

Volume 33, No. 3



September 2022

MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL



- * Windjammers
- * Lighthouses-Part II
- * *Jolly Rambler*
- * Letters of Marque

The Wool Clipper Argonaut
Jack Spurling—1925

Illustration: Wikipedia
See article page 10



Office Bearers

President: Nick Burningham Email: nickb3@iinet.net.au

Minutes Secretary: Elly Spillekom Email: ellyspillekom@gmail.com

Treasurer: Bob Johnson Email: lindabob@gmail.com

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

www.maritimeheritage.org.au

www.facebook.com/maritimeheritage

MHA End of Year Wind Up

When: 10:00am, 20 November 2022

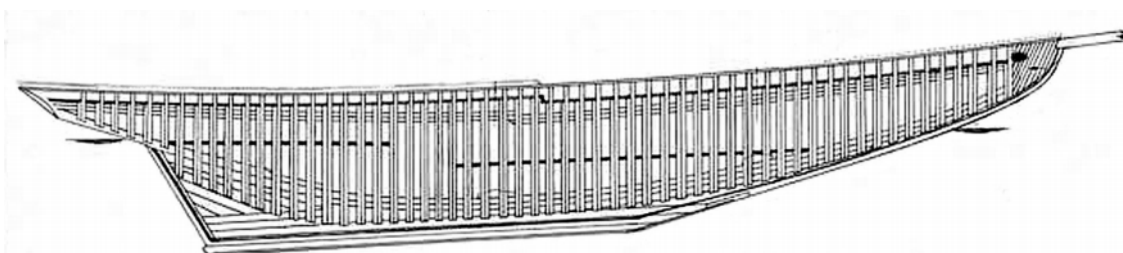
**Where: 33 Gosnells Road East
Orange Grove**

**It would be appreciated if you would bring a plate of nibbles
or finger food to share**

Robin and Pam will be supplying tea and coffee

**If you have any books and magazines of a nautical nature to
sell, please bring them along (proceeds to MHA)**

**There will be another quilt raffle—this time a very special
one featuring a print of Ross Shardlow's beautiful painting
of the historically important vessel *Georgette***





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!)

Nautical refers to a ship, sailors and navigation. *Naval* refers specifically to a navy, its personnel, equipment and customs. What is *naval* is also *nautical*, but what is *nautical* is not necessarily *naval*.

In 1627 corsairs from Morocco led by Murat Reis the Younger raided and captured the island of Lundy in the Bristol Channel off the north coast of Devon, UK. They raised the flag of the Ottoman Empire (Morocco was part of that empire), and stayed for five years, attacking ships and towns in that part of the world and taking many villagers as slaves before departing back to North Africa.

The Babylonians divided a circle into 360 equal segments 5,000 years ago. We still do this today, and call them degrees.

Sixteen years before he set out to cross the Atlantic Christopher Columbus served on a trading ship that visited Bristol in England and Galway, Ireland. He never actually reached North America despite the USA celebrating Columbus Day.

In 1660 the British Royal family in conjunction with a group of London merchants founded the Royal African Company. This company had the exclusive rights to supply African slaves to the plantations of the English colonies.

In 1805 the United States Navy captured the Libyan city of Derna during their war with the Barbary States. This was the first time that the US Navy was deployed internationally, and the first time the US flag was raised in victory on foreign soil.

In his book *Muruj adh-dhahab wa ma'adin al-jawahir* (Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems) the author, Al-Mas'udi states that the navigator Khashkhash Ibn Saeed Ibn Aswad sailed across the Atlantic and back in 889AD. Al-Mas'udi (896–956AD) was an Arab historian, explorer and geographer.

Boltsprit: A bowsprit which pivots on a bolt so that it can be steved up on end in order to be out of the way when the vessel is in a dock or harbour. Thames barges have a boltsprit.

With the current emphasis on clean seas, manufac-

turers of antifouling paints have been researching new biocides to use in their paints as a result of the bans imposed by many countries on past and present paints. One company is experimenting with a horse tranquilliser. This sends to sleep any animal organism which gets close to a hull so that they then just drift away.

The official world record for the biggest wave ever surfed is 86ft (26.21m) on 29 October 2020 at Praia do Norte, Nazaré, Portugal. This record, verified by the Guinness Book of Records, was set by German surfer Sebastiaan Stuedtner. There have since been claims of two larger waves being surfed (both at this site), but these have not yet been verified.

When Bligh and 18 of his crew were set adrift after the mutiny on the *Bounty* in 1789 their 23ft boat had only 7 inches of freeboard. They survived a voyage of 3,600 miles in the small craft.

Three of Europe's most significant early encounters with marsupials came because of shipwrecks – the *Batavia* (1629) and tamar wallabies, the *Endeavour* (1770) and kangaroos and the *Sydney Cove* (1797) and wombats.

On 20 August 1857 the ship *Dunbar* (1,198 tons, Captain Green) was wrecked near South Head at the entrance to Sydney Harbour. Only one of the crew survived, James Johnson; all 63 passengers and the other 58 crew died. Nine years later James Johnson was in charge of a small boat at Newcastle, NSW, which rescued the sole survivor of the wreck of the paddle steamer *Cawarra* at the mouth of the Hunter River. Fifty nine passengers and crew died in that tragedy.

A coast is said to be iron bound where the shores are of rock, generally rising perpendicularly from the sea and where there are no anchorages. It is therefore dangerous for vessels to approach.

The Hakluyt Society's definition





South Wind

First set eyes on the ketch *South Wind* while living in Geraldton. At that time it was owned by George Sayers, a retired prawn trawler skipper. George had sailed the yacht down from Shark Bay and berthed in Geraldton to carry out some repairs. He and I became friends, and I helped with some of the work, replacing the stem knee, repairing the main beam between cabin and cockpit, some re-caulking of the laid deck and work on the main boom.

South Wind had an interesting history. It was designed by H.E. Cox of Auckland, New Zealand, and built by the Wilson brothers in Mandurah. The plans were dated 15 March 1947, and it was launched some time in 1948 for Dr Gordon Abott of Bunbury.

The Wilson brothers were the sons of Charles Olaf Wilson who was born in Scotland and brought up in Sweden. He went to sea at an early age, lived briefly in New Zealand, then Victoria and came to Western Australia during the 1890s. He and his family arrived in Mandurah in 1911. Olaf started building a large ketch named *Leviathan* in 1916 when he was 80 years of age. Construction took four years, and even then the ketch was not quite finished. There was no ceiling over the frames or any hatch covers. The vessel was used to carry components for the building of carts from Bolton's Mill at Soldiers Cove in Mandurah to Perth. However, due to the lack of hatches and an unreliable second-hand engine *Leviathan* was wrecked on 25 August 1921 on the bar at the mouth of the Peel Inlet. Charles Olaf Wilson died at the age of 88, but his two sons continued boat building, first at Perth near the Causeway and then returning to Mandurah.

The brothers were luckier when they built *South Wind* than their father had been with *Leviathan*. Keel, stem and stern post were of jarrah, planking in 1¼ inch jarrah, frames, stringers and deck of karri and with tuart knees. The spars were of oregon and it carried a 5,265lb cast iron keel. The original engine had been a 15hp Turner petrol engine driving a 3-bladed 22½ inch propeller. This was replaced in 1978 by a 72hp Ford Lees diesel.

There were a number of subsequent owners after Dr Abott—Les Vincent, Frank Prineppi, Vivian Davison and then George Sayers. Under Dr Abott's ownership *South Wind* circumnavigated the world. Frank Prineppi intended to sail the ketch to Italy, but is believed to have reached

Aden and then turned back for Fremantle because of illness. During one of these two voyages *South Wind* called in at Bali. During the stay in Bali a number of attractive carvings were made inside the yacht and a teak saloon table fitted.

South Wind's particulars are:

Official No.	374903 (carved into the main deck beam)
Length overall	40ft
Length waterline	32ft
Length incl. bowsprit	44ft
Beam	11ft
Draft	4.66ft
Tonnage	17.25 (carved into the main deck beam)
Sail area	760 sq ft

George Sayers sold *South Wind* after he had suffered a serious illness, and I don't know where it currently is or even if it is still afloat. Does anyone know?

Peter Worsley





Letter of Marque and Reprisal

What gave privateers legal indemnity compared to pirates? The answer was a Letter of Marque and Reprisal issued by a sovereign or government.

This article is reprinted from an MHA Journal from several years ago.

The word Marque comes from the Old English *mearc*, from Germanic *mark* – boundary or boundary marker; from Proto-Indo-European *merǵ-* boundary or border. King Henry III of England first issued what later became known as privateering commissions in 1243. These early licences were granted to specific individuals to seize the king's enemies at sea in return for splitting the proceeds between the privateers and the crown.

In the days of fighting sail, a Letter of Marque and Reprisal was a government license authorizing a person (known as a *privateer*) to attack and capture enemy vessels and bring them before admiralty courts for condemnation and sale. Cruising for prizes with a Letter of Marque was considered an honorable calling combining patriotism and profit, in contrast to unlicensed piracy, which was universally reviled. In addition to the term *lettre de marque*, the French sometimes used the term *lettre de course* for their letters of marque, giving rise to the term *corsair* as a synonym for *privateer*. A Letter of Marque was often used to describe the vessel. It generally referred to a lumbering square-rigged cargo carrier that might pick up a prize if the opportunity arose. A privateer was usually a fast and weatherly fore-and-aft-rigged vessel, heavily armed and heavily crewed, intended exclusively for fighting.

The first use of the term letters of marque and reprisal was in an English statute of 1354 in which King Edward III referred to 'a license granted by a sovereign to a subject, authorizing him to make reprisals on the subject of a hostile state for injuries alleged to have been done to him by the enemy's army.'

The letter of marque and reprisal first arose in 1295, 50 years after wartime privateer licenses were first issued. According to Grotius, letters of marque and reprisal were akin to a "private war", a concept alien to modern sensibilities but related to an age when the ocean was lawless and all merchant vessels sailed armed for self-defense. A reprisal involved seeking the sovereign's permission to exact private retribution against some foreign prince or subject. The earliest instance of

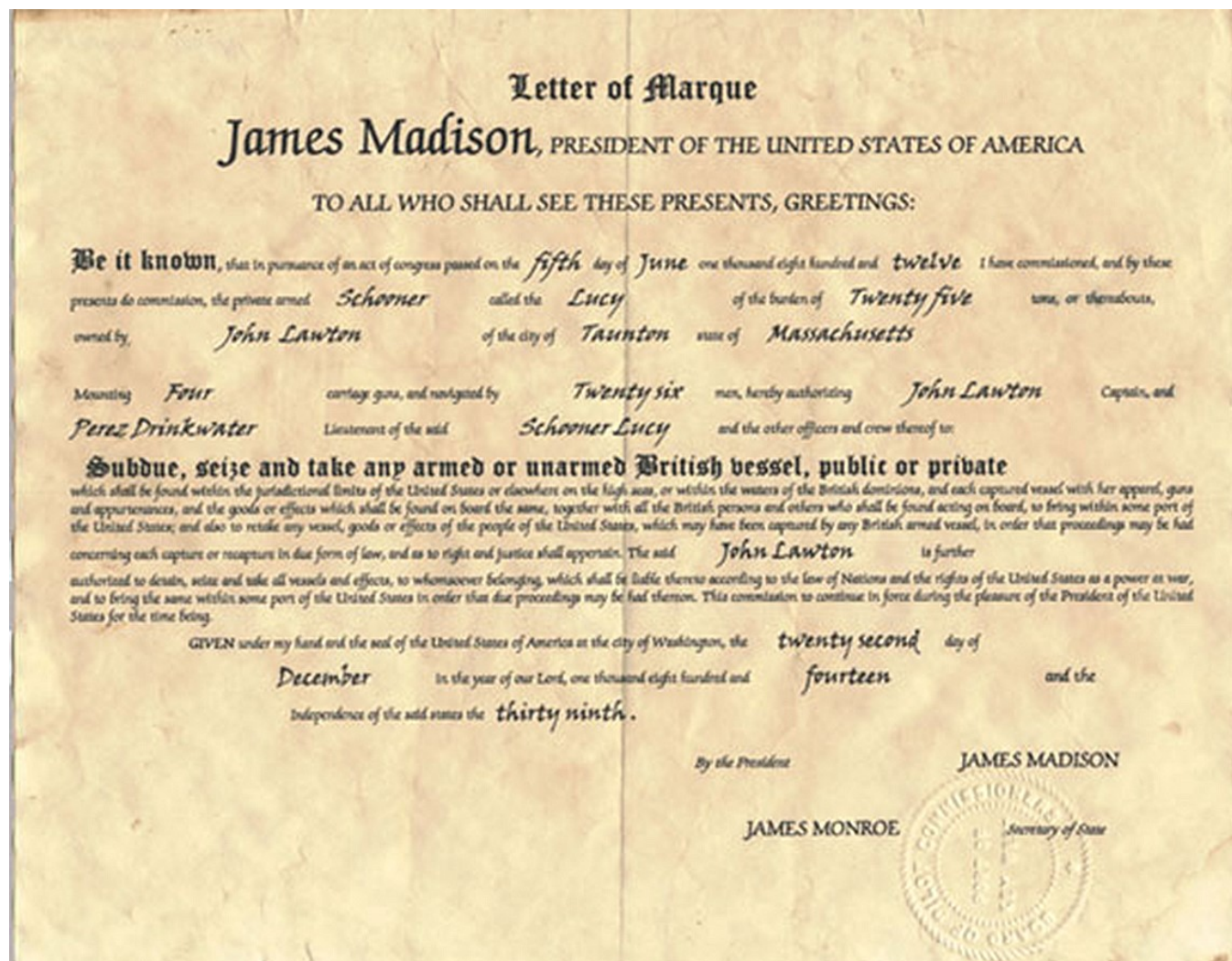
a licensed reprisal recorded in England was in the year 1295 under the reign of Edward I. The notion of reprisal, and behind it that just war involved avenging a wrong, clung to the letter of marque until 1620 in England, in that to apply for one a ship owner had to submit to the Admiralty Court an estimate of actual losses.

During the Middle Ages, armed private vessels enjoying their sovereign's tacit consent, if not always an explicit formal commission, regularly raided shipping of other nations, as in the case of Francis Drake's attacks on Spanish shipping, of which Elizabeth I (despite protestations of innocence) took a share. Grotius's 1604 seminal work on international law, *De Iure Praedae* (Of The Law of Prize and Booty), was an advocate's brief defending Dutch raids on Spanish and Portuguese shipping.

Licensing privateers during wartime became widespread in Europe by the 16th century, when most countries began to enact laws regulating the granting of letters of marque and reprisal.

Although privateering commissions and letters of marque were originally distinct legal concepts, such distinctions became purely technical by the eighteenth century. The United States Constitution, for instance, states that "The Congress shall have Power To ... grant Letters of marque and reprisal ...", without separately addressing privateer commissions.

During the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812, it was common to distinguish verbally between privateers (also known as private ships of war) on the one hand, and armed merchantmen, which were referred to as "letters of marque", on the other, though both received the same commission. The *Sir John Sherbrooke* (Halifax) was a privateer; the *Sir John Sherbrooke* (Saint John) was an armed merchantman. The East India Company arranged for letters of marque for its East Indiamen such as the *Lord Nelson*, not so that they could carry cannons to fend off warships, privateers, and pirates on their voyages to India and China—that they could do without permission—but so that, should they have the oppor-



A Letter of Marque dated 22 December 1814, issued by President James Madison for the schooner Lucy (Captain John Lawton) to 'subdue, seize and take any armed or unarmed British vessel, public or private'.

tunity to take a prize, they could also do this without being guilty of piracy. Similarly, the *Earl of Mornington*, an East India Company packet ship of only six guns, too carried a letter of marque.

In July 1793, the East Indiamen *Royal Charlotte*, *Triton*, and *Warley* participated in the capture of Pondicherry by maintaining a blockade of the port. Afterwards, as they were on their way to China, the same three East Indiamen participated in an action in the Straits of Malacca. They came upon a French frigate, with some six or seven of her prizes, replenishing her water casks ashore. The three British vessels immediately gave chase. The frigate fled towards the Sunda Strait. The Indiamen were able to catch up with a number of the prizes, and, after a few cannon shots, were able to retake them. Had they not carried letters of marque, such behavior might well have qualified as piracy. Similarly, on 21 November 1800 the East Indiaman *Phoenix* (800 tons, Captain William Moffat) captured the French privateer

Général Malartic, an action made legal by a letter of marque.

A letter of marque and reprisal would involve permission to cross an international border to effect a reprisal (take some action against an attack or injury) authorized by an issuing jurisdiction to conduct reprisal operations outside its borders.

The procedure for issuing letters of marque and the issuing authority varied by time and circumstance. In colonial America, for instance, colonial governors issued them in the name of the king. During the American Revolution, first the state legislatures, then both the states and the Continental Congress, then, after ratification of the Constitution, Congress authorized and the President signed letters of marque. A ship owner would send in an application stating the name, description, tonnage, and force (armaments) of the vessel, the name and residence of the owner, and the intended number of crew, and tendered a bond



promising strict observance of the country's laws and treaties and of international laws and customs. The commission was granted to the vessel, not to its captain, often for a limited time or specified area, and stated the enemy upon whom attacks were permitted. For instance, during the Second Barbary War President James Madison authorized the Salem, Mass., brig *Grand Turk* to cruise against "Algerine vessels, public or private, goods and effects, of or belonging to the Dey of Algiers". (Interestingly, this particular commission was never put to use, as it was issued the same day the treaty was signed ending the U.S. involvement in the war—July 3, 1815.)

A letter of marque and reprisal in effect converted a private merchant vessel into a naval auxiliary. A commissioned privateer enjoyed the protection of the laws of war. If captured, the crew was entitled to honorable treatment as prisoners of war, while without the license they were deemed mere pirates "at war with all the world," criminals who were properly hanged.

The letter of marque by its terms required privateers to bring captured vessels and their cargoes before admiralty courts of their own or allied countries for condemnation. Applying the rules and customs of prize law, the courts decided whether the letter of marque was valid and current, and whether the captured vessel or its cargo in fact belonged to the enemy (not always easy, when flying false flags was common practice), and if so the prize and its cargo were "condemned", to be sold at auction with the proceeds divided among the privateer's owner and

crew. A prize court's formal condemnation was required to transfer title; otherwise the vessel's previous owners might well reclaim her on her next voyage, and seek damages for the confiscated cargo.

Privateers were also required by the terms of their letters of marque to obey the laws of war, honor treaty obligations (avoid attacking neutrals), and in particular to treat captives as courteously and kindly as they safely could. If they failed to live up to their obligations, the Admiralty Courts could and did revoke the letter of marque, refuse to award prize money, forfeit bonds, even award tort (personal injury) damages against the privateer's officers and crew.

At the end of the Crimean War seven European nations signed the Paris Declaration of 1856 renouncing privateering, and 45 more eventually joined them. This effectively abolished privateering worldwide. However many nations continued to issue Letters of Marque, including Bolivia, which in 1879 issued letters of marque to any vessel willing to fight for that country against Chile. Bolivia at that time had no navy. The US was not a signatory to the Paris Declaration, and Article 1 of the United States' Constitution lists issuing letters of marque and reprisal as one of the enumerated powers of Congress, together with the power to tax and to declare war. After the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US the matter of issuing letters of marque and reprisal was put forward in a proposed *Marque and Reprisal Act of 2001* but never enacted into law.



Nautical Treasures

This new section of your journal is where you are invited to write an article on one of your nautical treasures. This could be anything from an anchor to a yacht, with all the alphabet of items in between.

As well as a short description of your treasure, a photograph is desirable. One item will be published in each journal—so choose your treasure to be featured in a future edition !

I will write of one of my treasures, a caulking box given to me by the late Jack Gardiner, a long-time member of MHA who contributed many varied articles on maritime matters.

A caulking box is a wooden box with a sliding lid, used by shipwrights for holding caulking irons and oakum and to sit on while caulking. There is often a ring of rope at one end of the box for carrying it over the shoulder, hanging from the handle of the caulking mallet. A shipwright usually made his own caulking box, as he did with many of his other tools of trade. Jack made this box and some of his caulking irons and cotton (used these days in lieu of oakum) are inside.

Peter Worsley



The Unlucky *Schomberg*

The ship that ruined the reputation of Captain James 'Bully' Forbes

The sailing ship *Schomberg* was launched on 7 April 1855 from Alexander Hall & Sons' Aberdeen yard. The hull was built of three layers, each 2½" thick, of larch. Between each layer was tarred felt. The first two layers were laid diagonally and the third horizontally. The planking was fastened with screw trunnels, trunnels with a screw thread which fitted into threaded holes. This was a novel method of fastening at that time. The ship's dimensions were 288ft length, 45ft beam with a depth of 29.2ft. Her registered tonnage was 2284, and she was owned by James Baines' Black Ball Line. She was regarded as the most luxurious and well-built clipper of her time, and cost £43, 103.

On 6 October 1855 the *Schomberg* departed Liverpool for Melbourne on her maiden voyage, under the command of Captain James Nicol 'Bully' Forbes. Forbes had gained a reputation for fast

cargo of rails and engines for the Geelong and Melbourne Railway Company.

The *Schomberg* made unspectacular daily runs (her best daily run being 368 miles) until, close inshore off Cape Otway on 27 December 1855, the wind dropped. The mate, Henry Cooper Keen, reported to Forbes who was playing cards down below. Forbes was losing, and in a fit of temper insisted on playing another rubber of whist before heading onto the deck. He then gave the order to 'bout ship. However with very little wind and a 3–4 knot westerly current the ship refused to come round. Forbes then tried to wear ship, but she ran aground on a sandbank in 4 fathoms of water 35 miles west of Cape Otway.

Captain Forbes, on being told that they were hard aground, said angrily "Let her go to Hell, and tell me when she is on the beach." He then went be-



voyages having previously commanded the famous *Marco Polo* and *Lightning*, and it was his stated intention to better his previous best time out, flying the signal 'Sixty days to Melbourne'. Beside 430 passengers *Schomberg* carried a large

low. The mate took charge, and clewed up the sails, let go the starboard anchor and lowered the boats. The next morning all on board were safely

Continued on page 9



disembarked by a passing coastal steamer, the *Queen*, and taken to Port Phillip. The mail was recovered.

All attempts to re-float the *Schomberg* proved unsuccessful, and on 6 January 1856 she broke up.

Captain Forbes was charged with gross negligence, but acquitted as the sandbar was uncharted. The passengers, however took him to task at

a mass meeting on 3 January 1856 held at the Mechanics' Institute in Melbourne. Many of them stated that in their opinion Captain Forbes was so disgusted with the slowness of the passage that he had deliberately let the ship go ashore. His moral behaviour was also questioned. He was severely censured, but the meeting held no legal power. The result of these combined actions was that Captain Forbes never again commanded a Black Ball Line ship.



So Long Ago

Many years ago (about 70 to be a little more exact) my friend and I used to go fishing for mullet in the Swan River. We didn't have fishing lines, instead we used home-made kylie. The word kylie, also spelt kyli and kylee, is the Nyoongar word for a boomerang. My kylie differed from the traditional boomerang, being a cross made from two equal length pieces of galvanised steel riveted together. It was still thrown in a manner similar to throwing a boomerang. To make a kylie we would go to a building site and sort through the rubbish heap of broken bricks, cut-offs of timber, bent nails and so on to find one inch wide galvanised steel strapping. (There were no skip bins in those days and all the builder's rubbish was put in a heap near the road to be later loaded onto a truck and carted away, or often just buried on the spot.) The strap would be taken home, carefully hammered out straight and two pieces each about 12–14 inches long cut off. These would be placed in the form of a cross and a hole made through the centre where they crossed, usually by hammering an old nail through. The nail was then peened over and would rivet them together, and so the kylie was finished.

On a calm day we would go down to the river and walk slowly along the shallows on the lookout for the tell-tale V-shaped ripples that told of a school of mullet swimming just below the surface. The kylie was thrown just in front of the ripples and the whirling steel would stun and sometimes kill one or two fish. These would be quickly grabbed and tossed ashore to be

later cleaned and taken proudly home to Mum and Dad. They were never big fish, averaging perhaps eight inches long.

Another feast we would take home were prawns. Prawns dig themselves into the sand close around rocks in the shallows of the river. We would scruffle about in the sand near rocks until we felt a prawn and then quickly grab it to add to the haul of mullet. All this fishing in water no more than knee deep to an eleven year old. Back then there also used to be many starfish and shoals of small squid in the Swan River. Are there any now?

If we got thirsty we would just go about 8–10 feet from the water and dig down into the sand of the beach. Only a few inches down would be fresh drinkable water. This, of course, is why Freshwater Bay was so named.

Do any other readers remember kylie fishing in the Swan?

Peter Worsley





Windjammers: A Suggestion

Thanks to Ron Forsyth for finding this article by Professor Walter Murdoch which appeared in the *West Australian* on 3 October 1925.

Touching the Adventures and Perils which we the Assurers are contented to bear and do take upon us in this Voyage, they are of the Seas, Men-of-War, Fire, Enemies, Pirates, Rovers, Thieves, Jettisons, Letters of Mart and Countermart, Surprisals, Takings at Sea, Arrests, Restraints and Detainments of all Kings, Princes, and People, of what Nation, Condition or Quality soever, Barratry of the Master and Mariners and of all other Perils, Losses and Misfortunes.

day; it is a quotation, not from some quaint document of Queen Elizabeth's time, but from a twentieth century insurance contract. It is a notable example of the persistency with which ancient phrases survive in legal instruments. It is still more notable as a reminder of the precariousness of a sea-voyage in the days when that document was first framed. It belongs to the days of sailing-ships, days now well-nigh done with, days

*When all the docks were filled
With that sea-beauty man has ceased to build.*

This was printed in the *London Times* the other



Narcissus—*Foaming to the South*

Ross Shardlow

It was not steam that made the sailing ship obsolete. The great clippers of the 'sixties—beautiful ocean grey hounds, doing their 13 knots over long periods, and whenever possible cracking on all sail, not mere t'gallants and royals, but skysails and moonrakers, and racing home from India or China or Australia for the £500 prize offered for a quick voyage—belonged to the era of steam; and for a quarter of a century they managed to hold their own. But the internal combustion engine was too much for them. Petrol has conquered canvas. Sir Alan Moore, in his fascinating book *The Last Days of Mast and Sail* speaks with melancholy certitude. 'I believe sailing vessels to be doomed to rapid extinction, from the largest to

the smallest. . . . Their numbers grow less every year, and the whole calling of the sailor. . . has passed the point beyond which revival is impossible.' Petrol, the unexpected, the invincible, is as fatal to the sailing ship as to the horse. For purposes of sport, no doubt, both will survive; the pleasure yacht and the race-horse may not disappear for many a year yet; but the tall merchantman and the Suffolk Punch will soon be alike historic curios. Brig and barque and schooner and clipper, will be words that will send our children to their dictionaries; and a great deal of the best English poetry and prose will be unintelligible without explanatory notes.

And with the passing of the sailing ship there passes, I must believe, a magnificent tradition: we turn the last page of a wonderful chapter in



the history of the indomitable race of man. I will not say that we have disarmed the sea. The sinking of the *Titanic*, the mysterious disappearance of the *Waratah* — such incidents do occur from time to time to remind us that the old enemy has not yet become perfectly docile. But, on the whole, sea-travel has become about as safe as travel by land. (I speak, of course, of voyaging in times of peace). When we step aboard a modern liner, bound for the other side of the planet, we may entertain a mild dread of sea sickness. We think no more of storm and shipwreck than we think of 'Barratry of the Master and Mariners;' we feel no greater tremors than if we were boarding a railway train. Life on such a vessel is very like life in a good hotel, except for the scenery. There is little, in the course of such a voyage, to remind us of the incredible courage and endurance which, in past ages, men brought to the taming of the sea.

But if you happen to run into a typhoon in the China Sea, or cross the Atlantic in the teeth of a westerly gale, you may perhaps remember one undeniable fact; that while ships have been growing, century by century, from the coracle to the Cunarder, wind and wave have not changed at all. Hurricanes blew just as hard in the days of the first mariner, as they blow to-day; and the mountainous waves, that make even your monstrous *Mauritania* roll and pitch, are not bigger than those encountered by Columbus when he crossed the Atlantic in the *Santa Maria*, 90ft. long and 29ft wide.

Herodotus— whom present-day historians have come to consider as not nearly so much of a liar as people used to think — tells us of a Phoenician captain who, commissioned by the King of Egypt, set sail from a Red Sea port, coasted round Africa, and arrived at the mouth of the Nile nearly three years later. If you find that story incredible, as perhaps it is, yet the fact that such a story could be told shows what manner of men those Phoenicians — the first real seamen of the world — must have been. We know that they sailed the length and breadth of the Mediterranean, and out through the Pillars of Hercules. Even in the Mediterranean a big liner of to-day can be tossed about in a most disquieting manner. We know, from Assyrian sculptures, what a Phoenician bireme was like: we learn, with wonder and awe, that in these frail barks the sailors of Sidon went out to face the perils of the deep — vessels in which we should hardly like to face the perils of the river Swan. Of course, disasters were frequent; it is recorded that, in on-storm off Mount

Athos, 300 Phoenician ships went down with all hands; but still the fight went on. It went on, partly no doubt, because they were a race of shopkeepers bent on finding markets for their goods, but mainly because they were a race of seamen. It went on, in many lands, for many centuries, at the cost of innumerable lives.

*If blood be the price of admiralty,
Lord God, we had paid in full.*

I was born and brought up in a place where the perils of the deep were always very real and near; in a village on the rocky, inhospitable shore of one of the stormiest of seas. I remember well the shadow of tragedy in which that village lived, and how every winter almost, some boat would put out from the little port and never come back again, and the community would be plunged, in gloom for a time; but only for a time, for they were a seafaring folk, and danger and death were familiars. Physically, those men were magnificent; and in pluck, in endurance, and in all the positive and manly virtues that go with these qualities, they were such a race as I do not hope to see again. If you had made one of those men the present of a farm, he would have gladly left the sea and become a farmer; but I am persuaded that in a few months he would have begun to neglect his farm and hang about the harbour; and before the year was out he would have been off to sea again. They were a sailor race; the salt was in their blood. I do not suppose they were exceptional. On all the shores of all the seas, there were such villages, and such men; — and such tragedies. Now that the sailing ship has gone, that race, too, must disappear. Every trade calls for its own special virtues; but to that particular kind of man, the sailor, we must bid farewell, not without regret.

There is a kind of sadness, more than its author intended in the closing words of *The Nigger of the Narcissus* in which the narrator takes leave of his hard-bitten shipmates. "Good-bye, brothers! You were a good crowd. As good a crowd as ever fisted with wild cries the beating canvas of a heavy foresail tossing aloft; invisible in the night, gave back yell for yell to a westerly gale." Good-bye, indeed — and forever. *Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale.* [For ever and ever my brother, hail and farewell.]

We need something to remind us, and to remind our children's children, of this high heroic tale, this wonderful epic of the sea; some-memorial to bring vividly before the minds of succeeding generations the inspiring thought of what the human



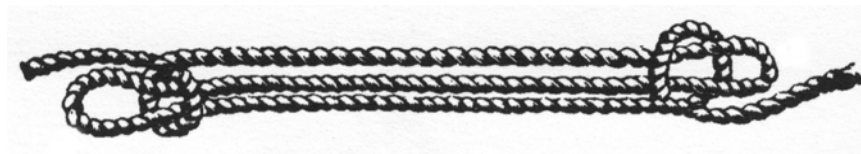
race has been capable of enduring and achieving.

I suggest that the most fitting memorial would be a full-sized model of one of the little Dutch East Indiamen which carried the first Europeans to sight our shores — either the *Duyfken*, whose captain may be styled the discoverer of Australia; or the *Eendragt*, Dirk Hartog's ship; or the *Dordrecht*, which was Houtman's; or Pelsart's *Batavia*, the heroine of one of the finest of all true stories of the sea; or perhaps best of all the *Geelvinck*, from which, towards the end of the seventeenth century, van Vlaming landed at Cottesloe Beach and discovered the Swan River.

There would be no particular difficulty. The Dutch of Dirk Hartog's time were the finest ship-builders, as well as the most skillful navigators, in the world. They were proud of their ships, and their artists were fond of drawing them. Consequently there is no lack of pictures of these old East Indiamen; we can learn pretty exactly what they looked like. And it is plain that they looked very like one another, so that if we built a typical seventeenth-century Dutch ship, we might feel reasonably certain that it was in a vessel closely resembling this, in build and rig that Dirk and his men sailed, into the vast unknown. Also there are diagrams— longitudinal plans and mid ship sections — which the State Museum at Amsterdam would be glad to lend us when they learned that we desired to do honour to the valiant Dutchmen

who discovered our country for us. From such pictures, and diagrams the vessel could easily be reconstructed, minutely correct from its towering poop to its richly ornamented figure-head. We should moor it on Perth Water, and charge six pence for admission; it would pay, for itself twice over in the first year; and we should possess a memorial unique in Australia. Moreover, we should be giving honour where honour is greatly due. And a visit to the ship would be worth, to our children, many lessons in history and in civics. Lastly, we should have added a very beautiful ornament to our beautiful city.

To walk the deck of such a cockle shell—it would be not much bigger than the *Duchess* — and to think of its voyages from Holland round the Cape to Batavia, would be to realise, as no amount of reading could force us to realise, the valour and hardihood of the human race. What earlier men, such as Columbus or Da Gama, dared and suffered, is beyond the utmost scope of our imagining; but something of what life meant for these Dutch men of ours we could, in this way, be brought to understand. And now that the sailing ship is passing into limbo and seamanship becoming a lost art, it is time we raised such a monument to the vanished race. It were shameful if we forgot the men who, greatly daring, steered their egg-shell pinnacles across a world of seas and found the land in which we dwell.



The Jolly Rambler.

By Ron Forsyth

The sloop *Jolly Rambler* was launched in 1813 at Broadstairs, Kent as a pleasure yacht. Her length was 14.2 m, beam 4.7 m and draft 2.6 m of 58 (bm) tons burthen. Her accommodation was described as superior.

She mixed in the highest circles. At a regatta held in August 1827 at Cowes in the presence of H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence she was entered under the ownership of J.H. Durand, Esq. Durand was the Member of Parliament for Maidstone, Kent and the duke was three years later crowned King William IV. Having served in the Royal

Navy he was popularly known as the 'Sailor King.'

Durand passed away in 1830 and the ownership of the sloop changed to John Gresswell and partner W. W. Harris. Gresswell was a master manufacturing goldsmith of fifteen years' experience in London. His wife, Henrietta, was of poor health, so they decided to move with their three children to the warmer climate at the Swan River Colony. With a crew of captain, mate, cook and three sailors they sailed via the Cape of Good Hope under the command of Joseph Brignell, also a shareholder. At Table Bay, where they stayed



two weeks, they ‘excited the wonderment of the Cape Town people that so small a craft should venture such a distance across the ocean.’ Their arrival at Fremantle on 18th Nov 1831, after a voyage of three months, initially went unnoticed. She was a vessel with a single mast and of so small a size that for many hours after anchoring in the harbor she was mistaken for the only large cargo boat then in the colony. Only after her papers were delivered was it realised she had made her passage from England. She was thought at the time to have been the smallest vessel to make the voyage (*Morning Post* (London), 27 April 1832).

Gresswell and his family settled in Western Australia and his wife Henrietta thrived in the warmer climate living to the ripe old age of eighty-eight. They begat a very large family. One of their three children alone, daughter Mrs. Henrietta Maria Smith, on her death in 1920 aged ninety-five years was said to have 38 grand-children, 44 great-grand-children, and one great-great-grand-child.

In February of 1833 after a dispute in court between its owners the *Jolly Rambler* was bought out by the skipper, Joseph Brignell. The little sloop changed its description to cutter and traded between Java, the Cape of Good Hope, Swan River, King Georges Sound, Launceston, Sydney, Norfolk Island and New Zealand. A Sydney newspaper, *The Currency Lad* (22 Sept 1832) informs us that Brignell, himself a ‘Currency Lad,’ had made a fast passage from Launceston to Sydney, a distance of 1,100 miles, in three days. (‘Currency lads and lasses’ were the first generations of native-born white Australians – the children of British settlers or convicts.)

An Edinburgh newspaper carried a report from the Swan River (*Caledonian Mercury*, 21 Sept 1833). Back in April ‘the Jolly Rambler, Brignell, bound for Sydney, put back ... with loss of bowsprit, topmast and jib. She was nearly wrecked on a reef about 25 miles from Cape Naturaliste.’

Subsequently this ‘reef’ became known as the Rambler Reef and a warning was put out to mariners. Brignell’s log book recorded ‘a cluster of rocks even with the water’s edge lying 12 or 15 miles W. S. W. from the sandpatch over Hamelin Bay.’ HMS *Beagle* (of Charles Darwin fame) commanded by Captain John Lort Stokes searched without success for the reef. It was finally erased from charts in 1887 when Captain Coghlan of HMS *Meda* made an extensive and

unsuccessful search for it. It was concluded that Brignell had confused his position and that he had encountered the Geographe Reef. This exemplifies the difficulty, particularly in stormy conditions, of sailors of that era finding their true position.

Another Sydney paper noticed the *Jolly Rambler*:
The Revenue Cutter had a trial of her sailing qualities on Sunday last, with the smart little cutter Jolly Rambler, formerly belonging to the Royal Yacht Club and although the former kept to windward, the Rambler proved, though deeply laden (being outward bound), that she was built to slip through her native element (The Sydney Monitor, 30 Oct 1833).

A cargo from Java to the Swan River in October of 1834 looks like a shopping list for the little settlement:

5 caskets of beef, 246 bags rice, 1 puncheon currack, 2 ditto stores, 1 hoghead wine, 36 baskets sugar, 36 boxes soap, 8 bags coffee, 3 tubs cocoa nut oil, 2 baskets ginger, 5 kegs tobacco, 11 boxes candles, 10 cases gin 8 casks tobacco, 6 baskets sugar candy, 3 casks vinegar, 21 boxes tea, 5 ditto glasses, 18 brushes, 1 weighing machine, 4 boxes cider, 6 jars oatmeal, 43 cheeses. 1 case tumblers, 2 cases unknown, half pipe brandy (Perth Gazette, 11 Oct 1834).

Perhaps her most noteworthy cargo was that of one Benjamin Hinks. He was sentenced in the ‘Free’ colony at the Swan River to seven years transportation. This seems ironic when some decades later Western Australia became a penal colony and the destination for almost 10,000 convicts. Hinks had emigrated with Thomas Peel but when his settlement plans failed he was released from his indentures. Along with William Booker he was charged with burglary and held in the Roundhouse prison.

The Sydney Herald, 25 Feb 1833 reported:

On Saturday morning (Jan. 5) William Booker alias Long Bill, under sentence of transportation, and Benjamin Hinks, a notorious offender, escaped from that flimsy concern called the jail, at Fremantle, by scraping a hole through the wall.

Also ironic was that this was a precedence for Moondyne Joe’s escape from the new prison by breaking a hole through its wall three decades later.



A reward of £20 was posted along with their descriptions. Hinks was described as:

Stout and square made, height 5 feet 10 inches, fair complexion, light sandy hair, light grey eyes. Dress when he escaped White brown hat, White cloth Jacket, Corderroy breeches, White cotton stockings (Perth Gazette, 26 Jan 1833).

Hinks was easily recaptured having broken into the Harbor Master's office. He put in a written defence that since his escape 'he could not get anybody to allow him to sleep in their houses and that he had merely taken shelter in the Harbor-Master's office for the night. Finding the cupboard open he was merely amusing himself by reading a bit.'

Booker, a more resourceful character, was not recaptured and must have escaped the colony, perhaps on a visiting whaling ship.

Hinks was transported on the *Jolly Rambler* along with another five adult and four child passengers and arrived in Sydney on 19th May 1833. He may have boasted that he was transported on the finest convict ship of all time – a yacht from the Royal Yacht Club at Cowes.

The *JR* did continue government service and was used to convey stores and prisoners to Norfolk Island and Moreton Bay (*The Sydney Monitor*, 27 Jul 1833).

Hinks did not receive his Certificate of Freedom until January 1844 (*NSW Government Gazette*, 12 Jan 1844) and consequently served an extra four years.

It is quite likely that a Benjamin Hinks, convict number 232, who was transported to Van Diemen's Land on the *Caledonia* is the same person. He was granted his freedom on July 31st, 1828 (*The Hobart Town Gazette*, 2 Aug 1828). This would have given him ample time to return to England, be indentured to Thomas Peel and voyage to the Swan River. Hinks 232 was transported for seven years for larceny. According to <https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/> he was convicted of stealing a saddle and arrived 5th March 1821 aged twenty-four. 'There were many punishments, assaulting a Doctor, disobeying orders, being drunk, and stealing £43 from Johnathan

Smith-discharged. This was the last entry in the conduct record.'

Another of the many casualties of the Peel Settlement debacle was Peel's son. The *Swan River Guardian* (16th Mar 1837) reflected how '...it is a well-known truth that Mr Peel's own son was obliged to abandon the Colony as a common sailor on board the 'Jolly Rambler' cutter.'

Interestingly the cutter carried a cargo of 1,240 bushels of wheat from Launceston to Sydney in October of 1833 (*Sydney Gazette*, 15 Oct 1833). Van Diemen's Land had been settled in 1803, fifteen years after New South Wales, but was able to supply it with a basic commodity.

The handsome little vessel changed hands and skippers several times and led an adventurous life.

The sloop Jolly Rambler, belonging to Messrs. Hughes and Hosking, returned unexpectedly to her owners on Tuesday last, with a full cargo of potatoes, corn, and flax, from New Zealand. Captain Griffin and his crew have had to encounter many troubles since they left Sydney, and think themselves fortunate in reaching port once more. The Jolly Rambler went ashore at Poverty Bay in a violent gale and was expected to go to pieces; as soon as the distress of the vessel was known to the natives, immense numbers of them came down to the sloop and laid claim to her, it being a law with the New Zealanders, that vessels wrecked on their shores become their property. The house in which the crew of the Jolly Rambler took refuge was also burnt to the ground, and the whole of their clothes, charts, &c. destroyed. After a great deal of trouble Captain Griffin recovered his vessel, and persuaded the natives to assist him in repairing her, which they did, but not without an idea that they were to make use of the vessel. The Jolly Rambler met with very heavy weather coming up and was nearly five weeks on the passage. The schooner Industry was the only vessel at Poverty Bay when the Jolly Rambler sailed (Sydney Herald, 7 April 1836).

The brave little vessel was finally wrecked on the bar of the Macleay River on the mid north-coast of New South Wales on 11th Dec 1836 (*The Sydney Herald*, 12 December 1836).



S.S. Richard Halliburton

The smallest vessel ever to pass through the Panama Canal did so in August 1928. The S.S. *Richard Haliburton*, launched on 9 January 1900 and registered in Memphis, Tennessee, was also charged the smallest toll ever for the privilege of passing through all the massive locks that raise and then lower ships during the passage. The vessel had a length of 1.8m and a displacement of 63.6kg, and for this measurement was charged a transit fee of 36 cents US. The transit took 10 days as the s.s. *Richard Halliburton* only sailed during daylight hours.

The traveller, adventurer and author Richard Halliburton had considered swimming the Panama Canal for some months when he approached the Governor of the Canal Zone, General M.L. Walker, to request permission. He registered himself as the S.S. *Richard Halliburton* so as to have the use of the locks. At that time Halliburton had not swum since he swam the Hellespont three years previously, the first to do so since Lord Byron in 1810. He was also a poor swimmer and only swam with an inefficient side stroke.

Halliburton's attempt to swim the length of the canal was not the first, but it was the first to use the six massive locks. Others had had to climb up over the locks and resume swimming on the other side. Each of the locks was 1,000ft (305 m) long and held 9,000,000 cubic ft (254,850 cubic m) of water. Halliburton was given a letter of permission by an amused Governor:

*Mr Richard Halliburton
Hotel Tivoli
Ancon, Canal Zone*

Sir: With reference to our personal conversation of today, you are informed that there is no objection on the part of the Canal authorities to you projected swim from Colon to Panama.

In this connection you are advised to take a course of anti-typhoid vaccination. You are also informed that alligators have been observed frequently in Gaillard Cut.

You are authorised to have a row-boat containing a rifleman accompanying you. You are also authorised to swim through the locks.

It is understood that any expenses in connection with this expedition will be borne by yourself, and that the Panama Canal will not be held responsible for any damages sustained.

*Respectfully
M.L. Walker, Governor*

Sergeant Thomas Wright, American Army, was allocated the task of guarding the swimmer, and he sat in a small dinghy, named *Daisy*, rowed by a Jamaican named Quentin. Sergeant Wright shot at least four alligators which appeared to be a danger to the swimmer. It took Halliburton seven hours to swim the first three miles to the first up lock, as every time a ship went through the canal 9,000,000 cubic ft of water would flood out against him. He swam seven to eight hours a day then went ashore to eat and sleep, starting again the following morning from the position he was in when he turned to go ashore. At each lock he was raised or lowered and swam into the next lock.



On the eighth day he swam out of the last Miraflores lock with only six miles to go to the Pacific end of the Canal. A quarter of a mile from the finish two barracudas were seen and Halliburton was dragged out of the water into the dinghy. He went back into the water but 'swam beneath the revolving oar, almost touching the boat's side.' He reached the finish and was hauled out of the water by some of the crowd of spectators. As the S.S. *Richard Halliburton* he had swum 51 miles (82km) along the total length of the Panama Canal.





A Notable Vessel

The following article results from a query by John Dowson as to whether I had written about the coastal trader *Theresa*. I hadn't, until now.

The following article appeared in the *West Australian* in late 1896.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR

A TRADER ENTERS THE RIVER

An apparently insignificant occurrence took place in shipping circles yesterday. At Fremantle the schooner *Theresa*, only a little coaster of 40 tons, came into the roads on her usual trip from Bunbury. Instead of berthing at the south ocean jetty, as is her usual custom, her commander, Captain Reid, elected to be towed to the railway jetty in the river. This is the first instance of a trading vessel berthing at a wharf in the Swan River, and, however small the tonnage of the craft may be, it is an occurrence which indicates more to come. The 15ft channel which has been dredged in the river up to the railway station siding is already proving of commercial utility, and if the Public Works Department could allow of a free use of the deepened water-way without interfering with the progress of the dredging and wharfage construction, a great stimulus would be given to river goods traffic. Captain Reid is to be congratulated upon his being the first trading vessel between ports to come into the Swan and berth alongside the structure which is doing duty for the south quay of the near future. The *Theresa*, which from this circumstance, becomes a notable vessel, is a fore-and-aft schooner of 40 tons, and was built on the same river on which she now rides as the pioneer of a fleet of traders. Captain Reid's crew are Messrs Tom Reid, E. McCarthy, and A.J. Hooper (*West Australian*, 29 October 1896: 3).

The 'little coaster' *Theresa* was built by Charles Watson in Perth during 1879 for Henry Seeligson, a jeweller of St Georges Terrace, Perth, and had cost £700:

NEW BOAT-A very handsome cutter, of about forty tons, is now on the stocks, ready for launching, at Mr C. Watson's building-yard. Mount Eliza. She belongs to Mr Henry Seeligson, who has spared no expense in securing in her construction both strength and finish. This vessel is probably the largest of her kind that has been built on this part of the river; and her well-known builder may certainly take the

credit of having turned out the finest-looking craft yet launched at Perth (*The Inquirer and Commercial News*, 5 March 1879: 3).

The vessel was towed down the river to Fremantle where it was rigged, not as a cutter as stated in the newspaper but as a schooner, and named *Theresa*. The schooner had the following dimensions:

LOA	52.25ft
Beam	17.75ft
Depth	6.54ft
Tonnage	37.1 nett

The Official Number was 75307, and it was registered as No. 2 of 1880 at Fremantle.

For the following three years the *Theresa* sailed regularly between Fremantle, Bunbury and Busselton under the command of William Reid. William Reid did not have a Master's Certificate, but he had 'great practical and local knowledge of the coast'. He was therefore allowed by the court to continue in command of the *Theresa*, after having been charged by the Collector of Customs under the *Passenger Act* (*Western Mail*, 19 June 1886: 16).

On 20 July 1883 the *Theresa* was advertised for sale by Auction to be held on 28 July 1883 'with gear, boats, sails, etc.' It was stated in the advertisement as a 'well-known and fast sailing vessel....for the past three years has been employed in the Southern trade of the Colony. She is admirably adapted for the coasting trade or pearling' (*The Daily News*, 20 July 1883: 3). The reason for the sale was given as 'to close a partnership account', and the vessel was sold to the joint partnership of Mr Seeligson and William Reid for £650.

The schooner continued trading to Bunbury and Busselton with Reid retaining command. In May 1888 considerable anxiety was felt as *Theresa* was overdue at Bunbury. The schooner departed Fremantle for Bunbury at 1.00am on Sunday 30 April, but had not arrived at that port by the following Friday. Later on the Friday morning a telegram from Mandurah was received stating that the *Theresa* had put into the Murray River, and had just departed for Bunbury (*West Australian*, 5 May 1888: 2).



In June 1899 William Reid sold *Theresa* for £412 to Alexander Birnie, a pearler based in Broome. William Reid had purchased the small steamer *Croydon* as he considered that steamers would be better suited for the trade that the schooner had previously undertaken. (*Bunbury Herald*, 17 June 1899: 3) The *Croydon* had been built at Singapore by Riley Hargreaves and Company in 1896 for Meagher and Osborne of Roebourne, and in June 1899 the 76ft vessel was in Cossack. Captain Reid loaded 38 tons of coal for the *Croydon* into the *Theresa* and had the schooner sail to its new owner in Broome via Cossack. Skipped by Captain T. Chope, *Theresa* duly delivered the coal on 15 July and sailed on to Broome. Birnie required the vessel as a store ship for his pearling fleet.

The voyage of the *Croydon* from Cossack to Fremantle was long. Having left Cossack on 8 August the steamer was well overdue a week later and other coasters had been requested to look out for it. However, on 15 August a telegram from Geraldton stated that the *Croydon* had arrived there having lost its rudder 150 miles north of that port. It had to be steered to Geraldton using coal baskets drifting astern on cables. (*The Evening Star*, 25 August 1899: 3).

The *Croydon* after being fitted with a temporary rudder, was towed from Geraldton to Fremantle by the steamer *Karrakatta*, arriving on 3 September.

The Bunbury Rowing and Sailing Club had arranged for the *Croydon* to bring two boats from Fremantle for a regatta to be held in mid-September, and the two boats were 'expected by the s.s. *Croydon* on her first trip to Bunbury under Captain Reid's ownership' (*Bunbury Herald*, 19 August 1899: 3).

There appears to be some uncertainty over ownership of the *Croydon* as most modern references make no mention of Captain Reid's ownership. But contemporary newspapers report his purchase and subsequent ownership of the steamer.

THE S.S. CROYDON CHANGES HANDS—The s.s Croydon, which has had a varied and chequered career since its arrival on this coast, has been purchased by Mr W. Reid, of Bunbury, and it is her owner's intention to run the vessel between port and Fremantle. As the Croydon will be able to steam up the Swan River to the Perth wharf, she should be very suitable for the trade she is now to enter (Northern Public Opinion and Pastoral News, 29 July 1899:2).

Wanted!

The editor of your journal is in dire need of more people to contribute articles, long or short, so that the high quality of the journal can be maintained. Contributions may be as short as a suggestion for the Ditty Bag or a description, preferably with photos, of an item of some personal or historic interest to feature in the new slot *Nautical Treasures*, or a substantial article which can if necessary be carried over a number of editions.

Did You Know?

In the Royal Navy of the 18th and early 19th centuries the term *sloop* had a quite different meaning to that which we now use. A sloop is now considered to be a fore-and-aft rigged sailing vessel with a single mast and single headsail, although in the US a sloop can have two headsails. However, 200 years ago the Royal Navy sloop was of no specific rig. There were brig-sloops and ship-sloops, the former having two masts and the latter three, in both cases all masts were square-rigged. What differentiated sloops from the other naval ships was that a sloop, whatever the rig, was under the command of a commander (one rank less than a captain) and had only a single deck carrying guns. Rated warships were commanded by captains or higher and carried guns on more than one deck. The RN sailing sloop disappeared around the late 1880s, although a few were used as boys' training ships until the early years of the 20th century. In more recent times a naval sloop was a small anti-submarine escort vessel used during World War II.



QUIZ

Answers to June

1. No, Western Australia did not have its own navy.
2. A parrel is any apparatus which keeps a yard or gaff to a mast. The parrel of a gaff is usually a rope on which is strung a row of hard wooden balls and encircling the mast, the ends being attached to each jaw of the gaff.
3. The ship Ernest Shackleton used on his expedition to Antarctica in 1907–09 was *Nimrod* (Official No. 55047), built by Alexander Stephen & Sons in Dundee and launched in January 1867. *Nimrod* was originally a wooden 334-ton 136 ft auxiliary schooner used for sealing and whaling. After purchasing it for £5,000 Shackleton converted the rig to barquentine.

Quiz

1. When James Stirling arrived in Western Australia on the *Parmelia* in 1829 to start the Swan River Colony one of the other passengers was Henry Reveley. What was Henry Reveley's position in the new colony?
2. In what year was the *Georgette* wrecked at Redgate Beach near the mouth of the Margaret River?
3. What part of a square-rigged ship is the yard arm?



A most excellent lead

The story of the Gage Roads leading light

The second part of the article by Julie Taylor

Log book

There is only one log book from Woodman Point in the State Records Office – 1932 to 1939.

Unsurprisingly it tells the story of routine. Every other day the glassworks were cleaned. Every eight days the machinery and gear were overhauled, and the tubes changed and cleaned. Each summer the lighthouse was painted, a task which took around ten days. And of course, the keepers were on duty every night from lighting up to extinguishing the following morning.

Each year the keepers received 28 days' annual leave. The log book reveals three relief keepers – a JP Maguire; Arthur Dray, who had been assistant keeper from 1910 to 1918; and William Laurence Forsyth, shipwright and son of former harbour master George Forsyth, subject of the 2019 MHA publication *A Hazardous Life*.

The log book contains some insights into the keepers' lives, but lightkeeper Hansen often does not note the outcome of his entries. On 28 Au-

gust 1935 he notes that they will have to be careful as the kerosene is 'a little short'. We can only assume that the supply arrived in time.

He is, however, preoccupied by the breakdown of the station windmill. On 11 October 1934 he notes that he has been informed that their water tank would only be filled twice a week and that they were to use water for domestic purposes only and not water the garden. After several entries on the subject, on 15 November he writes that the windmill seems to be in good order after a visit from 'men from the PWD'. Thereafter oiling the windmill appears in the log book as a completed task once a week.

After Hansen left for long service leave, and retirement, in April 1938 the entries are pared back to the minimum information of weather conditions and times of lighting up and extinguishing.

The Woodman Point myth

There are many references that claim that an error was made when the sector shades were installed



and that the red and green sectors are in the wrong order. I have not been able to find anything to support this claim. In fact, a drawing in the State Records Office entitled *Arrangement of sectors adopted*, that pre-dates construction, shows that the sectors are installed as planned. The arc of the sectors has been altered over the years but they have remained green to the east and red to the west (see map in the previous journal).

The newspapers at the time make no comment about any irregularity. Those opposed to the building of the lighthouse would surely have seized upon the opportunity had it existed.

The erection of the lantern, glasswork and mechanism was the responsibility of Mr Taylor, representative of Chance Bros, who arrived on the RMS *Arcadia* in mid May 1902. It is unlikely

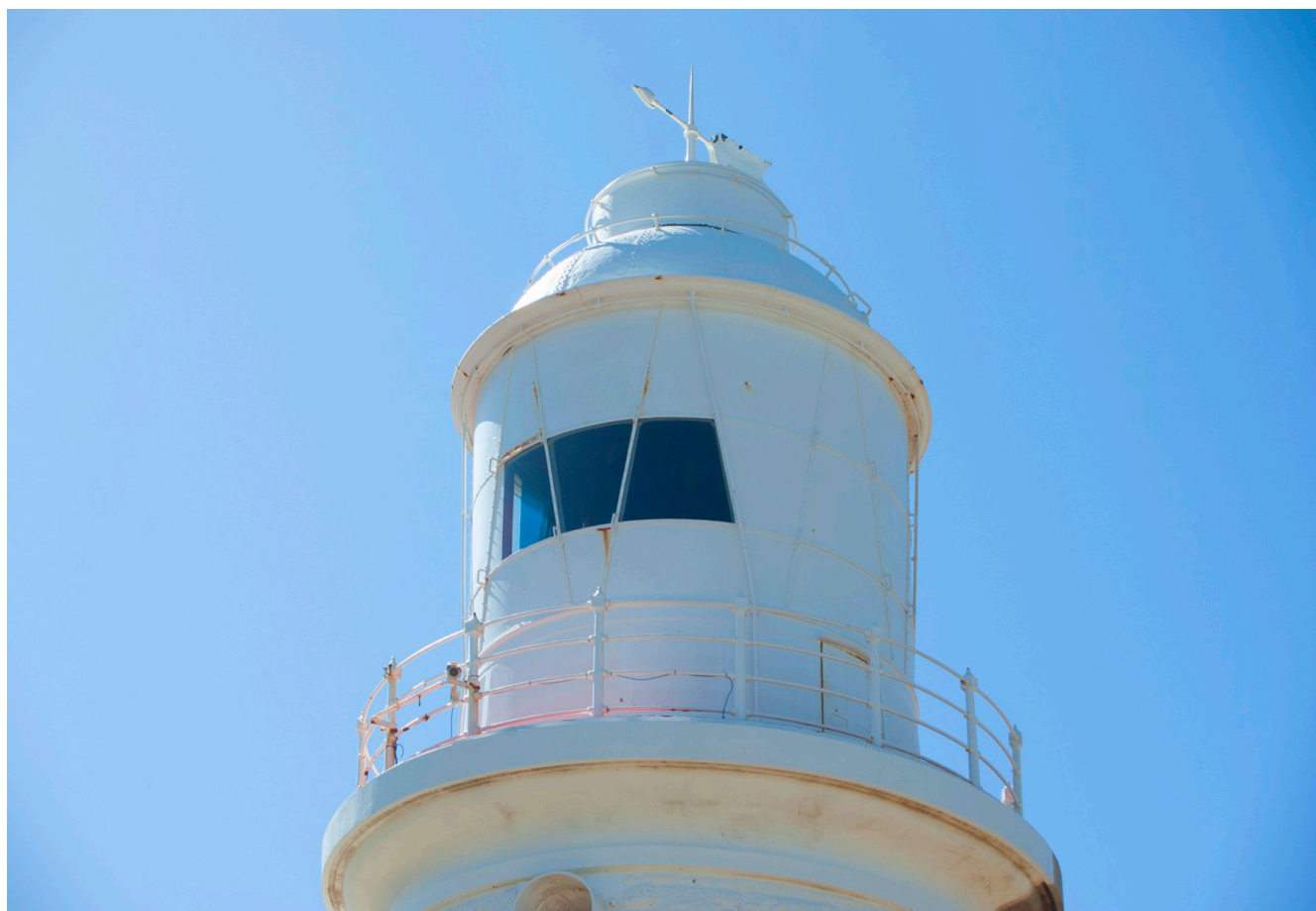
that he would make such a mistake. Besides, an article in *The West Australian* that month, three months before the light was lit, states that the green sector 'will be to the eastern side and the red to the west'. Case closed, I think!

Still a most excellent lead

Woodman Point is still an active aid to navigation and the three sectors continue to guide vessels through the channels to Fremantle Harbour. In the 1950s a second green sector was added, to the south-west.

The light was electrified and automated in 1955 and the keepers withdrawn. It is managed by Fremantle Ports.

The cottages and the lighthouse attained permanent entry on the WA Register of Heritage Places on 13 August 2004.



The objects of the Woodman Point Lighthouse myth. Looking through the green south-west sector window, to the Gage Roads sectors. Green to the east and red to the west, as intended.