

MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

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**C/o: The Secretary (Leigh Smith),
1 Meelah Road
City Beach W.A. 6015**



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



A painting of the ketch Aloha by Roger Leever



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

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

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Important Notice

Due to some sort of unknown error by Australia Post, many copies of the December Journal (which was posted on 12 November 2012) have been not been delivered. The MHA Committee have therefore decided to reprint and re-post copies of the journal to all members.

This edition of the journal will also be available on the MHA website.

If you are one of the lucky ones and have received two copies, why not give the spare to a friend for Christmas? We welcome new members!

Things They Would Rather Have Not Said

The enemy is tactically defeated

Walt Rostow, aide to Lyndon B. Johnson, April 1968

They were speaking about the war in Vietnam, and we all know what happened there in 1975!



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!)



Ships of the Honourable East India Company were built for carrying capacity and to provide a steady gun platform if they needed to fight. For many years even the largest were registered as being less than 500 tons. Those vessels over 500 tons were required by regulations to carry a chaplain, and this was not popular. After a considerable storm about this in parliament the ships were properly measured, and some of them increased suddenly from 498 or 499 tons to 800 or even 1,000 tons.

In the Persian Gulf in 1905 there were 4,500 boats and 75,000 men engaged in pearling. At that time (pre-oil industry) Bahrain was the headquarters of the trade.

The Thermopylae, which was perhaps the queen of all the clippers, ran from London to Melbourne in 1868 and again in 1871 in 60 days—a wonderful record for a 14,000-mile passage. The Cutty Sark, her great rival, never did better outwards than 64 days, and that was from the Lizard to landfall on Cape Otway (Villiers, 1952).

Here is an old recipe for red funnel paint:
Take the required quantity of red lead, dry it in the sun for half an hour or so, then damp with paraffin oil, so that it is even drier than a paste. After standing for half an hour, thin down to the required consistency with colza oil. This gives a light red similar to that on the funnels of a Union Castle steamer.

Thrum: Any coarse woollen or hempen yarn. It is used for mops, etc., in the cabins; also for mats which are worked on canvas with a large bolt-rope needle.

To thrum: A vessel, when leaky, is thrummed by working some heavy spare sail, such as the sprit-sail, into a thrummed mat, greasing and tarring it well, passing it under the bottom, and heaving all parts tight. The pressure forces the tarred oakum

into the openings, and thus, in part, arrests the ingress of water (Smyth, Admiral W.H., 1867, *Sailor's Word-Book*).

One of the most objectionable features of colonial life is the prevalence of profane and indecent language, not merely among the rough, uncultivated classes, but also those who profess to move in a high social position (Inquirer, 18 February 1880).

In June 1849 Earl Grey, Colonial Secretary, advised Governor Fitzgerald that:

Except in cases of a very special nature...convicts are not to be recommended for a conditional pardon, unless they have repaid to the Government the cost of their conveyance, which is to be assumed for this purpose at the sum of £15.

In the mid-19th century a French league was not 3 miles like the English league, but 1.81 nautical miles (2.08 statute miles) or 3.35 km. Ireland and Scotland also had a different length mile—2,200 yards (1.25 statute miles, 2 km).

On 20 January 1830 Captain James Stirling sent a dispatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the progress of the Swan River settlement. The following extract is interesting considering the settlement was only six months old:

The rivers and coasts abound in fish, and great supplies of food have been drawn from that source. No less than forty boats have been constructed in the settlement.

Mill Point, on the Swan River, was originally named Point Belches. The name was later changed when the flour mill was built.

Nelson was the first Admiral in the Royal Navy to order that all of the ships of his fleet be painted alike. Previously, although mainly painted with yellow sides, there was no standard colour scheme on British naval ships.



Ships of the State Shipping Service

By Jeff Thompson

No. 30: *Boogalla* Official Number: 355137

The third of the quartette of unit-loaders to be purchased was obtained from West German owners. The *Transmichigan* was bought on 22 September 1972 from Posiden Schiffahrt GmbH of Hamburg and then proceeded, with a German crew, to Tai-koo Dockyard, Hong Kong for modifications to bring her up to Australian and operational requirements. In April 1973 after completion of the alterations it was renamed *Boogalla*.

When delivered in 1966 by Mitsui S.B.& E. Co (Yard No. 741), Tamano, Japan, the *Transmichigan* was 6,103 gross registered tons, 7,723 deadweight tons , length 393' 9", beam 57' 9", draft 22' 3" with a 6-cylinder Mitsui - B & W

type 6-62VT2BF 140 diesel of 7,200 bhp to give a service speed of 16.8 knots. Also it was strengthened for navigation in ice.

On 4 May 1973 the *Boogalla* sailed from Fremantle to Darwin on her first voyage for the Service. On 25 September 1981 *Boogalla* left Fremantle on her last voyage for the State Shipping Service to Darwin. Leaving Darwin for Hong Kong on 16 October 1981.

On the 28 October 1981 the *Boogalla* was sold to the China Ocean Shipping Co, Beijing, and renamed *Yu Qing*, for use as a training ship. It was still listed in Lloyds Register 2005/06 under the same name and owners, but now with accommodation for 12 passengers.



Well Paid?

Diver: One versed in the art of descending under water to considerable depths and abiding there a competent time for several purposes, as to recover wrecks of ships, fish for pearls, sponges, corals, &c. The diver is now a rating in H.M. ships; he may be of any rank of seaman, but he receives £1 10s 5d per annum additional pay—one penny a-day for risking life!

Smith, Admiral W.H., 1867, *Sailor's Word Book: A Dictionary of Nautical Terms*.



The Loss of *Aloha*

In the September journal Tony Duvollet wrote about the ketch *Aloha*. This article by Roger and Kim Leever tells of her loss. However, it is not just the story of the wreck and subsequent rescue, but a plea by the two brothers for attention to be focused on Phil de Grauw's future with regard to the forthcoming Conservation Zones, and the gap it would leave for a quick response if any of the many yachts that sail up and down the coast get into trouble.

On Saturday afternoon 5th May 2012 around 4.00pm Kalbarri fishermen Phil De Grauw and "Stretch" Heaney of *Sabea*, pulled brothers Roger and Kim Leever from the ocean. The relieved brothers had been in the water for four and a half hours after the 40-foot yacht *Aloha* sank suddenly in 40 fathoms of water.

"We'd been sailing for 20 hours before this happened" said skipper/owner Roger, a well-known artist planning to spend some months painting in the Shark Bay area. "The weather had been increasing since the early morning so sail had been reduced to a small jib, a double reefed main and the mizzen. We were motor sailing. It was very rough and I estimate the winds to be over 25 knots. We were about 55 nautical miles from Steep Point and about seven nautical miles from the Zuytdorp Cliffs. We could see Womerangee Hill."

"Kim was down below resting when he noticed something was wrong. He called to me "We're awash!" I quickly looked and immediately turned on the bilge pump."

"We had no idea where the water was coming from or what had caused the leak but we soon realised the water was coming in faster than the pumps could handle. Just then the engine stopped and the pumps died. I made the decision to abandon ship. We launched the dinghy tied together with the kayak; the buoyancy ring; grabbed lifejackets and other emergency gear like the EPIRB. We then grabbed the radio and made a Mayday call. It was pretty frenetic. Fortunately our mayday was responded to immediately by Phil on *Sabea*."

"Kim read the coordinates to me and I relayed them to Phil. He said they were a fishing boat in

the vicinity and had received our call and would get a rescue underway."

"In no time we boarded the dinghy which swamped and capsized in the rough conditions. Thus went the rowlocks, buckets and off floated the emergency bucket! We righted the swamped dinghy and I clambered in. Kim took the kayak. As we floated away from *Aloha* I snapped open the EPIRB and moved the yellow switch to ON. *Aloha* sailed herself head to wind, drifting away from us. Behind a wave we saw her yaw wildly to one side as if capsizing, she came back up and as we sat on top of a wave saw her drop her nose and sail herself down as elegantly as anything else she had ever done."

The day was overcast and gusty as the unpredicted NW gale churned the sea into a grey morass of steeping waves streaked with white foam from collapsed wave tops. Curiously once we were off the stricken yacht and at a lower level the wind was no longer a factor. However it was enough to take the recalcitrant grab bucket just far enough away to worry us that we may create another problem for ourselves by attempting to retrieve it. Now we sat together on the vast and unruly infinite ocean, Roger, sitting in the swamped dinghy with his feet under the seat, around his waist the life-ring. Kim had climbed onto the Finn Gizmo kayak, (the best addition to the *Aloha* in many years) shortly after the dinghy swamped. We had left the yacht in our disorganization wearing our un-inflated life vests (PFDs) like bandoliers. Sitting in our respective craft we read the instructions, put them on and inflated them. They are very effective inflated to their maximum, taut and reassuring. This would not have worked at night. The space around us was immense, the enormous sky, the bustling gale came at me in the dinghy from abeam as we lay pointing NE, Kim on the Gizmo lay to the east of me facing north, the beeping EPIRB lay between



us secured by its orange lanyard. About six miles away the broad even, low mound of Womerangee Hill scoured of growth by the relentless ocean winds adjoined another bald hill with a significant pimple on its southern brow. Below the hills behind the rolling swells the mighty Zuytdorp Cliffs were dappled and pale in the distance as the sky began to break the cloud cover and show patches of blue. The cliffs here are up to 300 metres high with ledges at sea level pounded by the ocean swells, there are no beaches. The cliffs run from just north of Kalbarri to Steep Point, the southern entrance to Shark Bay, over one hundred nautical miles of the worst lee shore on the Western Aus-



Aloha in happier times—Serventy Island, Abrolhos Islands

tralian coast. “Occasionally the top of a wave would break and capsize us again; we learnt to clamber with a fully inflated life jacket over the front of our craft after righting.” Roger continued. “After a considerable time a Skippers Aviation plane appeared and made wide passes that didn’t assure us that we had been seen. Then they flew off leaving us with a rather empty feeling. After a large space of time, we had no watches, I heard a small engine. A small plane appeared on the south western horizon, but before he had completed a circuit it was joined by a sleek red and white Customs plane which did a half circuit and then from the east flew in a straight line right over the top of us. We took heart as he continued to overfly us. Then it flew away leaving anew the sounds of the ocean to lull us back into the precariousness of our situation and emptiness in the cloud ragged sky.

A few minutes later Kim said “There’s a boat over there” gesturing west. “Turn around and have a look” he said. I couldn’t look because of the life jacket’s taut constraint and fear of overturning. “Are you kidding me?” I asked, “You’re not pulling my leg are you?” He grinned and pointed at me and shouted “Gotcha!!!” But when I could turn I could see the squat shape of *Sabea* with Stretch standing on the roof. The boat came closer, they slung a tyre down the side. I found I could swim vaguely by flapping my arms and they dragged me aboard, flopping like a freshly landed fish. “Kim was soon pulled out of the water by Phil and Stretch who then shipped the dinghy, the Finn Gizmo kayak, the EPIRB and the other safety equipment aboard. A quick change into some borrowed dry clothes, a drink of fresh water (which never tasted so sweet), and the warmth of the wheelhouse soon had the brothers warming up and relaxing and sharing their story with their rescuers.

“It is hard to describe the feelings we had towards our rescuers” said Kim. “Phil and Stretch went quietly and efficiently about their business of steaming back to Kalbarri, then made us a cup of tea and heated some pies. The Sargeant’s pie was the best I’ve tasted for a long while.”

“The fact that Phil had picked up our Mayday and then had been the ones to rescue us four and a half hours later was fantastic. It is sobering to realise the effort and contribution they made to save us. We are eternally grateful. Phil & Stretch are heroes to us. They saved our lives.”

“From the moment they responded to the Mayday, got our coordinates and said they were in the vicinity we were reassured that a rescue was underway. Knowing that gave us more confidence and resolve in dealing with our situation. Roger and I are both experienced sailors but we had never been in this situation before. Seeing the *Aloha* sail below the waves made plain that we were alone, together, in the surging ocean, delicately balancing on fragile craft. We had our lifejackets and the EPIRB was transmitting. We knew we were alone but we had faith in the knowledge that some local fishermen were looking for us. Rog is an old deckie and he knows fishermen and the sea. We felt it was just a matter of time and we



just had to keep ourselves in the best shape to wait it out. Patience was my lesson for the day.”

On the 6½-hour journey back to Kalbarri the wind swung through the west as *Sabea* buffeted her way home. We had time to chat to our rescuers. Stretch regaled us with stories from his many years as a professional skipper and deckie, and his exploits as a long distance line casting champion. He spoke of their pleasure in being able to pull us from the water, as they had previous experience of rescuers who arrived too late only to pull a corpse from the sea; something they hoped never to repeat. For them our rescue was also their success. A part of the time honoured traditions of the sea where sailors always come to the aid of others in distress.

Phil related that where they were fishing was the furthest north that Kalbarri fishermen worked and that they were the only ones that went that far. Most preferring to stay closer to home and not have to battle the prevailing SW winds and swells off a most dangerous lee shore. Phil and Stretch earned their living the hard way, hand lining for snapper in deep waters, one man to either side of the boat. They iki jimi-ed their fish and put them into an ice slurry. They travelled a long way from home in all conditions and stayed out to fill their quota. They were having a day off, having fished the previous night in the deteriorating weather. But Phil's major fears were of the proposed Conservation Zone that was going to encompass his fishing ground.

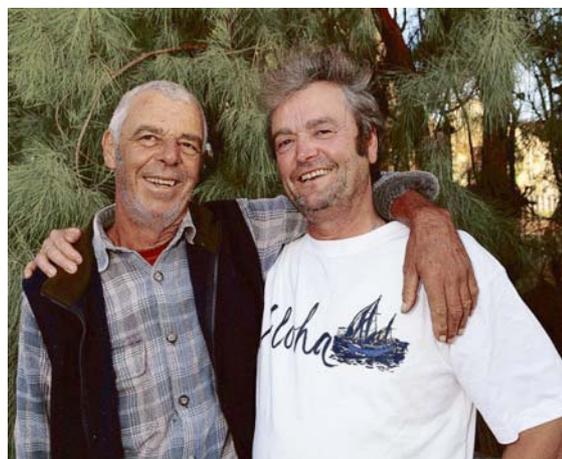
We were alarmed by this - imagine if he had not been there - unable to earn his living as he has done for 30 years. Someone in our position would be destined to a likely bad death on the cliff ledges. Rescue by local craft would have to come from Denham, 90 nautical miles or Kalbarri, 70 nautical miles. We were plucked out of the ocean around 4.00pm; another hour added to the failing light would have made our rescue more difficult. Having spent a life afloat I know how hard it is to see objects in the sea. If not for Phil and Stretch we were likely crab food or even fall to the deadly unseen menace of a shark that we refused to talk about while in the water. Phil and Stretch, for all their self-deprecation, are our saviours and heroes. More than that, they are the unspoken Guardians of the Zuytdorp Cliffs. The Cliffs are named for the ill-fated Dutch East India

Company ship which crashed at night under full sail in 1712.

Many sailing boats travel north each year for the winter. All are highly apprehensive of the return trip south past the cliffs. Many shelter at Steep Point until the eventuation of an offshore or northerly breeze. These are a rarity, 25 knots of SWly wind and swell being the norm. There is no shelter on the coast until Geraldton or the Abrolhos Islands. Should there be the imposition of the Conservation Zone, which is apparently imminent, Phil should have an exemption to continue to earn his living!. What can one man hand fishing to a quota do to an area the size of the Conservation Zone? Shall common sense prevail and allow Phil to continue to be the Guardian of the Zuytdorp Coast? Send a letter to your local Member of Parliament in support of Phil, particularly if you know people who use this coast.

On arrival back at Kalbarri at about 10.30pm we were met by Sergeant Matt Frode and the crew from St John Ambulance who ferried us to the Kalbarri Medical Centre where we were given a thorough check over, a shower, a snack and a warm dry bed for the night. The next morning feeling quite refreshed and glad to be alive we were treated to a complimentary breakfast at the Kalbarri Hotel.

There are many people, many who we do not know, the unknown people who across the nation rallied to make this rescue a success. The pilots, the observers, the radio operators, police, etc. we'd like to thank them all. And to Phil and Stretch. Once again, thank you, you will always be heroes to us!



Roger & Kim LeEVERS (photo: Gary Warner)



Wanderer III and the Blue Water Medal

In the September issue of the MHA Journal you were asked to put names to some well-known people and the vessels they were associated with. Among those names were those of Eric and Susan Hiscock and their various yachts named *Wanderer*. In 1955 this couple were awarded the Cruising Club of America's Blue Water Medal for their circumnavigation in *Wanderer III* from 24 July 1952 to 13 July 1955. This medal is awarded to:

reward meritorious seamanship and adventure upon the sea displayed by amateur sailors of all nationalities, that might otherwise go unrecognized.

The jib-headed sloop *Wanderer III*, is 30' 3" length over all, 26' 5" on the waterline, has a beam of 8' 5" and a designed draught of 5'. Planking is iroko on oak frames, keel, stem and stern posts.

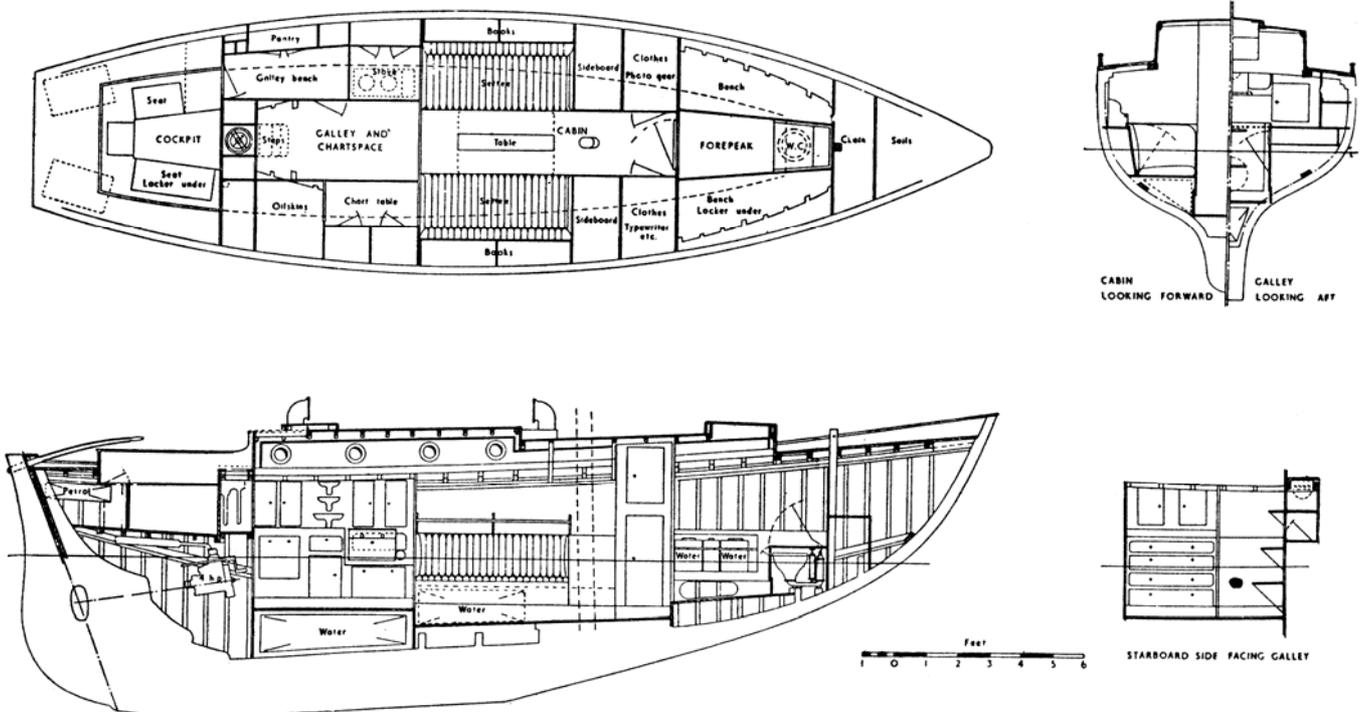
The Blue Water Medal, first awarded in 1923, has

previously been won by such well-known yachtsmen as Sir Francis Chichester, Eric Tabarly, Bernard Moitessier, Bill Tilman, Pete Goss, Alain Gerbault and Robin Knox-Johnston, among others.

The 2009 winners were Annie Hill and Trevor Robertson in the 35' steel gaff cutter *Ironbark* which Trevor had built in Queensland. The couple wintered in both the Antarctic (1999) and the Arctic (2004-05), the first yacht to do so unsupported.

The Blue Water Medal for 2011 was awarded to Thies Matzen and Kicki Ericson for their 24 years and 135,000 nautical miles of cruising on board the same *Wanderer III*, whose circumnavigation won the Hiscocks the medal in 1955.

There is no other yacht that I know of that has been awarded this prestigious medal twice, and 56 years apart.





Maria and America

When the schooner *America* won the Royal Yacht Squadron Cup, later named the America's Cup, it was not the fastest yacht in the New York Yacht Club. The yacht club's commodore, and part owner of *America*, John Cox Stevens, also owned another yacht, *Maria*, which appears to have been able to run rings around the famous schooner. So why was it not sent to England in 1851 to challenge the English yachts?

The following is an extract from *Yachting* published by Longmans, Green, and Co., London, in 1895.

The formation of the New York Yacht Club was followed by a rapid augmentation of the yachting fleet, and general interest seemed to be suddenly awakened in the sport. The attention of designers and builders became centred on pleasure craft, so that in the first five years of the life of the club several new builders and designers came into public notice. Foremost among them was George Steers, who showed marked ability in designing; indeed, it is not too much to say that his ideas in naval architecture and construction were a guide in the art for many years. Some of his best known yachts of this period were *La Coquille*, schooner, 1842, length 44 ft. 6 in.; *Cygnnet*, schooner, 53 ft. 2 in., 1844; *Cornelia*, schooner, 1847, length over all 74 ft.; *Gimcrack*, before mentioned.

In 1846 Winde & Clinckard, of New York, built *Coquette*, schooner, length 66 ft.; she made the passage from Boston to New York in 29 hrs., and returned in 28 hrs. *Brenda*, schooner, was turned out by the same builders in 1845; she was 48 ft. over all. She visited Bermuda in May 1849, and on the 14th of that month sailed there a match with *Pearl*, beating her 55 secs., this being the first international race found in any American record.

The schooner *Spray*, was built by Brown & Bell, of New York, in 1844; her length was 49 ft. 8 in. over all. Commodore Stevens contented himself with *Gimcrack* for three years, during which time he was evidently accumulating strength for a great stroke in yachting, which in the autumn of 1847 culminated in his last and by far the most famous yacht, the sloop *Maria*, the largest pleasure craft of her class ever built in this or any

country. George Steers assisted the Commodore in designing, and during the winter of 1847 and 1848 she was built by William Capes in Hoboken. Sloop *Maria* was originally 92 ft. long on water-line, she had the full round entrance and gradually tapering after body, a style popularly known as the 'cod head and mackerel tail', a form that prevailed generally in all vessels up to about this date. After two years Commodore Stevens became tired of the full round bow of *Maria*, and in 1850 she was lengthened forward, so that she became 110 ft. on water-line, and 116 ft. on deck.

Maria was such a departure from accepted rules, and became so well known in all yachting circles, that a full description of her is deemed worthy of record in these pages.

Her beam was 26 ft. 6 in., 8 ft. 3 in. depth of hold, 5 ft. 2 in. draught of water at stern, and 8 in. forward. She had two centreboards, a small one near the stern to aid in steering, and the large board 24 ft. long in the usual position; this main board was of iron and lead, weighing over seven tons. When first launched *Maria's* centreboard was not pivoted, but worked in a vertical line, both ends being dropped to the same depth.

The great weight of this board was partly balanced by two large spiral springs, one at either end, which were extended when the board was lowered. Length of mast 92 ft., 2 ft. 8 in. in diameter at deck, and 1 ft. 11 in. at hounds; it was a hollow spar, being bored out, for the first 20 ft. having a hole 12 in. in diameter; for the next 20 ft. 10 in., and above that the bore was 7 in. Her main boom was 95 ft. long, 2 ft.



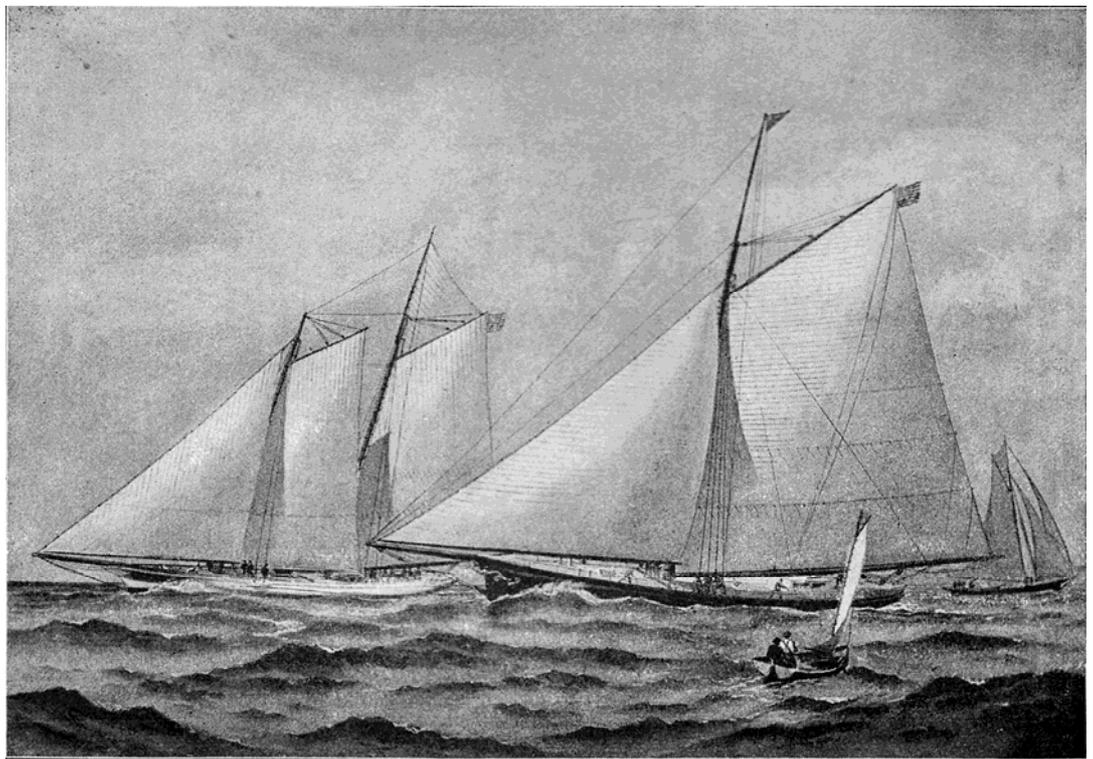
7 in. in diameter and 2 ft. 4 in. at the slings; it was built up with staves like a barrel, inside it was a system of truss-work with long tension-rods reaching nearly to the ends. Length of main gaff 61 ft., with a diameter of 2 ft. 2 in. Her bowsprit had an extreme length of 38 ft., with a diameter of 2 ft.; it entered the hull of the yacht below deck, leaving the deck space above all free and clear; there was also a jib-boom which materially lengthened the bowsprit, so that the point where the jib-stay was attached was 70 ft. from the mast. Area of mainsail, 5,790 sq. ft.; the cloths of this were placed parallel to the boom, the bighting running fore and aft instead of vertically as usual. It was thought by the Commodore and his brothers Robert and Edward, who were equally interested with him in the ownership of the yacht, that a sail thus constructed offered less opposition to the passage of wind than a sail made in the usual style; but the plan was open to objections, so that it never became popular. Her jib presented 2,100 ft. of surface, leach 69 ft.; its foot, 70 ft.; foot of mainsail, 94 ft.; hoist, 66 ft.; head, 60 ft.; and leach, 110 ft. *Maria* had a working topsail, but it was rarely set.

Commodore Stevens with his famous craft took part in many races and matches during the first six years of *Maria's* life; she usually beat all her competitors, the few failures she suffered being attributable to the failure of one or other of some new devices in her rigging or fittings; for her owners were for ever trying something new in way of experiment.

At one time the ballast of *Maria* was disposed in a layer on the outside of her planking, the lead being about 2 in. thick at the rabbit

and tapering to a half-inch about half-way out to the turn of the bilge. *Maria* had several test matches with the schooner *America*, just before that vessel departed on her eventful voyage to England in 1851; *Maria* usually beat the schooner easily, particularly in smooth sea and moderate wind. It is related of *Maria* that on one day when conditions favoured her she sailed three times completely around *America* in a comparatively short distance, which performance forms the subject of a spirited picture here given.

After the death of Commodore Stevens [13 June 1857], and when *Maria* was the property of his brother Edward, the yacht was lengthened about 6 ft. or 7 ft., and finally rigged as a schooner. She was then sold and used in the fruit trade, making voyages to the coast of Honduras; but in October 1870 as she was bound to New York with a load of cocoa-nuts, a storm overtook her when in the vicinity of Hatteras, in which she succumbed, and vessel and crew were never more heard of.



'BLACK MARIA,' SLOOP, BEATING 'AMERICA,' SCHOONER, IN TEST RACE, NEW YORK, 1850
132 tons. Built 1848. (Commodore Stevens, N.Y.Y.C.)
(Contributed by E. A. Stevens, of Hoboken, U.S.A.)



Can You Date this Photo?

This hand-tinted photo of Perth from Kings Park was one of many photos donated to MHA by the Albany Historical Society. Can you put a date to it, please?



Conrad and the *Otago*

In the March 2012 edition of the journal I published an article from the *West Australian* of 15 October 1895 about the trials of the iron barque *Otago* during a severe gale. By way of a contrast here is an extract from *The Mirror of the Sea* by Joseph Conrad. This also tells of the *Otago* in a gale, but there was no trial for crew or ship this time. Conrad was the captain and he writes:

I well remember a three-day run got out of a little barque of 400 tons somewhere between St Paul and Amsterdam and Cape Otway, on the Australian coast. It was a long, hard gale, grey clouds and green seas, heavy weather undoubtedly, but still what a sailor would call manageable. Under two lower tops'ls and a reefed fores'l the barque seemed to race with a

long, steady sea that did not becalm her in the troughs. The solemn thundering combers caught her up from astern, passed her with a fierce boiling up of foam level with the bulwarks, swept on ahead with a swish and a roar: and the little vessel, dipping her jibboom into the tumbling froth, would go on running in a smooth, glassy hollow, a deep valley between two ridges of sea, hiding the horizon ahead and stern. There was such fascination in her pluck, nimbleness, the continual exhibition of unfailing seaworthiness, in the semblance of courage and endurance, that I could not give up the delight of watching her run through then three unforgettable days of that gale which my mate also delighted to extol as 'a famous shove'.



Steamer Under Sail

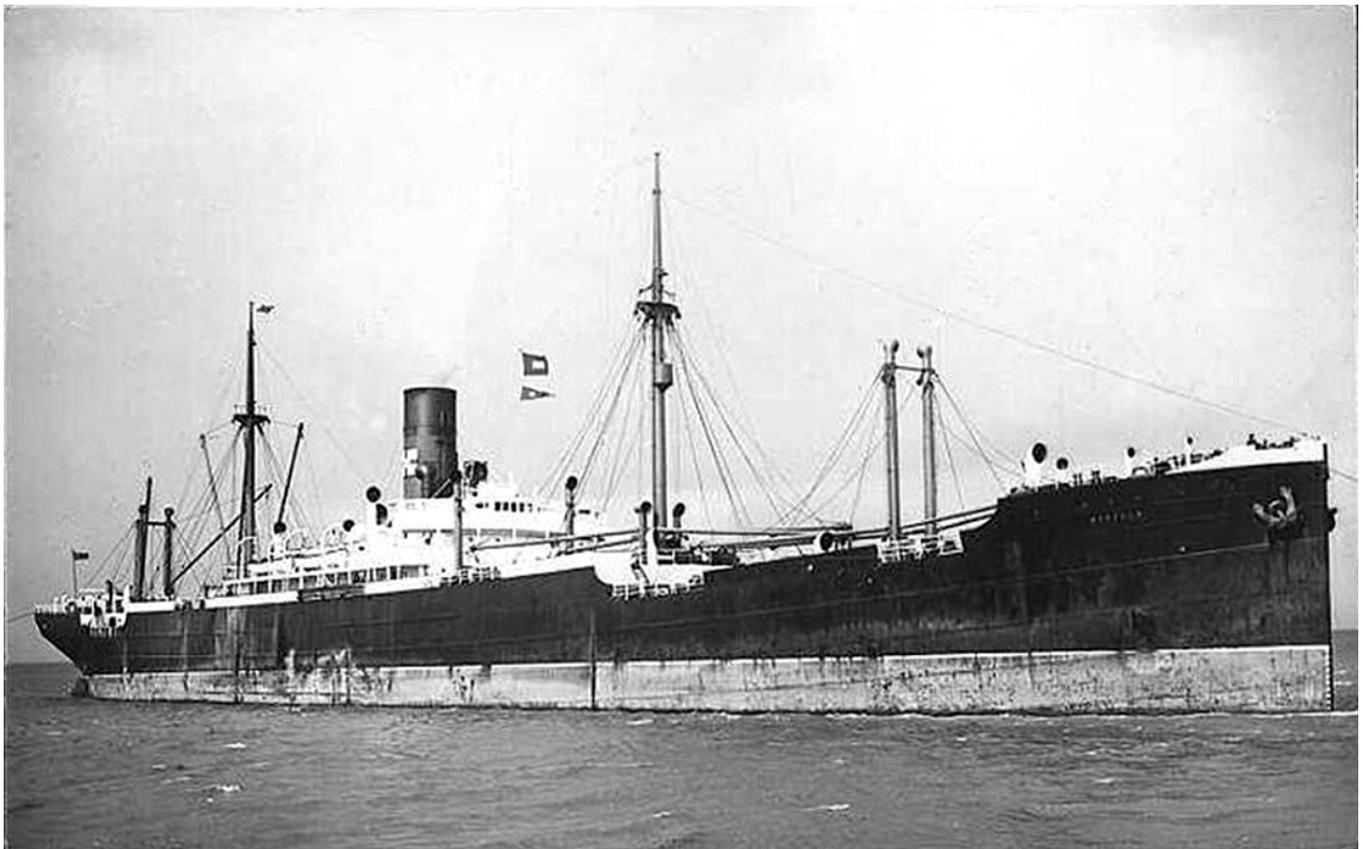
In 1906 a strange vessel approaching the coast had the local population of Fremantle gathering on the beaches to see the curious sight of a steamer under sail. The steam ship *Norfolk* (master – Captain F.W. Corner) had departed Durban, South Africa, on 28 May 1906 bound for Albany. On 10 June, while at latitude 36° 20' S and longitude 99° 47' east, the ship suffered a disabling accident when the propeller shaft snapped off at the sternpost, the propeller dropping off and sinking into the depths. This occurred at about 1.00pm. There was little chance of any sort of assistance in that pre-radio era so the only course left to the crew was to sail. Captain Corner was an experienced sailor, having been at sea since 1881, initially under sail but changing to steam in 1903 when he became master of *Norfolk*. As with many of the steamers around the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries *Norfolk* had masts and sails. These were small and of limited use for practical sailing. Captain Corner's description of what followed is very instructive:

The only sails the ship possessed were one jib, one staysail, and four small trysails, one for each mast, and these were at once set: but the

ship soon lost steerage way and broached-to on the starboard tack heading S by E with the wind abeam. I then ordered the some of the crew to make a square foresail, also a large jib into which every available tarpaulin, hatch cover and awning was pressed into service – while others unshipped the derricks to be used as yards. A big sea was running, the ship rolling heavily and shipping water, making the handling of the derricks a dangerous task.

The crew were working all night, and at noon June 11 had a foreyard up and a derrick rigged out for a jib-boom, and a foresail set and a jib out as far as possible. I then decided to have square sails made for the other three masts which were rigged after about 4 hours hard work, but even with the wind abeam she did not answer the helm.

At 8.00pm the 11th it was blowing a moderate gale which continued all night and the next day. At 9.30pm the 12th the wind shifted to W in a heavy squall, blowing the foresail clean out of the bolt-ropes, and causing the ship to again broach-to, heading N; but by bending





the jigger trysail on the after swifter of the fore-rigging she was got off to the N.E. again. The gale continued all night, and at dawn the torn fore-sail was unbent, and the crew set to work making another.

By June 14th the gale had abated considerably and the new foresail was bent, with three other square sails made from awnings, tarpaulin, etc. Also the large jib was set in place of the staysail on the jib-boom, and the staysail shifted to the main stay. The ship now began to move at a greater speed, but still would not answer the helm satisfactorily, so No. 1 and No. 2 tanks were pumped out, and the after peak filled. This had the desired effect, and she began to steer, and I was able, for the first time, to set a course.

There were other problems, especially wind – the wind force increased, and it was necessary to make oil bags to seep oil onto the sea to calm it, and so assist in keeping the helm working as desired, and among other things, large sea-anchors were manufactured for possible use when approaching land. On 21 June a very strong gale rose, which blew out some of the sails.

This caused the captain some anxiety because they had now exhausted all available material so should another gale damage anything the vessel might be unmanageable. However on 21 June they sighted Rottnest Island about 10.30am, a pilot boarded at 2.30pm, and tugs took up the tow an hour later. Despite the gales and blown out sails the ship had been sailed 950 miles in the 24 days. During the voyage the fires had been drawn in all but one of the boilers: this providing steam to keep the electricity and refrigeration op-

erating. As Fremantle had no dry-dock the new propeller (which had to be made in Sydney) was fitted with the ship afloat; lifting the stern clear of the water by flooding the forward tanks.

The *Norfolk* (5,310 tons) was built in 1900, and met an untimely end when, en route Melbourne for Sydney, on 8 November 1914, she caught fire and, after failing to control the fire, the master tried to run her ashore on Gippsland's 90-mile beach. After touching bottom some 300 yards from the shore the anchors were dropped, but further attempts to quell the flames proved unsuccessful, and the crew were taken off by two coastal colliers, *Koonda* and *Alabama*, which had been standing by. The vessel partly collapsed because of the intense heat generated by the fire, and was abandoned.

Another ship, *Cornwall* (5,500 tons), owned by the same company, Federal Steam Navigation Company Limited, is believed to have been the first ship to enter Fremantle's new harbour on 8 October 1897.

The company's colours were:

The funnel was red with a black top, and in the middle was a red cross with blue square at its centre on a white background. Hull was black above a white boot topping with red below. Company flag was a red cross with a blue square at its centre on a white background.

Reference:

Dodman, F.E., 1958, *The Observer's Book of Ships*. Frederick Warne & Co. Ltd., London.

Shipping Record, Vol. 38, No. 1, January-March 2007.

Can You Help?

Peter Groves recently bought the Olsen/Sutton Swan River ferry *Valhalla*, and is hoping to restore her back to as close to original as possible. He needs information on *Valhalla*'s history, and probably copies of any photos of her when working. His email address is:

Peter.Groves@dpc.wa.gov.au

Phone : 0403 367 579

Mail: 52 Naunton Crescent

EDEN HILL 6054

The editor is running out of "Things They Would Rather Have Not Said". I feel sure that this is not because all the blatantly ridiculous statements to have been made, have already been included in these journals. After all, they are still being made today by people everywhere! I'm running out of inspiration, and desperately need readers' suggestions.

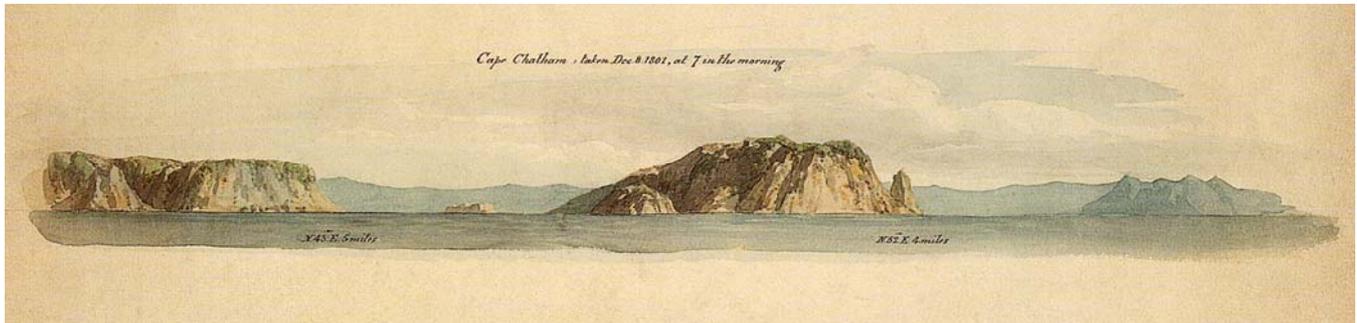


The Naming of Chatham Island

On 26 September 1791 George Vancouver in the *Discovery* had his first sight of Australia, the coast east of Cape Leeuwin. The following day he named a prominent rocky feature which he thought was a cape, but which

to call it Cape Chatham, and the sketch by William Westall mentioned by Flinders is captioned:

Cape Chatham: taken Dec. 8. 1801, at 7 in the morning (see below).



may have been an island, he was not sure which. He described it as being ‘remarkable for its high cliffs falling perpendicularly into the sea; and if it be detached, which is by no means certain, is about a league in circuit’ (Vancouver, G., 1984 (1798): 333). However he must have considered that it was most likely part of the mainland, and on 27 September 1791 named it Cape Chatham after John Pitt, second Earl of Chatham, who was First Lord of the Admiralty from July 1788 to December 1794.

The subsequent drawing of Chatham Island in ‘Views on the South Coast of Terra Australis’, part of Flinders’ atlas of charts covering his exploration and mapping of much of the Australian coast published along with his journal in 1814, thirteen years later, still refers to:

Cape Chatham: taken Dec. 8. 1801 at 7 a.m. (see below).

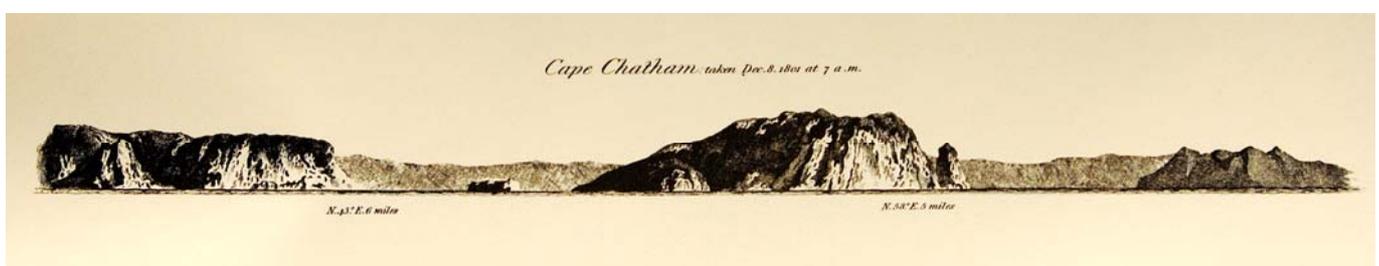
Some ten years later on Tuesday 8 December 1801 Matthew Flinders sailed close by Chatham Island in the *Investigator*. His journal reads: *It afterwards proved to be a smooth, steep rock, lying one mile from the main; and is the land first made upon this coast by captain Vancouver, who called it Cape Chatham. Its latitude is very nearly 35° 3’ south, longitude 116° 29’ east, and it was sketched by Mr Westall (Flinders, 1989 (1814): 50-51).*

Flinders had no hesitation on that same day in renaming Cape Howe, situated to the east of Chatham Island, and also named by Vancouver in 1791:

There is another Cape Howe upon this same coast, named by captain Cook, which makes it necessary to distinguish this by a descriptive adjunct, and I shall therefore call it West Cape Howe (Flinders, 1989 (1814): 52).

His description definitely states it as being an island, and situated about a mile from the mainland. Despite this, however, Flinders continued

In July 1831 a letter from a writer in Cockburn Sound dated 5 January 1831 was published in the *Leicester Journal*. It is considered that the Royal Navy surgeon and explorer Alexander Collie was the author, and he writes of the explorations made on the south coast ‘in the neighbourhood of Cape Chatham’ (Berryman, 2002: 211).





Despite the passage of 30 years since Flinders first proclaimed it as an island, it was still being referred to as Cape Chatham. Why?

References:

Berryman, I., 2002, *Swan River Letters, Volume 1*. Swan River Press, Glengarry, WA.

Findlay, E., 1998, *Arcadian Quest: William Westall's Australian Sketches*. National Library of Australia, Canberra.

Flinders, M., 1989 (1814), *A Voyage to Terra Australis*. The State Library of South Australia, Adelaide (Facsimile edition 1989).

Vancouver, G., 1984 (1798), *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean*. The Hakluyt Society, London (Facsimile edition 1984).



Chatham Island from Mandalay Beach

The *Investigator* Enters King George Sound 1801

At seven, we passed close on the south side of the Eclipse Isles; but Bald Head at the entrance of the sound had so different an appearance from what I had been led to expect, being a slope in this point of view, that the steep east end of Break-sea Island was at first taken for it. The error was fortunately perceived in time; and at eight o'clock we hauled up round the head, with the wind at west, and made a stretch into the

sound. It was then dark; but the night being fine, I did not hesitate to work up by the guidance of Captain Vancouver's chart, and having reached nearly into a line between Seal Island and the first beach round Bald Head, we anchored at eleven o'clock, in 8 fathoms, sandy bottom.

Matthew Flinders' log on the *Investigator*, 8 December 1801.



Bunyips?

The following letter to the editor appeared in *The Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal* of 15 February 1834. We also would like further light thrown upon this subject!

Sir, - Perhaps the following account of a large Amphibious animal, which frequents this part of the continent during the wet season, may not be uninteresting to many of you subscribers; and if you think it worthy of a place in your useful publication, you will oblige me by inserting it.

I had the information from one of the Murray River Natives, who has been living with me for 8 or 10 days. He gives it the several names of Me-maang, Mamamh, Wañgarin, Gowla, Gâbba, Girârâding, Böornâ, Gabla, Calarada. It stands higher than the ridge of my house, which is about 17 feet high. He says my house is a pickaniny buck to it, (that is little in comparison); that its bulk is proportionate; that it has a very long snout - can gape very wide - small teeth, but a great number of them: likewise it has ears - its eyes sunk deep in its head - long arms or flippers, which it continually shakes about it - its hands web-footed. From his description, its arms, or rather flippers, which are not straight, would reach 12 or 14 feet when extended; it has two legs and knee-joints, but its feet web-footed; it is covered with hair all over the body, and impervious to a spear, or that it is impossible to kill it, - and that it would be impossible to shoot it; he likewise states that it lies dormant for two or three months, then gorges itself, and again lies dormant; that it only comes at the approach of winter, and then again at the termination retreats into the sea. He describes it as being a terrific animal, and that the natives are in dread of it; that they sometimes creep softly behind a bush to peep at it in the swamp, and then walk far away from it; that it sometimes attacks them at night when asleep by their fires near the swamp where it lives, seizes one of them by the thigh, bites it off, and retreats into the swamp with the limb and eats it, making a most dreadful noise in the water. As to the truth of the last statement, I can scarcely think it is correct, but that some large animal, which we are as yet unacquainted with, exists in the large swamps, I have not the slightest doubt; for I asked him to make a noise similar to the noise which the animal makes; which he did, and it exactly corresponded with the sound I once

heard when out shooting by myself at a swamp below Rockingham Farm. I shot at a cockatoo, and immediately heard a noise exactly similar to the one the native made, something resembling the scream of a pig, but five times as loud, and then, as though it dived in the water, at the same time making a blubbering noise, which felt as though it shook the ground. I was prevented from seeing anything, owing to the bushes growing so thick on the side of the swamp: the swamp empties itself into a large lake about four miles from Rockingham, to which the natives give the name of Quidgip, - and the noise sounded as though the animal kept rising to the surface of the water, and then diving again, but at the same time sounded each time at a greater distance, and I have no doubt but it retreated into the lake. I told the native where I heard it, to which he assented. Since he told me, five or six other natives have arrived here from the Murray, who all corroborate the statement, and say that it is of a tremendous size. I have traversed the bush pretty much, both hunting and shooting, and have slept out often, so that I cannot be altogether unacquainted with the noise of birds or beasts; but I have never heard a similar noise either before or since.

The natives class it with the seal, and when speaking of it, they continually speak of the seal, and say, that they spear and eat a great many seals, but that this is of so tremendous a size, they cannot kill it, and it is very difficult to divide the ideas in their minds.

I shall endeavour to obtain more information respecting it, and if you think it worthy of attention, shall transmit it for publication.

I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.,

W. LEDGARD

We shall be glad to receive further communications from our Correspondent, and we court the inquiry of those who are sufficiently acquainted with the native language, to be enabled to throw any light upon this subject.



Heritage and the Old Gaffers Association

A short history of the OGA by Doris Hicks and Mike Igglesden.

Some 50 years ago the OGA was formed in the U.K. Essentially it was not an old boat preservation society, but its grass roots stemmed from a group involved with gaff rig and who began by the saving and restoring of old traditional boats. Thanks largely to the Association's example, the result in the UK has been a number of modern yards building gaff rig boats, and private individuals rescuing old wrecks, researching their past, and rebuilding to 'fill the horizons with their graceful sails.'

Our old friend Barry Hicks gathered a group of yacht people together in 1980 and formed the WA Old Gaffers Association. Doris, Barry's wife, recalls that "it wasn't meant to be an organisation at that time and we had never heard of the OGA, which I believe existed in other States and certainly in the UK. Barry put an advert in the *Sunday Times* saying would like to be in contact with people who had an interest in sailing ships and gaff rigged boats. He had seven replies. Brian Axcell was one of them as we had first met him in the previous October when he had his business called *B & N Shipwrighting* on *Preston Point Road*.

The Old Gaffers Association regatta at the Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club in 2010



We arranged to have a meeting at our house in Jubilee Street (where Robin and Pamela lived till about four years ago). I can't remember who the people were, only that it was pouring with rain and one man came all the way from City Beach. His surname was Brown but I can't remember the rest of it. Keith and Barbara Thomas were there, he was the Chief Engineer of the Gosnells Council at the time and remained a member till he retired and moved to the country somewhere. Rod Waller was an early member, he was the cartoonist for the now defunct Western Mail newspaper. Ron Howells was also a member, then Frank Marchant, Peter and Darryl Hick, Tony Oliver, Owen John from Hopetoun, Tony Larard and Shirley and Wally Cook, who were to become the mainstay of the OGA in years to come.

We met on a monthly basis and I used to send out a short newsletter. After a while they decided they wanted to pay a \$5.00 annual fee to cover postage, etc. and then they wanted a name and that's how we became the Old Gaffers Association without being affiliated to anyone at that time.

Gradually people wanted to get onto an official basis and Barry became President. This was not what he wanted; he had just wanted to meet people with the same interest. They decided they wanted to race their boats and we had an old cray

boat at the time which we called Jean Dee. When we bought the boat, it was in a dreadful mess. Barry cleaned out two bin loads of cans, bottles, semi-pornographic literature from the walls – and completely gutted it. Then he fitted it out as a little gaff-rigged ship. I remember him saying at the time 'poor little boat, she nearly died of shame'. He wasn't happy about



racing her, she was too heavy and he said 'It was beneath her dignity'.

I think it was the Flying Squadron who agreed to host our races and Barry is not a yacht club person so about that time, probably 1983 when he decided to hand over the president's job to someone else and Frank Marchant agreed to take it on. Barry remained a member. I think that South Perth, East Perth Yacht Club and Perth Flying Squadron became involved. The Association manned the starting box at PFSYC and held its meetings in the Club's board room and might also have hosted a race at times. We did have a lot of fun sailing on the river and many members would congregate on our boat, because it was bigger and we had morning teas on there just as we do on the open days but, of course, on a much smaller scale. You might have seen in our museum a sign which Brian made for Barry 'Ye olde Gaffers tea shoppe' and it hung on Jean Dee. Brian had Delta at that time. Jack and Clare Gardiner had Gumleaf. Ron Howells and Terry sailed on Suzie Wren and we all used to sail on Sundays. At Christmas we used to have a party in the museum in Jubilee Street, which was on a much smaller scale than it is now, but lots of people came. Happy days."

Mike continues:

As time moved on there was a shift to East Fremantle Yacht Club where Doug Rickman, with his knowledge of handicapping, encouraged racing from that Club. It was in the middle 1990's that I became involved and, by some quirk of fate, replaced Doug as handicapper. What a thankless job! Racing was divided into two divisions and a fleet of seven or eight boats regularly competed. More importantly, to my mind, were the 'picnic' days, including a race in the Fremantle Inner Harbour. The Harbour Master was approached, and the proposed course accepted. The event took place with the start line in front of the balcony of the passenger terminal in front of a large crowd of spectators who really enjoyed the spectacle. This was the first yacht race held in the inner harbour and the OGA's first public appearance.

The re-enactment of the arrival of the first fleet and the OGA's involvement in a simulated delivery of goods and supplies to 'King's Meadow'

jetty in Guildford, created a good public image for the association, especially after coverage was aired by a local TV Station.

The next event the OGA was requested to attend was to tow the *Skopje* replica to Perth Waters, using sail where possible. The Prime Minister Bob Hawke and his wife were on the boat together with a Dutch carpenter who was involved in building the boat in Holland. Jack Gardiner was declared skipper and he recalled that the carpenter was a typical Island Dutchman and 'did nothing but yell and point'.

All went well and the vessel was moored at the Police Jetty at the foot of William Street where an official welcome was conducted. "By this time," recalls Frank Marchant, "the wind had increased, sailing was impossible as *Skopje* would not point up at all, so we sent towing lines over from my launch, *Sunflower* and with some effort against tide and wind, eased her off the jetty and back to Royal Perth Yacht Club." Frank began to wonder, since the tow was so difficult against the sea breeze and, with *Skopje's* very bluff bow, that possibly he was towing the jetty as well.

Skopje was built as a replica of the vessel built on the Abrolhos Islands after the wreck of the *Batavia* and sailed back to the East Indies. Apparently she was named *Skopje* since she was rigged as a sloop.

1992 saw the incorporation of the OGA, another stepping stone towards maturity.

One of the many picnic days enjoyed was at the opening of the restored Claremont Jetty. The then town planner for Claremont, Ron Brooks, instigated the event and the Council donated \$200 for trophies and also erected a canvas type shelter on the jetty end, which dispersed snacks and drinks. The event was well supported and the older citizens were very taken by the old crafts. 'I knew that boat years ago' was a comment made by many bystanders.

Possibly the most prestigious event to which we were invited was to the re-opening of the historic Rowing Club at the foot of Barrack Street, on the 31st January 1994. The number of members able to attend was restricted to small boats of the Association since clearance under the Narrows



Bridge is only approximately twenty feet or so. An anchor was put down 100metres off the club and six boats lay to, bow to stern. H.R.H. Prince Charles, arrived with his entourage for the opening ceremony in the boat shed and he then, together with two Federal Police officers and another VIP, climbed aboard a 'rubber ducky'. They pulled up alongside each of our boats in turn, Charles having a little chat in a very relaxed manner. When my turn arrived I explained to him that we were off to a picnic this afternoon and suggested that he might prefer to spend his time with us



Mike Igglesden sailing his first restoration, the gaffer Seafarer, in Dover Harbour in 1947

instead of his other commitments. A wry smile was then forthcoming. He performed his job, the 'common touch' very well. I do not envy his role in life one little bit. That evening we attended a Garden Party in the grounds of Government

House, a pleasant way to conclude an interesting, different day.

The years have been spent enjoying 'raft ups' and little voyages in company to Rockingham, Mandurah, Hillary's, Rottnest, Garden Island, Carnac Island and up the river as far as Guildford and places in between. Some events entailed overnight camping but mostly just one day sails.

In 1997 I was invited to partake in an Old Gaffer Regatta at Howth, just north east of Dublin. All the boats (twenty or so) were moored Mediterranean fashion, bow to the wharf and anchor astern, and we had some trouble slipping out with the motor going astern. Eventually we arrived in the starting area, just off the clubhouse. There was some confusion as to the starting procedure, with some boats starting on the warning signal, others of the fleet (including us) on the preparatory signal and a few on the actual start! We set the full main, inner and outer jib on the huge bowsprit of my allocated 40 footer and had grand sailing in the rain with a 15 knot northerly breeze. The course, round the 'Ireland's Eye' island and return was accomplished in two and a half hours, in which time I took some good photos of the others in the fleet, and re-learnt forgotten skills I had acquired when sailing on the Brixham trawler *Esmerelda* in my teenage years.

The Guinness fuelled prize night presentation was an hilarious affair with no-one caring about the results. The whole concept of the day was just the enjoyment of each other's company.

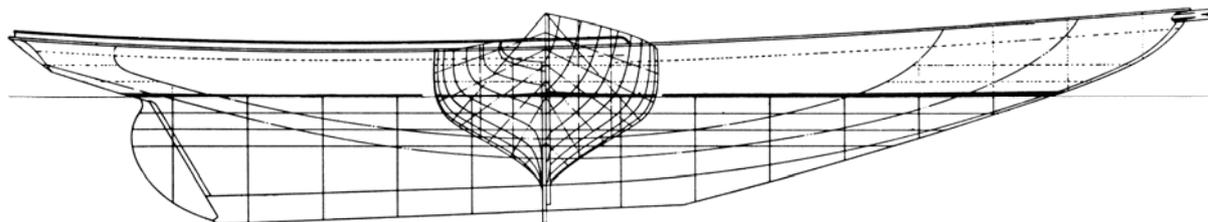
I am of the firm belief that a sense of history and tradition plays a large part in many Old Gaffers psyche. Not only old boats but ancient buildings, cultures, civilizations, engender a fascination for us where there factors, possible surreptitiously, become an important influence in our lives. One way of retaining this, our heritage, alive, is through the annual Old Gaffers Regatta. People's imaginations are stirred to the extent that, sailing before them, are historical links to our maritime past. A past to which they, realize it or not, owe a great deal. Should this connection be lost it would prove to be a great tragedy in this world of ours.



QUIZ

Answers to September

1. The schooner *Bluenose* was 143 ft long (see lines below), and STS *Leeuwin II* is 132.2 ft.



2. Steeve is the angle the bowsprit makes with the horizontal. A high-steeved bowsprit is one that is well cocked up.
3. Esperance Bay was named by Joseph Antoine Raymond Bruny, Chevalier D'Entrecasteaux on 16 December 1792. It was named after the consort vessel *Espérance*, which accompanied D'Entrecasteaux's *Recherche* in the search for the lost expedition of La Perouse.

Quiz

1. Which is the older vessel – USS *Constitution* or HMS *Victory*?
2. The Beaufort scale of wind speeds includes Gale Force 8 and Storm Force 10. What are the actual speeds for these winds?
3. Matilda Bay on the Swan River was named after the wife of a prominent early Western Australian. Who was she?

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