor-General of Batavia to the Dutch East India Company.

An overview of the event:

In 1658 the Dutch ship *Elburg* was sailing north up the coast of Western Australia (towards Batavia) on a trade mission. The ship was under the Command of Jacob Peereboom. Severe winter storms drove the ship towards the shore at 31.495 degrees south (near the present-day settlement of Two Rocks). It was a threatening situation. The mariners could see huge waves breaking on reefs close to the shore. Fortunately the ship's anchors were able to hold, 2½ miles offshore, in 22 fathoms of water.

After 12 days at the above location a brief lull in the weather allowed the ship to weigh anchor and seek the comparative safety of the open sea. However further winter gales arose and these drove the ship back down south:

After reaching a latitude of 33 degrees 14 minutes, we found a good anchorage behind a protruding point of land. The master, first mate, a sergeant and six soldiers went to shore on leeuwin country and found three black persons¹.

Tom's work:

Tom had concerns about the accuracy of the 33° 14'S latitude cited as the *Elburg*'s place of shelter and landing. From maps and a site visit he had identified that location as being a completely flat stretch of coast, certainly one lacking any 'protruding point of land'. He wrote again to the General State Archives asking for a copy of the ship's log and/or charts. The Archives informed him these records had been lost and that the Governor-General of Batavia's letter was the only existing source of original data. Tom later wrote to multiple other agencies asking for any record they might have other than the letter from the Governor-General of Batavia to the VOC. All informed him there were no other records.

Tom then asked himself, and the Archives, if the latitude reading might have been taken at some distance from the protruding point of land noted in the record², or if an error might have been made in taking the original latitude reading³, or if the coordinate might have been incorrectly transcribed from the ship's log and charts.

Tom wrote again to the Archives asking for a copy of the Governor-General's letter and was informed that the photocopying or photographing of the document was not permitted. The Archives did provide him with a Dutch language transcript of the letter and an English language excerpt from its most relevant section. Tom considered this was insufficient evidence. Determined to examine the original source of the data he wrote yet again to the Archives, asking for a copy of the original letter. The Archives advised Tom that in his case it would make an exception to the rule and sent him a Xerox excerpt from the original letter. This original material cites the *Elburg*'s landing having been at latitude 33° 14'S⁴.

As the physical features described in the literature differ so significantly from the latitude data, Tom concluded the landing must have been at a different location. Tom noted that there was (and is) a 'protruding point of land' at 33° 18' 80"S, 4–5 minutes south of the coordinates given in the Governor-General of Batavia's letter. This protrusion protects Koombana Bay and the port of Bunbury. (Some 150 years after the Dutch landing the



French named this protruding feature ‘Point Casuarina’.) Given its proximity to the recorded latitude of the landing, given its physical features and in the absence of any other evidence, Tom considered Point Casuarina/Koombana Bay i.e. Bunbury as the most likely site of the *Elburg*’s shelter and landing.

Tom’s work does not aim to diminish the significance of the Baudin expedition’s 1801 exploration and landing near Bunbury. A detailed and fully referenced article in a future edition of the MHA Journal will show the depth of Tom’s *Elburg* research and reveal that his objective is to correct the historical timeline.

End Notes

¹ Excerpt from letter from Governor General of Batavia to the Dutch East India Company dated 14 December 1658. Original letter is written in Old Dutch.

² The letter from the Governor-General of Batavia to the VOC does not/not state that the protruding point was at at 33° 14’S, rather that after reaching that latitude they found a good anchorage behind a protruding point of land. There is a logical distinction between these two contentions.

³ In his research papers Tom notes that in 1658 an astrolabe rather than the more accurate sextant would most likely have determined latitude. The latter came into more general use after the voyage of the *Elburg*. The Dutch mariners are known for the accuracy of their navigational skills. The mariner’s astrolabe however needed to be suspended vertically in order to measure the altitude of a celestial object - provided of course there was no cloud cover and such celestial object could be seen. This means it could not easily be

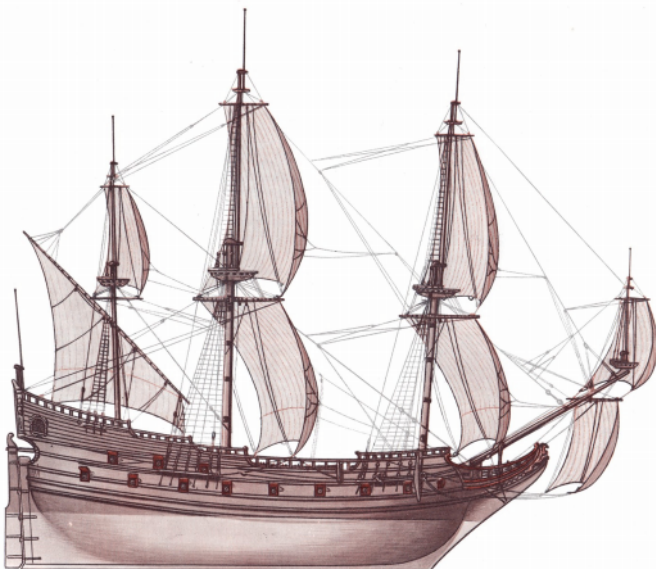
used on deck in windy conditions or cloudy conditions, such as most likely pertained at the time of the *Elburg*’s visit to these waters. Further the astrolabe’s angular accuracy was directly proportional to the length of its alidade and generally this was not very long. (Leslie O’Brien note: Tom worked for many years as an underground mine surveyor and surface surveyor. He had a deep interest in and strong understanding of the technical aspects of his profession and maritime navigation.)

⁴ Leslie O’Brien note:

I have clarified two possible issues associated with interpretation of the original data. These need to be clarified:

First – the Senior Archivist, General State Archives of the Netherlands was kind enough to provide TNOB with a Xerox copy of the original missive from the Governor-General of Batavia to the VOC. The relevant section of this letter shows coordinates of 33° 14’. The numeral 1 in the 14 minutes is somewhat exaggerated. It is however identical to the numeral 1 used in the 1658 date of the signature block of the letter. Do you agree?

Second – the original manuscript refers to the *Elburg* anchoring at ‘Leeuwinnenhoek’: “De schipper, een sturmaan, de sergeanten 6 soldaten zijn bij de Leeuwinnenhoek aan landgegaan en hebben 3 zwarte mensen gevonden.....” Leeuwinnenhoek, or Cape Leeuwin is at 34° 33’S, a considerable distance from the 33° 14’S given as the site of shelter and landing. The issue here is whether the Dutch used the term Leeuwinnenhoek to refer specifically to Cape Leeuwin, to the area between Cape Leeuwin and Cape Naturaliste or to the area sheltered by these capes, viz Geographe Bay?



Elburg was a type of ship known as a fluyt, and would have looked similar to this



The Ditty Bag

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

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



The barque *Scindian* which brought 75 convicts to Western Australia in 1850 was wrecked on 3 November 1880 off Elba, Italy. The *Scindian* had gone there to load iron ore.

On 20 August 1944 the S.S. *Richard Montgomery* sank off Sheerness in the Thames Estuary. It carried a cargo of 1,400 tons of explosive ordinance, none of which has been recovered. An article in the *New Scientist* in 2004 reported that if the cargo exploded the force would be roughly a twelfth the size of the atom bombs dropped on Japan. An earlier Government report stated that the a column of water and debris 1,000ft wide would be blasted two miles into the air, and create a tsunami 13ft high.

On 2 July 1798 the West India Merchants and Planters Marine Police Institution was formed. This became in 1800 the Thames River Police, later amalgamated with the Metropolitan Police Service.

Although outboard motors, including electric ones, had been around for some time, it was not until February 1905 that an American, Cameron Waterman, coined the name 'outboard motor'.

If you suffer from sea-sickness the following is pertinent:

*There was a young lady from Spain,
Who washed down her meal with champagne,
In a futile attempt
To make her exempt
From seeing the same food again.*

Gin originated in Holland, and was brought to England at the end of the Thirty Years War. It had been drunk on the battlefields both to keep the soldiers warm and to steel their nerves. It was the original 'Dutch courage'.

A privateer was a privately-owned vessel, armed and manned at her owner's expense for the purpose of capturing enemy merchant craft in time of war. International law of the time required that she have a commission or 'letter-of-marque' as it was called, obtained from the government under whose flag she sailed, otherwise she was considered a pirate.

Howard I. Chapelle, 1935

In the early 19th century there were six Royal Dockyards in England—Portsmouth, Plymouth Deptford, Chatham, Woolwich and Sheerness. In 1814 they employed more than 15,000 men, not just building ships but also in rope, block, mast and anchor making and repairs to ships.

The word *abrolhos* is Portuguese for 'spiked obstructions'. The word was misinterpreted by the Spanish to be 'open you eyes', and thereby became a warning to their sailors.

The greatest number of yards ever crossed by an iron or steel sailing vessel was seven, the seventh being a skysail yard.

The 4-masted German barque *Herzogin Cecilie* spread a total of 35 sails amounting to 45,000 square feet (4,180 square metres) in area, a little over an acre. Only 18 of these were square sails.

In four centuries scurvy killed more seamen than cannonball, drowning and shipwreck combined.

The famous composer of operas Giacomo Puccini (1858–1928) bought a yacht which he named *Cio Cio San* after the heroine of his opera *Madame Butterfly*.

Before they became university towns both Oxford and Cambridge were busy trading ports.

If the sky reddens at night, a clear day; if in the morning, bad weather...Also when during a night voyage, the sea glisters about the oars, there will be a storm. And when dolphins often leap above the water, by what they say, there will result a wind rising, and breaking clouds will open the heavens.

The Venerable Bede (673–735AD)

Scaling: The act of cleaning the inside of a ship's cannon by the explosion of a reduced quantity of powder.

Admiral W.H. Smyth, 1867



Lenita, her life, loss and recovery of her keel

By Ross Shardlow

The following notes passed on to me by Michael Westerberg, were hand written by the late Stan Austin, acclaimed yachtsman, seaman, launch driver, craftsman, boatbuilder, Commodore of the Princess Royal Sailing Club, and a very nice man. Stan's notes describe the loss of

Sailed to Albany 1914 [*recte* 1919] by Lionel Rosser Austin with owners Charles & Vic Westerberg (brothers) & brother in law Harold Tuttlebee. Used for fishing. Moored off Residency [Point, Albany]. The buoy nearby used as a sailing club marker always known as Lenita Buoy.



Stan Austin's "rough painting of Lenita for Michael", watercolour, 1995. The setting is off Albany. Inscribed on the verso: "My impression of Lenita. Vic & Charles Westerberg Senr. To Albany from Fremantle 1919."

Westerberg Collection

the *Lenita* and how, in 1938, Lionel and Geoff Austin, Stan's father and brother, salvaged her lead keel using a diving helmet made from a kerosene tin, garden hose and a car pump!

Stan's notes conclude: 'Am doing a rough painting of *Lenita* for Michael, if he wants it.'

LENITA 32 ft (9.75m)
Plumb Stem, bowsprit & counter stern.
Narrow beam, sharp bow. Lead keel 31 cwt.
Built Fremantle, short gaff rig.

Sold to Irvine McKenzie who allowed ex Master Mariner Capt Downie use of her for fishing down the coast.

1933 Returning home met with a hard Sou wester & miss stayed on approaching North west side of Michaelmas Island. Efforts to start the rusty Chev 4 failed and she caught on limestone outcrop approx 2 metres under & 50 metres from the Island. Downie scrambled ashore & was rescued a day later by the *Margaret* (Teddy Davis).

McKenzie gave rights to keel to Lionel & Stan



Austin.

1938 Three attempts to locate were made with *Vanessa & Dauntless*. Lionel & Geoff Austin; Geoff with a 5 gal diving helmet & car pump. Fastened on with clamp made by Lionel & with shearlegs above gradually worked keel to the little sandy beach. Here it was cut into 5 pieces with large steel chisels made specially by Lionel & taken ashore to Brunswick road. Here melted & moulded for keel for *Kestrel* (launched 1940).



Stan Austin's father, Lionel Rosser Austin; blacksmith, carpenter, fisherman and boatbuilder, made this massive clamp to lift the 31cwt (1.57 tonne) lead keel from the wreck of the Lenita.

Westerberg Collection

(*Dauntless* Geo Pannett Jnr)

Hope you can pick something out of this lot.

Am doing a rough painting of *Lenita* for Michael, if he wants it. Will give it to you hopefully next week.

Stan Austin Albany 1995

Ian Brayshaw's self-published book, a heartfelt treatise to *A Man, his Boat, his Town: a Stan Austin memoir*, 2014, gives another account of the *Lenita* story. The entry, also in Stan's own words, clears up the question of whether it was 1914 or

1919 when *Lenita* was sailed to Albany from Fremantle. As Stan was born 15 March 1915, and claims to have remembered the event, it must have been 1919:

I can remember one time when my mother worried for a few nights. My father had gone to Fremantle to bring a boat down – a fishing boat – with the two Westerberg brothers, Charlie and Vic. Of course, she was worried because those old-time boats had no engines to call on if they got into trouble on the way down. But my father was very capable and they got her to Albany safely. The boat was called Lenita and some time later she was wrecked off Michaelmas Island. I was told I could have the keel if I could find it. That meant the lead, of course. Years later, with my father and brother and others, we found it and that lead went into the bottom when I built my own boat in the late thirties.



Kestrel.

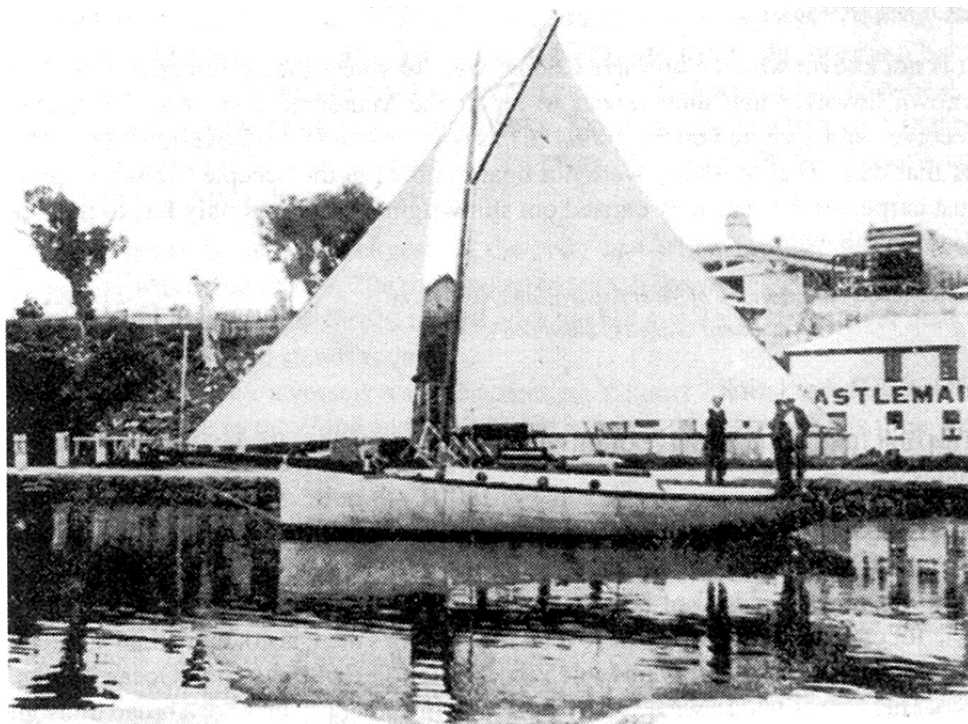
Built in a shed at the back of the Austin home in Brunswick Road, Albany, Kestrel was launched into the channel at Oyster Harbour on Armistice night, 1940. The lead keel salvaged from Lenita was melted down and remoulded for Kestrel's keel.

Courtesy Michael Westerberg



In his book *They Kept This State Afloat*, the late Rod Dickson stated that *Lenita* was built by Frederick Cooper and attached the photograph of *Lenita* with the notation that she was equipped with a 10 hp Vosper engine. Dickson refers to an article dated 1906 that described Frederick Cooper of East Fremantle building a tunnel boat to the order of Mr J. Green of Mandurah. Dickson then concludes: 'That is all that is known of this man . . .' The only reference Dickson cited for the article was *W.A. Yachting and Motor-boat Annual, 1906/07*. If the photo was published with the article in 1906 we might presume *Lenita* was built about that time.

Frederick Cooper described himself as a mechanic and boatbuilder. He lived with his wife and three children in Osborne Road, Richmond (now East Fremantle) and had a boatshed on the south bank of the Swan River near the Castlemaine Brewery at East Fremantle; indeed, the brewery can be seen behind *Lenita* in the photo. As the photo probably commemorates her launching or commissioning, the gentlemen standing on her stern may well include Mr Cooper and Mr George Davies, her new owner. Sadly, a few years later, 2 April 1908, Frederick Cooper lost his two boys, Richard and Frederick, aged 3 and 2 years respectively, when both accidentally drowned within sight of where the photo of *Lenita* was taken.



Lenita. Built by F. Cooper. Equipped with a 10 H.P. Vosper engine.
From Rod Dickson's They Kept This State Afloat: Shipbuilders, Boatbuilders and Shipwrights of WA 1829-1929, Hesperian Press, 1998.

George Davies, Land and Estate Agent, highly regarded resident of Fremantle, eldest son of George Alfred Davies, late Mayor of Fremantle, one of the best skippers of pleasure yachts on the coast and particularly well known as owner-skipper of the auxiliary yacht *Lenita*, named his vessel after the two most important women in his life – his mother Letitia and his wife Nita. Despite the halcyon days fishing and sailing for which his enthusiastic friends presented him with a pair of field and marine glasses and a barometer suitably inscribed to mark the 'pleasant times spent on board his yacht during the 1912–13 season', George Davies placed his beloved *Lenita* on the market. The advertisement in *The West Australian*, 28 March 1914 read:

AUXILIARY YACHT
"LENITA"

Length 32 ft., beam 9 ft., suitable for fishing boat. Motor 10-horse kerosene.

For further particulars apply George Davies, Market-st., Fremantle.

The advertisement only ran for three days and this was probably when the Westerberg brothers purchased her and may have given rise to the confusion of sailing her down to Albany in 1914, instead of 1919. There is another Albany connection, however, as George Davies' wife Nita, actually Anita/Aneta Bertha Augusta née Stirling, was the sister of Hordern Fraser Stirling of Albany. Hordern and Elsie Stirling's daughter, born in Albany in 1919, was also named Anita.

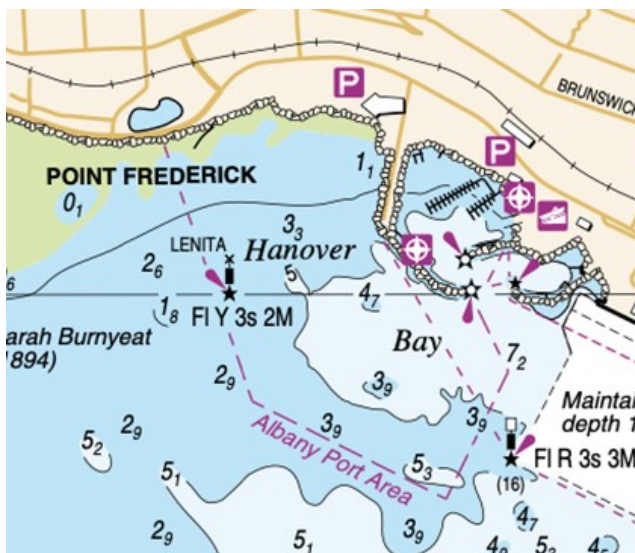
Whatever connections there might have been, George Davies put *Lenita* up for sale in 1914 and she was sailed down to Albany in 1919 – and despite Stan's recollections (as a four-year old) that this old-time boat did not have an engine, it appears she did in fact have a 10 hp Vosper kerosene engine. There is nothing to say, however, that the Vosper actually worked, and a Chev 4 was installed sometime after *Lenita's* arrival in Albany. After selling *Lenita* George Davies then procured a second auxiliary pleasure

Photo: Dickson Collection



cruiser, this one 28 feet long with a 10-foot beam, which he also called *LENITA* ! George sailed his new *Lenita* regularly from the (South) Fremantle Yacht Club, eventually putting her up for sale in December 1935. George's wife Nita died at their home, 28 Alma Street, Fremantle, in 1938. George passed away at the same address in 1940.

The Westerberg brothers, Vic and Charlie made good use of the *Lenita* in the post war regattas at the Princess Royal Sailing Club at Albany. Charlie was a Vice President, Vic was on Committee and Lionel Austin was Assistant Secretary and Official Handicapper. *Lenita*, however, like so many of the sailing fleet, had to work for a living. She was moored with the fishing boats near Residency Point (Point Frederick on the charts) with Westerberg's *I.M.G.* and Mouchemore's *Wild Wave* and *Wildflower*. The nearby sailing club marker buoy was given the name *Lenita* buoy, a distinction it still holds to this day as the *Lenita* harbour light.



Detail from the Albany chart showing the *Lenita* harbour light below Point Frederick.

The Albany Advertiser for Monday 27 November 1933, reported:
Wreck of "*Lenita*", Aground on Michaelmas, Skipper's Night Ashore:

Captain M. Downie (55) had the unpleasant experience of being wrecked and marooned on Michaelmas last Wednesday afternoon. He was not rescued until the next morning, when Mr. E. Davis saw smoke signals from the Island, and discovered Captain Downie's predicament. He was unable to get close enough to rescue the marooned man then, and had to re-

turn to Albany for a dinghy with which Captain Downie was taken off the Island. His first act after being rescued was to eat what food was available, as he had been without for about 30 hours.

*Recently Captain Downie had refitted the 30ft. yacht "*Lenita*," the property of Mr. Irving McKenzie, with the intention of fishing near Albany. On Wednesday he had been fishing between Michaelmas and Breaksea Islands, and about 4 o'clock he brought the boat in close to the North side of Michaelmas. The boat missed stays, and though Captain Downie tried to start the engine, and so haul off the Island, he was unable to do so, and the boat drifted across a sandbank, tearing off the false keel, and then grounded on the rocks on the shore of the Island. A large rock pierced the hull, and the boat began to fill rapidly, while the swell pounded it heavily on the rocks. Captain Downie grabbed his blankets and scrambled ashore over the rocks. He had his matches with him, and his first thought was to light a fire, to attract the attention of any boat which might be in the vicinity, but he was unlucky, and had to set about finding a sheltered spot to spend the night. Before the next morning, he was feeling very hungry his last meal having been at breakfast the day before. At ten o'clock, Mr. E. Davis saw Captain Downie's signal and discovered the wrecked boat. He returned to Albany and obtained a dinghy, with which he and a mate, Mr J. M. Mitchell, effected a rescue.*

*In the hope that the "*Lenita*" might be salvaged, Messrs. Davis and L. Austin made a trip to the Island on Friday, but it became obvious before they reached their destination that there was no possibility, as, in their own words, "the wreck was coming to meet them." They found that the boat was a total wreck, and all they were able to save was some of the gear, including the sails.*

*The "*Lenita*" was a well known sailing boat, and was stated to be valued at £400. It is understood that it had been Mr. McKenzie's intention to race her this season with the Princess Royal Sailing Club.*



A Little Known War Loss

By Vic Jeffrey

Most entries relating to the wartime loss of the Naval Auxiliary Patrol launch *Gladmor* simply refer to her as being 'destroyed by fire at Fremantle, October 17, 1943.'

A telephone call from Mr Mich Crawcour claiming his father's vessel had been lost to fire at Garden Island while on naval service certainly aroused my interest. Naval historical records in Canberra has revealed she was indeed destroyed by fire at Garden Inland on the morning of Sunday, October 17, 1943. Other references to the loss location as "Fremantle" were rather vague, keeping in mind that the waters of Cockburn Sound on the eastern side of Garden Island are classified as being in Fremantle's outer harbour. Requisitioned on July 10, 1942, *Gladmor* became a member of the Volunteer Patrol with hull number VP-11 before the formation of the Naval Auxiliary Patrol when she became His Majesty's Motor Boat *Gladmor* with hull number 713.

Gladmor was based at the Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club on the Swan River which was the headquarters of the Naval Auxiliary Patrol after the club had been taken over by the Navy and commissioned as HMAS *Leeuwin II*.

Truly a resplendent vessel, *Gladmor* had been constructed by a boat builder named Carnaby on the Nedlands foreshore for a Perth lawyer, Mr Morris Crawcour in 1935. The ship boasted 14m long single 32mm thick planks in her jarrah hull and was double-ribbed with 50mm karri. Her keel and stem were both one piece timber and she looked seemingly indestructible. The motor launch's upper works were of light timber and the interior was of selected polished and varnished sheoak. Fitted with two Gray Marine twin 94HP 6-cylinder petrol engines, *Gladmor* was good for 13 knots and no doubt would have been afloat today if it had not been for the war.

After being requisitioned for naval service, *Gladmor* was fitted with long-range fuel tanks and had her upper works and interior modified. *Gladmor* emerged boasting a machine gun mounted on the aft cabin and two depth charges on her stern.

On that fateful Sunday of October 17, 1943,

HMAMB *Gladmor* developed fuel problems soon after leaving Fremantle Harbour. Her skipper, W.H. Paddon, headed *Gladmor* for the sheltered waters of the northern area of Garden Island to clear the fuel line. She was secured to a buoy for two hours before the operation commenced.

At 0830, a seaman was instructed to transfer petrol from the small port tank to the main port tank to alleviate the risk of petrol in the bilges as the smaller tank was leaking. The sailor positioned himself behind the port engine with a large oil tin to draw petrol from the tank before passing it to an assisting NAP cadet.

While this was happening a crackling sound like an electrical short circuit was heard shortly before a dull 'whoor' as the engineroom rapidly became engulfed in flames.

Paddon and two NAP cadets scrambled through a skylight in the forward cabin while the seaman had clambered out through a small engineroom escape hatch on to the aft deck.

Once on the upper deck Paddon kicked in the port wheelhouse window to reach a fire extinguisher just inside when the billowing flames forced him to stagger back, falling overboard with a burnt hand. Managing to scramble back on board he noticed a fifth crew member, the mate, who had been cleaning the machinegun on the after cabin when the fire broke out, reach an extinguisher and play it on the flames. Water thrown from a hastily formed bucket brigade was to no avail as the fire took hold.

Paddon ordered the mate and the seaman to drop the two small MK VII depth charges to avoid their detonation in the heat and raging fire. (They were later recovered).

As the petrol tanks were located in the wheelhouse above the engines, the imminent danger of them exploding caused the order to abandon ship. The crew members swam for the shore some 400m away, with the mate assisting the seaman who could not swim.

Once ashore the crew members were treated for burns and shock by Army personnel who were stationed on the island. The once sturdy *Glad-*



mor burnt for hours until her burnt-out hulk finally slipped below the waves.

A Naval Board of Investigation held at HMAS *Leeuwin* at East Fremantle on October 30, 1943, attributed the loss to a spark which occurred during the transfer of petrol, igniting fumes from the leaking tank. A bay on the north eastern side of Garden Island has been identified as the site of the accident and where the remains of HMAMB *Gladmor* lay beneath the waves.

Source: *Navy News* Vol.37, No.4 1994

Editor's note:

The preceding article was reprinted in *The Voice*, the newsletter of the Korean Veteran Association of Australia, August 2016. However, there appear to be a few errors.

The launch *Minnehaha* was built in 1907 for Arthur Bunning, timber merchant, of Perth. It had the following specifications:

Official No.:	120028
Port of Registry:	Fremantle (1 of 1908)
LOA:	32 ft (9.75 m)
Beam:	Either 7ft (2.13 m) or 6.75 ft (m) (2.06)
Depth:	2.3 ft (0.7 m)
Tonnage:	7 gross, 6 net
Engine:	2-cylinder oil engine 12HP by Smalley Motor Company of USA

The vessel was built by T.R. Hill, and the interior was described in a contemporary Perth newspa-

per:

The notable feature of the Minnehaha is the beauty of her interior fittings, and the attractiveness of the carved wood panelling in her cabin. The woods principally used in this work are Queensland oak and elm, and the result is rich and handsome (Western Mail: 1 February 1908: 38e).

In May 1922 the *Minnehaha* was offered for sale, and on 28 December 1922 the launch's name was changed to *Gladmor* on its sale to Morris Cawcour (1884–1964), solicitor, of Perth.

References

Dickson, R., 1996, Ships Registered in Western Australia from 1856 to 1969: their details, their owners and their fate. Report – Department of Maritime Archaeology, Western Australian Museum, No. 80.

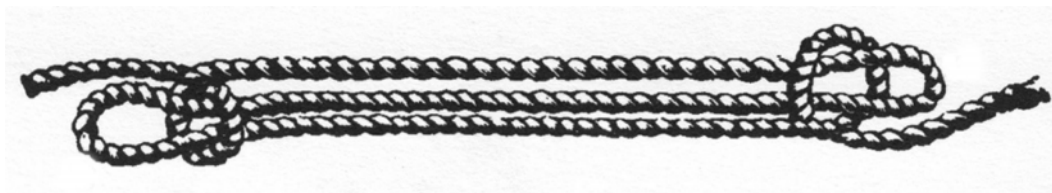
Dickson, R., 1998, *They Kept This State Afloat: Shipbuilders, Boatbuilders and Shipwrights of WA 1829–1929*. Hesperian Press, Victoria Park.

The Register of Australian and New Zealand Shipping, Including Shipping Registered Fiji and New Guinea with which is Incorporated The Australian Register of Shipping, Compiled and Issued by the Underwriters' Association of Victoria Limited, Melbourne, from Returns Furnished by the Customs Authorities in Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, and Fiji. The Underwriters' Association of Victoria Limited, Melbourne.

The Mirror, 13 March 1908: 5d.

The West Australian, 23 May 1922: 11b.

Western Mail: 1 February 1908: 38e



When 19th century naval architects designed a vessel, they were guided by rules of proportion which dictated that a bowsprit might be two-thirds of a smack's length, its greatest thickness being that of the mainmast at the partners; itself a function of the length, beam and depth of the hull.

In a merchant ship the mainmast was 2½ times the beam, the foremast eight-ninths of the mainmast, and so on. Her yards were to be an inch thick at the slings for every 4ft of length, half an inch at the yardarms. Even anchors and cables were part of this curious proportioning-111b to the ton for

smaller vessels, 7½ with cable link thickness, shackles, swivels and the rest of the furniture all in line.

It is now just quaint history, but I have the lingering feeling that some of it might have been salvaged with benefit. We might now have had fairleads and cleats that could stand the stresses of towing at sea, anchors that left a margin for safety, and cookers that would swing 180 degrees without bringing up solid and painting the deck-head with soup.

J.D. Sleightholme, 1988



The Japanese landing in Australia in 1944

The following article is from military.wikia.org

While the Japanese government never adopted proposals to invade Australia, a single reconnaissance landing was made on the Australian mainland. Between 17 and 20 January 1944, members of a Japanese intelligence unit named *Matsu Kikan* ('Pine Tree') made a reconnaissance mission to a sparsely populated part of the Kimberley region of Western Australia. The unit, operating from Kupang, West Timor, used a converted 25 ton civilian vessel called *Hiyoshi Maru* and posed as a fishing crew. The mission was led by Lt. Susuhiko Mizuno of the Japanese Army and included another three Japanese army personnel, six Japanese naval personnel and 15 West Timorese sailors. Their orders, from the 19th Army HQ at Ambon, were to verify reports that the U.S. Navy was building a base in the area. In addition, the *Matsu Kikan* personnel were ordered to collect information which would assist any covert reconnaissance or raiding missions on the Australian mainland.

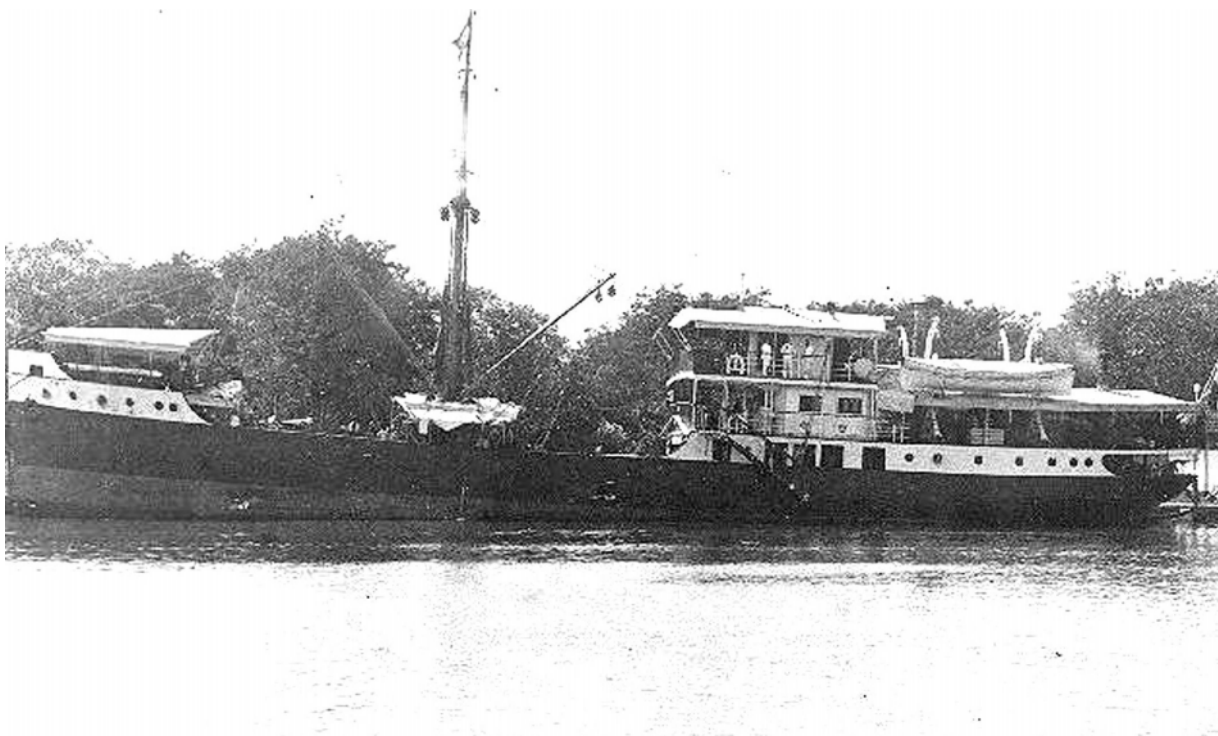
Hiyoshi Maru left Kupang on 16 January and was given air cover for the outward leg by an Aichi D3A2 'Val' dive bomber which reportedly attacked an Allied submarine en route. On 17 January, *Hiyoshi Maru* visited the Ashmore Reef area. The following day the crew landed on the tiny and uninhabited Browse Island, about 100 miles north west of the mainland. On the morning of 19 January, *Hiyoshi Maru* entered York

Sound on the mainland. Although the crew saw smoke emanating from hills to the east of their location, they nevertheless anchored and camouflaged the vessel with tree branches. Local historians state that *Matsu Kikan* landing parties went ashore near the mouth of the Roe River (15°08' 16"S, 125°23'11"E) which runs into Prince Frederick Harbour. The Japanese reportedly explored onshore for about two hours, and some members of the mission filmed the area using an 8mm camera. The *Matsu Kikan* personnel spent the night on the boat and reconnoitred the area again the following day, before returning to Kupang. The Japanese did not sight any people or signs of recent human activity and little of military significance was learnt from the mission.

Editor's note:

Built in Holland as the diesel powered *Mandar* and launched in 1929, it was owned by Internationale Scheepsbouw Mij, De Maas and registered in Rotterdam. On 6 January 1942 the 536-ton vessel was scuttled off Tjilajap in southern Java to prevent it falling into Japanese hands. The Japanese Navy salvaged it and renamed it *Hiyoshi Maru*.

On 10 June 1944 the *Hiyoshi Maru* was torpedoed by the submarine HMS *Tantalus* in the Straits of Malacca.





Uco and Manunda

A painting of two ships by Pat Rodriguez

Fremantle Tug *Uco* 1919–1962

The *Uco* was one of several ocean going tugs ordered by The British Admiralty in 1917. Built by the Murdock and Murray Yard on the banks of the river Clyde she was launched in 1919 and named *St Kitts*. She was a vessel of 43 metres, 368 tons displacement, fitted with twin triple expansion steam engines built by Ross and Duncan of Glasgow, as were her twin boilers which powered them with a pressure of 180lbs per square inch. This pressure enabled the engines to produce 1200i.h.p. and a top speed of 10–12 knots, but at lower rpms provided a very high bollard tonnage which for her day made her a very powerful tug for heavy harbour and salvage work. In 1923 The Adelaide Steamship Co were looking to purchase a large tug to replace their old and ageing Fremantle tug *Euro*, and subsequently negotiated the successful purchase of *St Kitts*. In 1924 in all probability the sale was through the UK wartime surplus programme.

Following the purchase of the ship it was moved to Cowes, the shipping centre on the Isle of Wight, where extensive constructive alterations were carried out to fit her for work as a Fremantle tug. These works included the removal of the forecastle head, modified tumblehome bulwarks, stem and bridge modifications to enable her to come alongside passenger ships and larger vessels with out doing any damage. This was with particular reference to the bridge height and width. On completion of the modifications *Uco* sailed, under the command of Captain W.R. Ferguson, for Portland on the south coast of England to carry out the final preparations for the long voyage of 9,360 nautical miles to Fremantle.

Whilst bunkers and victualling were being loaded two firemen deserted delaying the sailing until replacements could be found. Finally in late 1925 with Adelaide Steamship colours on her funnel she finally set sail at 6pm (for reasons unknown) into a channel gale warning. The intensity of the gale stopped all channel ferries sailing and much shipping hove to for 24 hours including *Uco*. The ships planned voyage was Portland–Fremantle via the Suez Canal, steaming on one boiler only and alternating the engines every four hours.

Every leg of the trip had to be carefully planned due to the relatively slow speed and limited coal bunkers between coaling ports. The voyage had good weather until departing Colombo on the longest leg non-stop to Fremantle. Two days out a heavy south-west monsoon endured for four days, finally arriving at Fremantle in early 1926. The rest of *Uco*'s story is history; built in 1919; served 1926–1952; sold 1952 Waratah Tug Co; broken up 1962.

***Manunda* 1929–1956**

Built:	1929 by William Beardmore & Co. Ltd, Glasgow
Tonnage:	9,155 gross, 5,064 net
Service speed:	15 knots
Engines:	H & W diesels
Propulsion:	Twin screws

In 1927 The Adelaide Steamship Company took the decision to build a new liner to participate in the lucrative Australian coastal passenger/cruising trade.

The new ship *Manunda* (Aboriginal for water-hole) arrived on her maiden voyage to Adelaide on 21 May 1929.

She could carry 176 first class passengers and 136 second class and was the largest liner on the Australian coast powered by diesel engines.

She commenced her services in June 1929 operating in winter months Melbourne–Cairns and summer months Sydney–Fremantle. In 1935 the large *Manoora* joined the fleet and both ships continued in the coastal trade until requested at the outbreak of World War II by the Australian Government. In September 1939 *Manunda* was converted to a hospital ship and commenced operation in 1940. Between 1940 and 1941 she completed four trips to the Middle East bringing home wounded Australian soldiers from the North African Campaign.

In January 1942 en route to Singapore she was diverted to Darwin because of the worsening situation in Malaysia. Whilst at anchor in Darwin she



received some direct hits from raiding Japanese aircraft. The ship suffered considerable damage, twelve personnel were killed and 150 wounded. *Manunda* managed to limp south to Fremantle where repairs were completed.

The ship sailed for Milne Bay, Papua, where she was involved in much action which took place in those areas. The rest of her war service as a hospital ship was carried out in the Pacific area, and finally repatriating POWs from Singapore after the surrender of Japan.

In 1946 she was handed back to her owners, and

after an extensive re-fit re-entered her regular coastal services. As competition from air lines swelled the ship could no longer operate at a profit, and was finally withdrawn from service in September 1956 and put up for sale.

She was sold to Okadagunn Ltd of Japan and sailed for Japan from Sydney as the *Hakone Maru*. She was broken up in Japan in 1957.

A sad end for a beautiful ship which served her country and owners so well for twenty seven years.

QUIZ

Answers to June

1. Matthew Flinders did not serve on the *Mermaid*. He either was in command or served on the other four.
2. Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus; Radio Detecting And Ranging; Sound Navigation Ranging; Pipe Line Under The Ocean. (PLUTO was the code name of pipelines laid under the English Channel to supply fuel to the Allied forces landing in Normandy in 1944.)
3. The scantlings of a vessel are the measurements of the individual pieces that go into the construction of a vessel's hull. This includes frames, stringers, planking or plating.

Quiz

1. What part of a wooden sailing ship is the apron?
2. In what year was the *Xantho* wrecked at Port Gregory? Its engine is on display at the Maritime Museum in Fremantle.
3. HMS *Warrior* was Britain's first iron-hulled, armoured battleship. At the time it was launched it was the largest, most heavily armed and armoured warship, and the fastest ship in the world. It is now in Portsmouth, UK. When was it launched?

220-TON (about) KETCH, classed 13 Ar ; saloon and 5 cabins ; has just been thoroughly overhauled and re-decorated, when owner spent a lot of money on her ; nearly new liquid fuel steam launch included ; owner going in for steam sole reason for selling. Price £2,300 for prompt sale.

Urgent Request

If you know of any upcoming event that may be of interest to other MHA members, please let your Social Secretary Jill know so that she might possibly be able to arrange an MHA group visit to that event. All ideas welcome

Jill: Phone: 9586 9003 or Email: maha.editor@gmail.com



Great Circle Sailing, Theory into Practice

By Ron Forsyth

In August of 1849 the emigrant and cargo clipper *Constance* berthed in busy Port Adelaide. Under the captaincy of T.C. Godfrey she had just made sensational maritime history by confirming the theory of Great Circle Sailing with a 77 day voyage from Plymouth. As early as 1495 Sebastian Cabot had suggested the adoption of this method of navigation. It was also advocated in 1537 by Numez, and subsequently by Cortez, Zamarano, and others. It was recognized that a straight line on a Mercator chart was not the shortest distance between two places as the world is not flat but a globe. The problem for navigators was the complexity and tedium of the calculations required to sail the ever changing courses of a great circle. About 1846 John Thomas Towson turned his considerable intellect to the problem and produced his *Tables to Facilitate Great Circle Sailing*. Together with his *Tables for the Reduction of Ex-Meridian Altitudes* they were published by the Admiralty in 1849.



Constance

Photo: SRO Ship Index Album YA269-441

August of 1848 had seen Godfrey complete the same voyage with *Constance* in a creditable 91 days. The average duration of the journey at that time was 110 days. Dissatisfied though, he sought tuition under Towson to put the theory into practice. A shortened voyage meant lower costs for the charterers and a less stressful voyage for travelers, the majority of whom had no experience of the rigors and vicissitudes of sea travel. Under Towson's guidance a maximum latitude of 50° South was chosen. After clearing the trade winds in the South Atlantic around latitude 24° S he shaped his route on the arc of a great circle, vary-

ing his course by compass according as the latitude of the ship varies, as shown below; or he sailed as near to these courses as the direction of the winds would permit. The courses were as follows:—

Lat.	Course.	Lat.	Course.
25·9 ..	SE	46·0 ..	ESE
30·0 ..	SE ¼ E	47·0 ..	ESE ¼ E
34·0 ..	SE ½ E	48·0 ..	ESE ½ E
37·0 ..	SE ¾ E	48·30 ..	ESE ¾ E
39·30 ..	SE b E	49·0 ..	E b S
41·30 ..	ESE ¾ S	49·30 ..	E ¾ S
43·0 ..	ESE ½ S	49·45 ..	E ½ S
44·30 ..	ESE ¼ S	49·57 ..	E ¼ S

The Melbourne *Argus* of 25 July 1850 explained:

This part of the voyage is about 3480 miles, and brings the ship 68 degrees of longitude nearer her destination. She then runs due east on the parallel 50, about 72 deg. 40 min. of longitude, being about 4360 miles, and leaves that parallel by the route of a great circle for her destination. This last-named part of her voyage is 1865 miles, and about 43 degrees longitude—making altogether, from the commencement of the composite track, 8145 miles; whereas the same voyage by the Cape, and thence to Adelaide, by Mercator's sailing, is 9080—making a saving of distance to the amount of 935 miles, besides an equal saving of time, from the uniform favourable winds that blow in these latitudes. [From the Globe, March 8 1850]

It was considered important that the course gave a wide berth to the Cape of Good Hope, known as it was as the 'Cape of Storms'. The higher maximum latitude placed the vessel at full benefit from the prevailing westerlies without the risk of icebergs.

Writing to the *Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle* in 1850 Towson enunciated his advice of the best range of latitudes for the Australian voyage:

The parallel of 51° is the highest that deserves our consideration. In this latitude the wind is favorable, and the route is shorter than those of lower parallels. The principal objection against this route is, that it is within the limits of ice drifts, which at the latter months of the Austral summer (March and April) are occasionally met as low as the forty-seventh paral-



lel, between the meridians of 40° W. and 100° E. Between latitude 50° and that of 56° , the composite track is beset with islands, which compose Prince Edward's, Crozets and Kerguelans Groups; and, should therefore not be adopted at any time of the year.

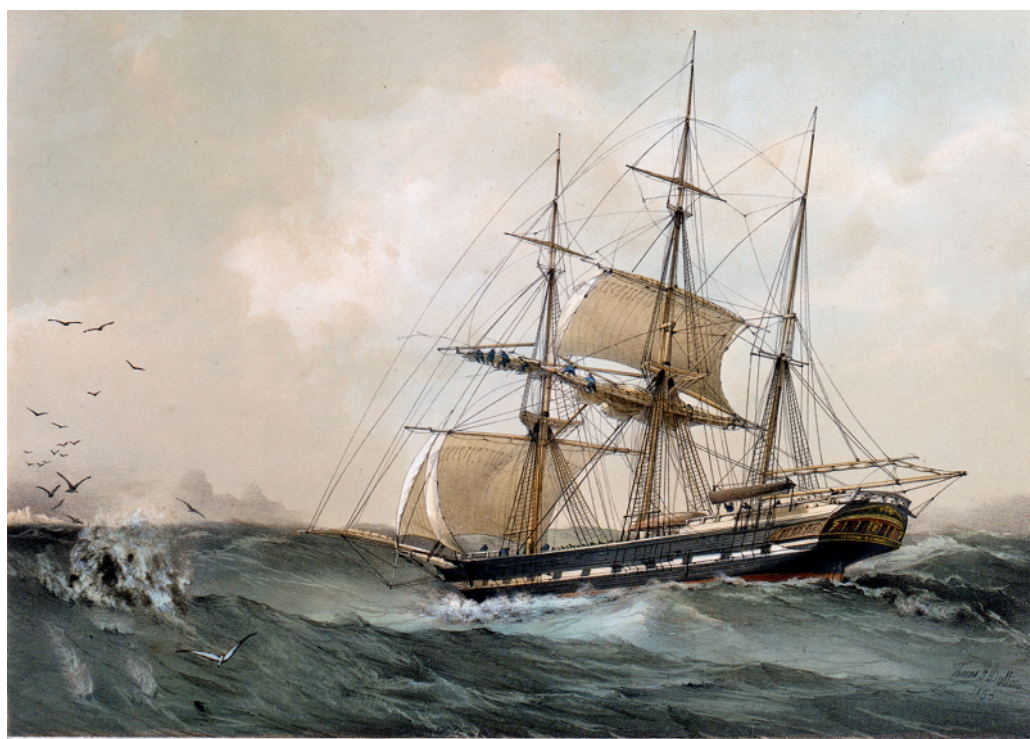
His great benefits to navigation were acknowledged with a handsome testimonial of 1,000 guineas in 1857 at a meeting in Liverpool of merchants and ship owners, chiefly engaged in the Australian and New Zealand trade. The establishment of the Great Circle route to Australia proved timely with the increased shipping trade of the next decade and its gold rush.

Sceptical ship's masters quickly adopted the new route on the long hauls to Australia and New Zealand. It appears that in the Northern hemisphere, however, navigators were slower to change. They were in fact confused by the changes of course required in tacking to windward. Lesser degrees of longitude traversed meant also that smaller distances were saved as compared to the Australian route.



The Great Circle Route, 1850's

Illustration: Jones, I. & L., *Oceanography in the Days of Sail*



THE CONSTANCE 578 TONS

OFF KERGUELEN LAND, 20th OCTOBER 1849 ON HER PASSAGE FROM PLYMOUTH TO ADELAIDE IN 77 DAYS

To Captain Godfrey & the Owners of the Ship

This event is respectfully indicated by three most obedient servants

1849

The Constance 578 tons

*Off Kerguelens Land, 20th October 1849 on her passage from Plymouth to Adelaide in 77 Days
To Captain Godfrey & the Owners of the Ship*

Painting: Thomas G. Dutton, 1850, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich