



# MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

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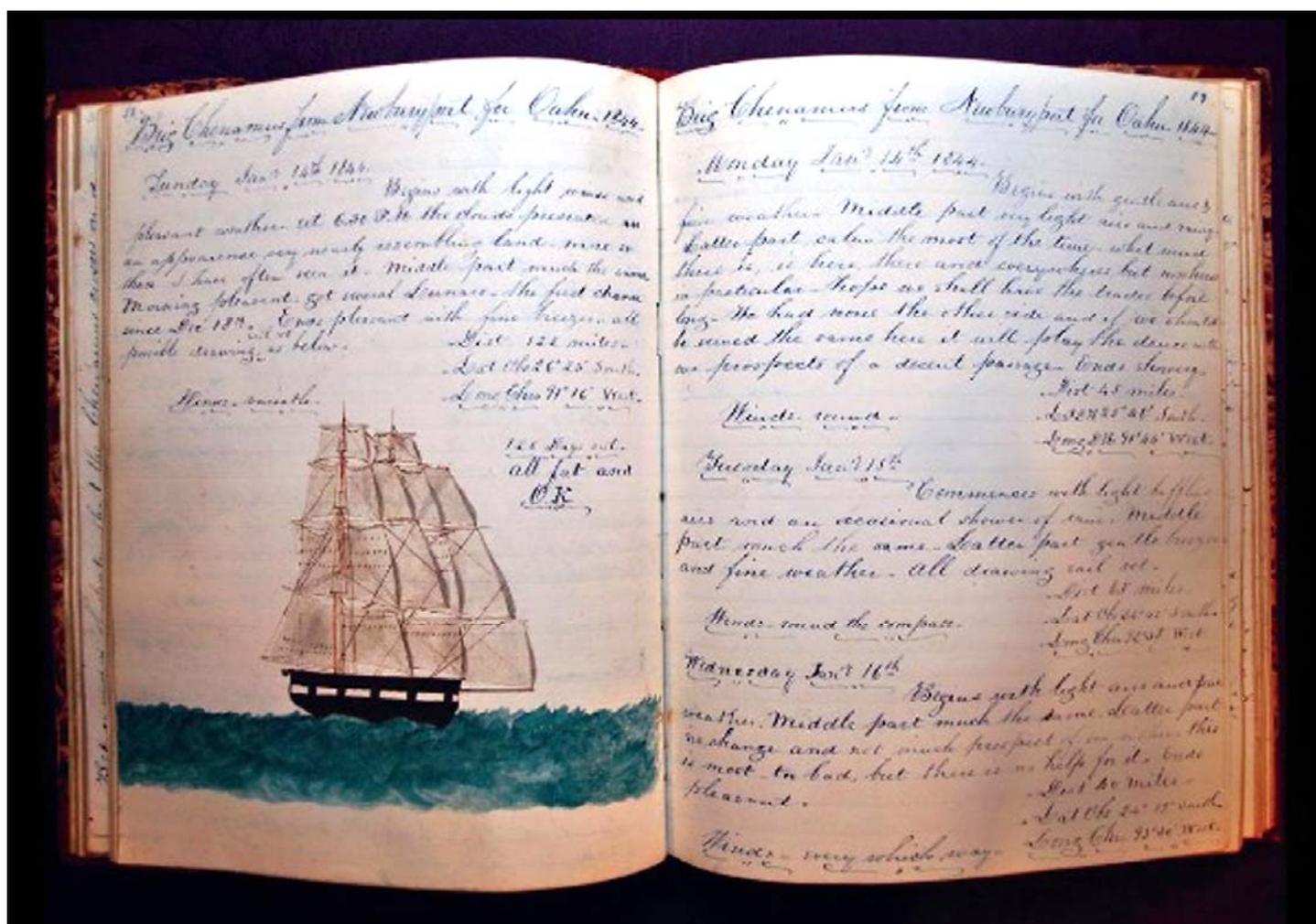
Website: [www.maritimeheritage.org.au](http://www.maritimeheritage.org.au)

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

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Ship's log from the brig Chinaman. Dated January 1844, the log gives details of weather, wind and sea conditions. The vessel was hoping to pick up trade winds to ensure a quick passage. Unfortunately by the bottom of the page 'Winds every which way' were still blowing.



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

(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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Robin Hicks (left) receiving his Certificate of Honorary Life Membership of the Maritime Heritage Association from President Nick Burningham. In the background may be seen part of Robin's workshop where the Hicks' Collection will eventually be housed.

Photo: Peter Worsley

## Did You Know?

**Bidjigurdu** — An island. The natives have a tradition that Rottnest, Carnac and Garden Island, once formed part of the mainland, and that the intervening ground was thickly covered with trees; which took fire in some unaccountable way, and burned with such intensity that the ground split asunder with a great noise, and the sea rushed in between, cutting off those islands from the mainland. This is a savage's description of subterranean fire; and although there are not many indications of volcanic activity in the neighbourhood, yet some recent observations of the officers of HMS Beagle, during an examination of that part of the coast, and of the Abrolhos Islands, would rather tend to confirm than to overthrow this opinion (Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal, 20 August 1842: 3a).



# Maritime Heritage Association Inc.

## President's Report to the Annual General Meeting

### April 3rd, 2016

There can be no disguising the sad truth that this has been a year of losses for the MHA despite the excellent financial situation reported by our esteemed treasurer.

We have marked the passing of Geoff Shellam, our long-serving senior vice-president, a yachtsman of note, a true gentleman, a quiet over-achiever, and a person we have all been proud and honoured to serve alongside on the committee.

Just days after Professor Shellam's passing we had to face the loss of Brian Lemon, a distinguished former president of this Association, and so very much more. Brian was a maritime historian whose meticulous research was brilliantly presented in his perfect (and multi-award-winning) watercraft models. He also published research in *Model Shipwright*, a journal that has attracted contributions from other famed maritime historians including Basil Greenhill. Brian's models will remain as a fitting memorial to a man who wore his exceptional achievements so lightly, with impish good humour.

The passing of Barry Hicks was something we knew must happen eventually, and yet was almost unimaginable. We are all diminished by his passing, as is the Association and Maritime Heritage itself. I am proud to have once described him in print as a living national treasure. He has gone, leaving his fantastic museum collection, and we rejoice that the museum will live on thanks to the passion, skills and knowledge of Barry's son Robin Hicks. But Barry was a man of such luminous and unaffected authenticity... we should rejoice in having known him while grieving his passing.

Another marker of the end of an era, which it is difficult to contemplate without a sense of loss, is the decision of Barbara and Ross Shardlow to move to Albany. I hardly need say, we hope they will enjoy a blissful and creative life in Albany because their genial and courteous personalities and extraordinary gifts, talents and genius assure that happy outcome. Our loss is Albany's abundant gain. I am unable find an appropriate way of

recounting Ross and Barbara's contribution to the Association. To list their significant material contributions would take hours... it would be a history of the Association.

Ross and Barbara are the Association. Ross was much our most distinguished president and gave the Association its direction and impetus with such momentum that we have largely coasted along on that momentum since Ross transitioned from President to elder statesman and mentor to all subsequent committees. Barbara served as the Association's secretary, producing such impeccable minutes that one could write an authoritative text book on minute keeping without reference to any other examples. I don't want to sound a note of despair, but I do wonder how we will get on when the grown-ups have gone... to Albany.

We shall not succumb to despair. Our Journal remains a source of pride thanks to Peter's masterful editorship, and once again we thank Julie Taylor and Par Excellence for the excellent printing. Peter and Jill Worsley's third volume in their series about the maritime heritage of Western Australia's coasts, *Green Seas and White Horses*, was published in this last year by the Australian Institute of Maritime Archaeology with the Maritime Heritage Association. It will add to their reputation for meticulous research and clarity of presentation. *Green Seas and White Horses* very significantly advances the aims of this Association.

Our indefatigable secretary Marcia van Zeller published her historical novel about the wreck of the *Georgette*, entitled *The Capes*, and has undertaken a lecture and book-signing tour of venues around the State as well as broadcast interviews. Furthermore, thanks to Marcia's expertise and authoring of a Social Media Strategy we now have a presence on Facebook which attracts a significant number of "likes" and viewings when we post to it.

In our collaboration with Hesperian Press, Rod Dickson's *History of the Whalers on the West Coast* has been published.



The publication of *Albany and the Whalers* as the first book under the Maritime Heritage Association imprint is certainly one of this year's significant achievements. It is a handsome publication thanks to Julie's professional design and layout work, and illustrations from Jill and Ross. I hope we can continue to be a publisher of such works as well as publisher of the Journal. The marketing of *Albany and the Whalers* in places far beyond Perth, including Albany, has been undertaken with impressive zeal by several members of the committee, notably Marcia van Zeller, Bob Johnson and Murray Kornweibel. Sales have already

come close to returning the cost of the print run of 500 copies.

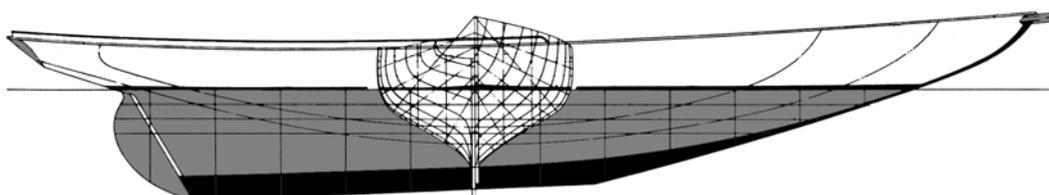
This year has seen the MHA's 175th committee meeting, a significant milestone. I would like to thank all the committee members, and Barbara and Ross Shardlow, for their many efforts and successes in keeping the Association on the course plotted by Admiral Shardlow back in the previous century and still making respectable headway.

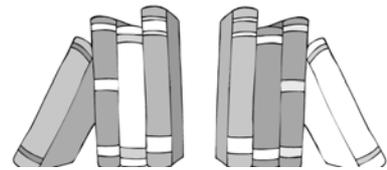
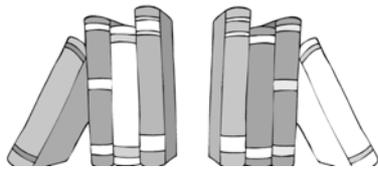
Nick Burningham



*Ross Shardlow holding the Certificate of Honorary Life Membership presented to him and Barbara by President Nick Burningham (left), while the editor of the journal seated in the middle is trying to look inconspicuous.*

*Photo: Bob Johnson*





## CALL TO ALL WRITERS (and Would-be Writers!)

Your Maritime Heritage Association is moving in a new direction, spearheaded by the successful publication by the Association of a new edition of Les Johnson's *Albany and the Whalers*, the first of what we hope will be a series of booklets on maritime matters of interest to Western Australians.

Is there a topic of particular interest to you that you would like to research in a voluntary capacity, and then put forward as an idea, to the Publications Committee of MHA? The Publications Committee can help you from that point on, to a finalisation of text and then publication. The publication would have your name on the cover, an ISBN number, and a copy would be lodged with both the National and Western Australian State libraries. You would thereby become a published author with a book in the WA State Library system.

A volunteer whose choice of topic was accepted would need to research and write a text which would finalise at about forty A5 sized pages. Illustrations would need to be collected to complement the text. As an example, two members have already expressed an interest in doing research with a view to publication by MHA, their topics of choice being *The Brig Emily Taylor* and *Macassan Perahu to Cruise-ship Perahu Phinisi: the development and survival of South Sulawesi Perahu*.

1. The Maritime Heritage Association will have final control over production, as this organisation will be covering the major costs of printing, etc.
2. Several members of the Publications Committee are recognised authors on their own account, and are very willing to help first-time writers to overcome difficulties encountered along the way.
3. About forty pages is the anticipated size of works, as production costs are greater above this limit. The booklets will bear the MHA logo, and will be sold at established outlets which already handle stocks of *Albany and the Whalers*. This does not preclude the Publications Committee seeking new outlets, especially if works have a particular geographic interest or will appeal to other groups such as tourists, recreational divers, etc.
4. Any profits from sales will remain with the MHA as a means of recouping costs, but selling price will be as low as possible to boost volume sales. One of the stated aims of the Association is to *preserve, promote and promote knowledge of Western Australia's maritime heritage*, and one method of achieving this is through volume sales of attractive and informationally accurate productions.
5. Copyright will remain with the author.
6. A suggested size is about 12,000 words with up to 20 illustrations. Further information may be obtained through the editor of this magazine.

Here are a few topics which have been suggested as possible areas of research, but the Publications Committee would be very willing to consider any other topic which you would be willing to explore.

*Fremantle and the Whalers*

*The Swan River — An Overview of Development from 1829 to the Present*

*Lighthouses along the WA Coast*

*Aspects of Maritime Use by Western Australia's Indigenous Peoples*

*Activities at the Port of Fremantle during World War II*

*Tugs*

*From Proud Sailing Ships to Coal Hulks at Fremantle*

The Publications Committee are waiting to hear from you!

Please contact the editor for further details.



# The Ditty Bag

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

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



The US Navy has reinstated compulsory celestial navigation training including the use of the sextant. This is a reaction to the rising fears that computers used for navigation on board ships could be hacked or malfunction.

*At which period there were gentlemen and there were seamen in the navy. But the seamen were not gentlemen; and the gentlemen were not seamen.*

*(Lord Macaulay, 1848, History of England)*

During World War II the Naval Rescue Tug Service brought back to ports in the UK nearly three million tons of torpedoed shipping, saving cargoes and crew. They also towed the Mulberry Harbour sections to France for D-Day.

*The Dugong oil will doubtless before long form an important and valuable item in our exports, as it appears this fish abounds in large numbers on our North West Coast. Messrs. Francisco Bros. have, I hear, despatched their cutter the Brothers for the purpose of obtaining this oil, and also pearl shells.*

*(Inquirer, 13 March 1867: 2.)*

The largest pure paddle steamers ever built were the sister-ships *Great Buffalo* and *Greater Detroit*. They were built for the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company for use on Lake Erie. At 7,700 tons they were 519 ft long and each could carry over 1,500 passengers. (Note: The *Great Eastern* had both paddles and a propeller. It was 18,195 tons, 680 ft long with a beam of 83 ft, the largest ship in the world at the time.)

Did you know that the original paddle steamer *Decoy*, which arrived at Fremantle from Adelaide carrying miners in 1905, is still in existence? It is now a houseboat on the Murray River near Mannum.

The first fully-welded ocean-going ship was the 620-ton *Fullager* built by Cammell Laird at Birkenhead in 1920. The steel plates were joined by arc welding using stick electrodes of mild steel rod dipped in asbestos slurry. Lloyd's classed it

100A1, adding: *Electrically Welded, Subject to Biennial Survey—Experimental*. It was named after W.H. Fullager, the designer of two-stroke opposed diesel engines.

**Parish-rigged:** A vessel which, through the parsimony of its owner, had worn or bad gear aloft and meagre victuals below.

The United States Coast Guard barque *Eagle* was built in 1936 by Blohm & Voss, Hamburg, Germany, and named *Horst Wessel*. It was acquired by the U.S. Coast Guard as war reparations at the end of World War II.

The battleship HMS *Agincourt* was commissioned in August 1914. The ship had more turreted heavy guns (14 x 12 inch) and more main turrets (7) than any other battleship before or since. Instead of the usual naming of the turrets (A, B, C, etc.) they were named after the days of the week.

**To come home with a wet sail:** To make swift progress to victory, like a ship with sails wetted in order to keep close to the wind. Wetting the sail canvas caused the weave of the sailcloth (cotton or flax) to tighten, resulting in a stiffer, flatter sail. This expression is now applied to many different sports.

When really severe weather struck whaling ships the whale-boats in their davits were 'turned down', that is they were turned with the keel pointing outwards to better protect them from the sea.

On 12 November 1896 the French Chamber of Deputies accepted the Greenwich meridian in place of the Paris meridian as the basis of the standard time for France.

*As a youngster I ran appalling risks from crazy boats and inadequate gear because no one could understand that one must sail in anything rather than nothing.*

Claud Worth, 1934



# The Loss of *Crofton Hall*

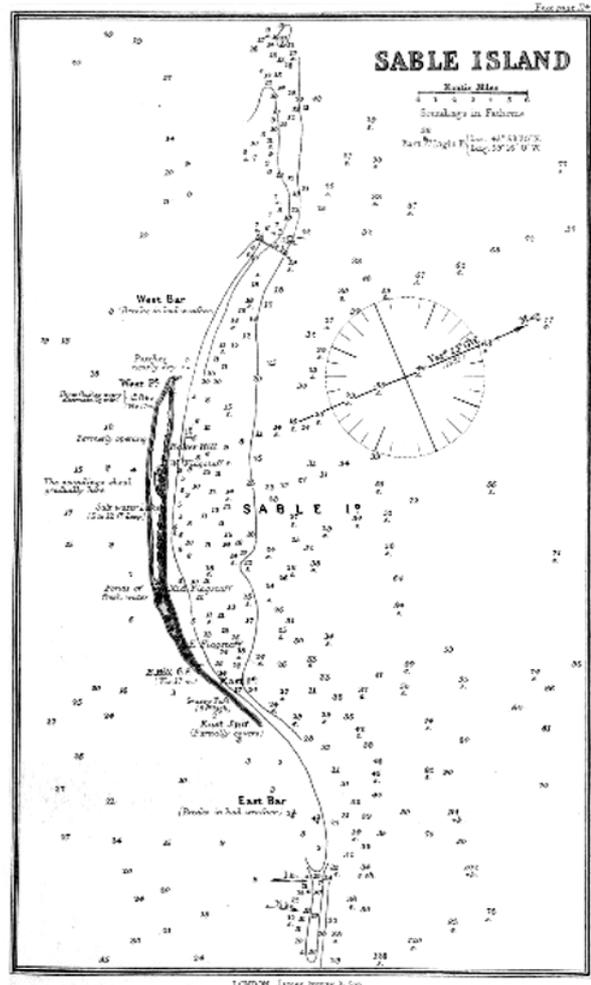
By Geoff Vickridge.

With more than 350 vessels recorded as wrecked on Sable Island, the 44-kilometre long, crescent-shaped sand island, was deservedly referred to as ‘The Graveyard of the Atlantic’. About 300 kilometres east south east off the Nova Scotian coast, the island has been moving slowly to the east powered by the wind and the currents in the vicinity and because of this, the lighthouse on the west end has had to be moved four times. The first recorded vessel to be lost on Sable Island was HMS *Delight* in 1583.

One of the many victims was the four-masted British barque, *Crofton Hall*. Built by W.H. Potter & Co. of Liverpool, England, *Crofton Hall* had a gross registered tonnage of 2,127. The 91.91-metre long vessel had a beam of 11.9 metres and a draft of 7.16 metres. She was rigged with skysails and royals above double and single topgallant sails.

The iron vessel was launched in April 1883 for Herron Dunn & Co. of Liverpool; her first master was Captain Kilvert. Sold to the Globe Shipping Co. (Chas. G. Dunn & Co.) of Liverpool in 1889,

she left that year from Penarth for Rio de Janeiro, San Francisco and Le Havre under the command of Captain T H Lyons. In 1891, *Crofton Hall* sailed from New York with a cargo of kerosene for Calcutta. Shortly after sailing from the Indian



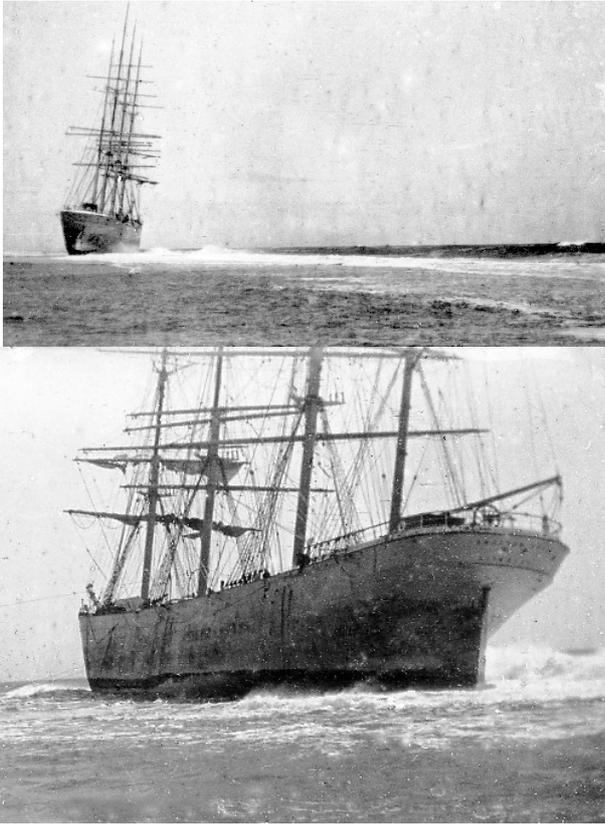
An 1884 chart of the crescent-shaped sand island



Superintendent of Sable Island from 1884 to 1912, Robert Jarvis Boutillier supervised the rescue of many men from the 33 ships wrecked during his tenure

port with a cargo of linseed, the barque was forced to put back when six of the crew died from food poisoning.

Her final voyage commenced at Dundee on 22 March 1898 when she was bound for New York with 1,000 tons of coal as ballast. In command was Captain Ronald S. Thurber (who was born in Freeport, Nova Scotia) with officers comprising 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> mates - the latter without a certificate of competency, and a crew of 14 able seamen, seven apprentices, a cook, a steward, one carpenter and a sailmaker. The ship was fairly well equipped and the master supplied the charts



*Two views of the starboard side of Crofton Hall being pounded by the destructive surf on the eastern end of Sable Island*

which were dated 1895.

The vessel was navigated by the standard magnetic compass on the forepart of the poop and steered by the binnacle magnetic compass forward of the wheel. While the compasses had not been adjusted during the time Thurber was the master, the deviations were recorded; there was a difference of several points (1 point = 11.25°) between the two compasses on many of the headings.

After passing down the English Channel, departure was taken from the Bishop's Rock Lighthouse. The course was then directed to pass to the south of the Grand Banks to the south east of Newfoundland. The chief mate kept one watch with the third mate while the second mate kept watch with the master, but was occasionally trusted with the charge of a watch by himself.

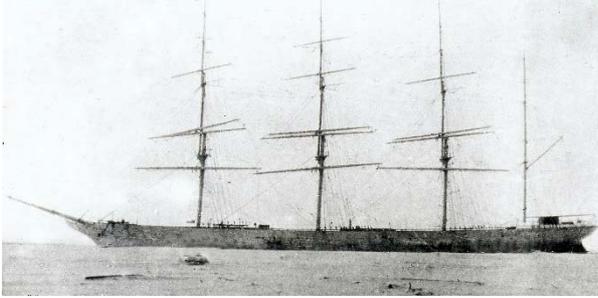
On 12 April solar observations were taken to establish the ship's position which accorded with

the dead reckoning position. From that date until *Crofton Hall* stranded, no further astronomical observations were able to be taken due to the inclement weather, including the usual fog present at that time of the year. Sable Island was shrouded with fog for about 125 days every twelve months. Rules for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea were followed by the barque with a lookout at night and another forward during foggy weather. The fog horn was also sounded at regular intervals. In the early hours of 17 April, 1898, the iron barque *Crofton Hall* stranded three miles from the East End of Sable Island in thick fog. There was no loss of life and some of the men were saved with the aid of a breeches buoy manned by men of the lifesaving crew stationed on Sable Island.

From 8pm on 16 April, the courses steered by the barque were not correctly ascertained or noted down. Evidence given at the subsequent inquiry, was that the vessel was, 'frequently steered in a careless manner', in some cases without the knowledge of the officer of the watch or the master. For about 20 to 30 minutes before the *Crofton Hall* struck, she was up to one point off course. The helmsman, Bernard Kummel, admitted that he did not inform the second mate who had the watch. There were many discrepancies to the courses recorded in the log which the Wreck Commissioner scathingly reported, 'cannot be intelligently accounted for.' He went on, 'On the 13<sup>th</sup> none of the courses made by the ship are entered in the proper column, and upon the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> of April no distances are noted down.' The Nautical Assessors assisting the



*A temporary hut was erected as a shelter for the crews salvaging anything of value from the barque*



*The graceful lines of the ill-fated Crofton Hall viewed from the port beam showed no apparent damage – such was not the case*

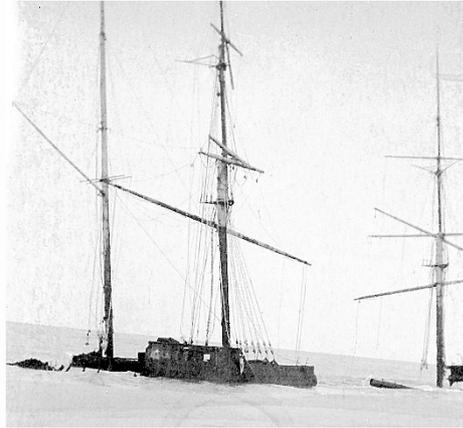
Wreck Commissioner together found that the log was kept 'in a slovenly manner'. During the inquiry the master was requested to give the dead reckoning positions on certain dates; he advised that it was impossible to do so.

On the day prior to the stranding, the wind was variable and the weather foggy; the ship's speed was between nine and 10 knots. At noon that day,



*Men of the lifesaving establishment and crew from Crofton Hall salvaging what could be saved from the stricken vessel*

the vessel's position was calculated by dead reckoning by Captain Thurber but not recorded in the log-book. *Crofton Hall* was 187 miles south-east of Sable Island according to him but the First Ma-



*The end is nigh as the sands of Sable Island subsume the barque Crofton Hall*

te calculated a position 47 miles closer.

On the afternoon of the 16<sup>th</sup> all plain sail was set to the main top gallant sail and the barque was kept close hauled; the barque was proceeding at a speed of between nine and ten knots. During the First mate's watch from 8pm to midnight, the weather deteriorated with fog, high winds and heavy seas running. The master passed orders that he was to be called if there was any change in the weather or a light was sighted. These orders were passed verbally as no night order book was kept. Somewhat amazingly, the officers didn't have access to the charts nor were they consulted as to the position of *Crofton Hall*.

At midnight, the Second Mate relieved the First Mate as officer of the watch. The fog lifted shortly after; about 1.15am, the lookout sighted a light about five degrees off the starboard bow which he reported to the Second Mate who went forward to the bow and watched it for about five minutes. Why he failed to report the light to the master remains a mystery especially as he had spoken to him about three-quarters of an hour before the barque struck. Just previous to this, the main top gallant sail was taken in and all hands went aloft to stow it. They were on the yard when *Crofton Hall* struck. All members of the crew survived and some were landed by use of a breeches buoy. As much of the victuals as could be salvaged was landed along with parts of the barque such as the sails.

*With her back broken abaft the mainmast, the barque Crofton Hall presented a forlorn sight on the east end of Sable Island on the morning of 17 April, 1898 when she stranded. She was a total loss but the crew was saved*





*The forecastle of Crofton Hall with the destructive surf to starboard.*

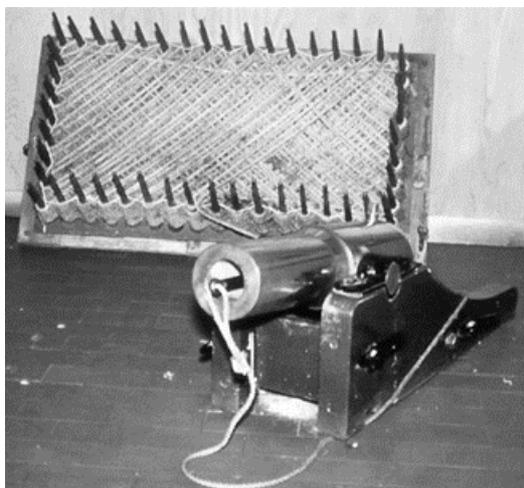


*The immaculate upper deck of Crofton Hall seen shortly after stranding.*

It would appear that within a relatively brief period, the crew was landed at Halifax as a Court of Inquiry was held in the Nova Scotian capital commencing on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1898 and running for four days. The Wreck Commissioner, W H Smith, RNR presided, assisted by Captain Bloomfield Douglas RNR, Naval Assistant with Marine and Fisheries Canada and Captain Louis Anderson, Master Mariner and Underwriters' Agent, as Nautical Assessors; the inquiry was established pursuant to the Wrecks and Salvage Act of Canada.

The finding was that the stranding was attributed to the master in allowing *Crofton Hall*:

*to approach the vicinity of Sable Island and its banks during foggy weather, where strong and irregular currents are known to exist, without taking precautionary measures recommended in the sailing directions, and endeavouring to obtain soundings to verify the position of the ship.*



*The Lyle gun was used to shoot a line out to wrecks within 200 metres of the shore. Crews would use the line to haul out heavier lines to carry a breeches buoy.*

Blame also attached to the second mate, Cosmo Mackay, who failed to inform the master of the light sighted on the starboard bow for three-quarters of an hour prior to stranding. The fixed light was that on the east end of Sable Island.

Captain Thurber's Canadian certificate of competency was suspended for three calendar months as and from 18 May, 1898, while the Imperial certificate of Cosmo Mackay was suspended for six calendar months from the same date. The First Mate, J W Ellis, did not escape the displeasure of the Court and was censured and severely reprimanded for keeping the log in a slovenly manner, and 'omitting to make some important entries ...' His culpability was not helped by the fact that he held a master's certificate of competency.



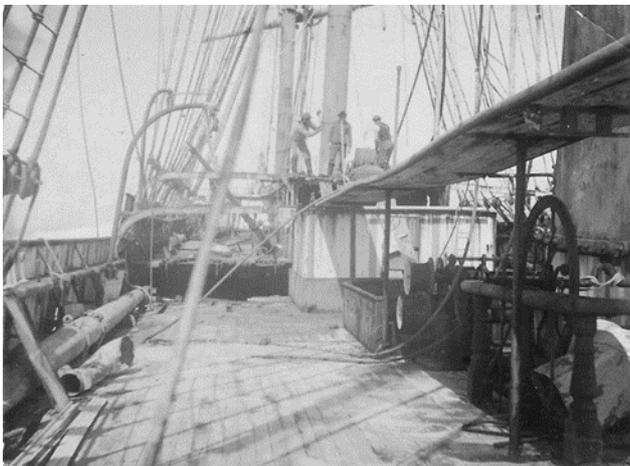
*The breeches buoy in action, disembarking some of the crew of the barque Crofton Hall. The arrangement was later used to salvage food and parts of the ship such as the sails*

Alexander Graham Bell, his wife Mabel, the photographer Alex McCurdy and some others arrived in July 1898 to search for evidence of friends who lost their lives when the ship *La Bourgogne*



*The midships section of the vessel shortly after she struck is seen to be quite orderly.*

collided with the British sailing ship *Cromartyshire* in dense fog 110 kilometres south of the island on 4 July. When the French ship sank, 548



*Within a brief period, the pounding surf took its toll of Crofton Hall as can be seen.*



*Alexander Graham Bell and his wife Mabel journeyed to Sable Island in the steamship Harlaw for ten days in July 1898.*

were lost; almost half the crew survived but only 13 per cent of the passengers and then only one of them a woman. The sailing ship was undamaged. An inquiry in Halifax blamed disorganization and panic for the huge loss of life onboard *La Bourgoigne*.

One of the problems which occurred prior to the introduction of wireless telegraphy was when a large number of passengers and crew were landed and had to be fed and accommodated until such time as a rescue vessel could be sent out from Halifax; there was no way of communicating with the mainland. Although Bell proposed a kite with a message attached, it was concluded that the distance was too great and subject to the vagaries of the wind.

*Post-script: During 1965-67, Geoff Vickridge served on loan with the Royal Canadian Navy and flew over Sable Island on several occasions. He was fortunate to meet Trixie Embree (nee Boutillier) who gave him her collection of photographs, and glass and film negatives which covered much of the period during which she lived on the island; these were repatriated to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 2005. Trixie well remembered meeting Alexander Graham and Mabel Grosvenor Bell.*



# How an Amateur Group Produced a Phone APP for Shipwrecks

By Ian Warne of MAAWA.

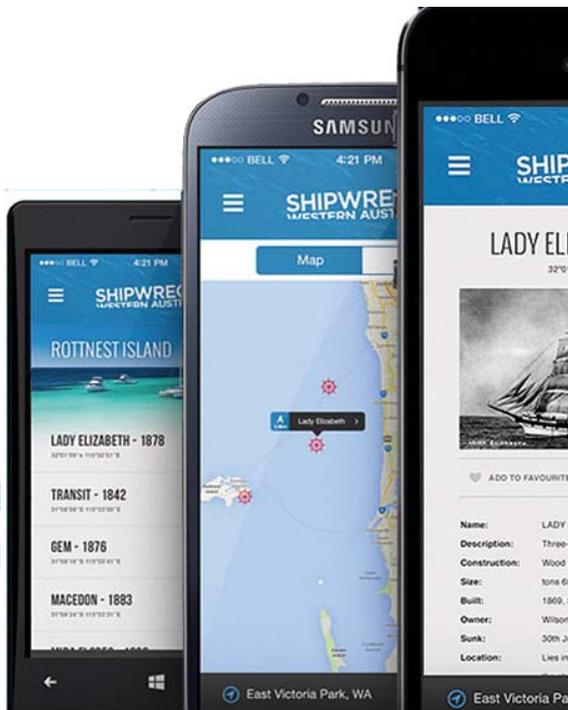
*“We wanted to bring History out of boxes” - and direct to the public*

Maritime Archaeological Association of WA (MAAWA) formed in 1974 - is a group consisting of divers, historians and enthusiastic volunteers/members, who are interested in Western Australia’s rich Maritime Heritage. The Association is closely affiliated with the WA Maritime Museum.

Over the past 40 years of dedicated historical and underwater research a data base of historical

The phone apps contains historical and pictorial information of the vessel when it was still sailing or operating (most are 100 years old) and shows how the wreck looks now, complete with drawings and underwater photos, as well as exact wreck location via Google maps.

Since the launch of the Website and Phone Apps, more research and interpretation is continuing, particularly relating to shipwrecks found in the Mid-West Coast. This area is rich in historical interest with some Dutch major shipwrecks i.e. *Batavia* being located in this area.



## The Future?

To work on projects which can record and expand our knowledge of Shipwrecks and Maritime history in Western Australia

Gain assistance from the public to find more old photographs and stories of the people involved – owners, ship captains and their families

Design the project for later expansion around the coast of Western Australia.

In conjunction with the WA Maritime Museum, involve schools and community groups to research and develop shipwrecks found in their local area, to be included in the data base.

To include new technologies such as 3D modelling and videos of important shipwrecks.

wrecks has been developed. During this time MAAWA members discovered masses of historical information had been stored in libraries, boxes, sheds, etc. which has never been made available to the general public.

In 2014 MAAWA (with the assistance of a financial grant through LotteryWest), produced a web page and phone app showing details of the 30 known wrecks in the Swan and Canning Rivers and 12 wrecks around Rottne. The website is now easily accessible for Schools, Libraries, commercial and recreational tourism operators, and the general community to access all the same information as the phone apps.



*Lucky finds at libraries and online: this photo captioned Kids Fishing on Jetty shows the steamer Harley*



# Elephant tusks provide clue to Mid-West Dutch shipwreck off WA coast

A report by Bonnie Christian, ABC news 11 March 2016

Elephant tusks found on a shipwreck off Western Australia's Mid West coast are a key indicator that another 300-year-old wreck could be in the same vicinity, according to the Western Australian Museum.

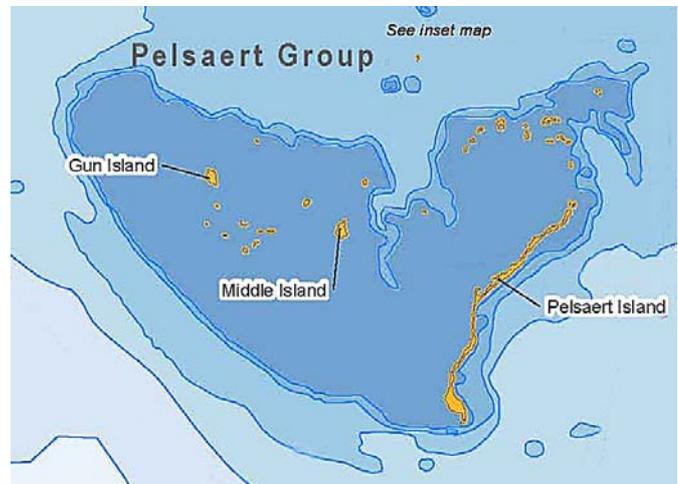
The museum has begun a search for a Dutch East India Company vessel, the *Aagtekerke*, which was believed to have been lost off the Abrolhos Islands in 1727, after its maiden voyage from the Netherlands a year earlier. Historical research and previous surveys indicated there was a high probability an 18<sup>th</sup> century shipwreck lay in the vicinity of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) wreck, *Zeewijk*, which was lost off the Abrolhos Islands at Half Moon Reef in 1727.

WA Museum CEO Alec Cole said there were a lot of theories about where the *Aagtekerke* may lie, but this one had been compelling enough to attract funding from global shipbuilder Austal to underwrite the search.

"One is that it's also wrecked on the Abrolhos Islands and even that it might've been wrecked so close to the existing sites that the two wrecks might have become confused, so there might be two wrecks instead of one," Mr Cole said.

He said author and shipwreck hunter Hugh Edwards, who was one of the people who discovered the *Batavia* shipwreck, said finding the *Zeewijk* in 1968 had led to even more mysteries. "One of the key bits of evidence that Hugh has cited was the presence of ivory on the wreck site of the *Zeewijk*," he said. "Whereas in fact there is no evidence that the *Zeewijk* was ever carrying elephant ivory [and] we believe the *Aagtekerke* probably was. At this stage it would really be total conjecture to imagine what might be left there and what might not be but [there could be] any amount of material from canons to personal affects to currency that might've been carried at the time."

Batavia Coast Maritime Heritage Association chairman Howard Gray said there was also evidence from survivors of the *Zeejick* wreck.



"When the survivors of the *Zeejick* came ashore they found material there that they thought indicated that someone had been there before them," he said. "Hugh Edwards is convinced that the amount of wreckage on the sea bed is more than that one wreck, the *Zeewijk*."

Over the coming weeks several flights would conduct a magnetometer survey over an area of the Abrolhos Islands known as the Pelsaert Group. The survey would detect magnetic anomalies that would indicate the presence of an undiscovered shipwreck. Mr Gray said if anything was discovered, it could take months or possibly years for the wreck to be identified.

"It will really require a painstaking look at individual items, the way they're scattered on the seabed, looking for more material that might have become uncovered over the recent decades," he said. "And then laying all that material out and piecing it all together and seeing what stories those bits and pieces tell. The other thing about the site is that it's a very, very exposed site and access to the underwater areas is restricted to very few days of the year, so that's going to make it take a lot longer than probably you might expect."

Mr Gray said it would be a significant discovery if the *Aagtekerke* was identified. "There's certainly a mystery there and it'd be great to see it solved," he said.





# QUIZ

## Answers to March

1. The depth of a vessel is the distance from the underside of the deck beams to the top of the keelson, and doesn't vary. The draught is the distance from the lowest point of the keel vertically to the surface of the water. This varies depending on the state of the ship's loading.
2. Grog is rum diluted with water at the ratio of one pint of rum to two quarts of water. It was introduced in 1740 by Admiral Vernon, because of what he saw as excessive drunkenness in the fleet. His nickname was 'Old Grogam', and this came to be applied to the drink.
3. The Long Jetty at Fremantle measured 3,294 ft (1,004 m) when finally completed.

## Quiz

1. Which part of a canon is the cascable (sometimes cascabel)?
2. On what date was the iron ship *City of York* (1,194 tons) wrecked off Rottnest Island with the loss of 11 lives, including that of Captain Phillip Jones?
3. The material in this photo has a maritime connection. What is it?



## \*\* Important Notice \*\*

It is now time to think about your renewal of membership  
You will receive a renewal notice in the near future

### Maritime Heritage Association Inc.



Fees will be as below

	1 Year	3 Years	5 Years
INSTITUTIONAL	\$100	\$275	\$440
FAMILY	\$40	\$110	\$175
ORDINARY	\$30	\$83	\$130
ASSOCIATE	\$10	\$28	\$40



# HMS *Plym*

At 9.30am on 3 October 1952 the British Government exploded a 25kt atomic bomb off the west coast of Trimouille Island in the Montebello Islands. The bomb was contained inside the River-class frigate HMS *Plym*. The test was to discover the effects of a nuclear weapon being smuggled into a British harbour aboard a ship. This was considered a distinct possibility at the time.

Built by Smith's Dock Company Limited, *Plym* was laid down on 1 August 1942, launched 4 February 1943 and commissioned on 16 May 1943. It was named after the river Plym which flows out at Plymouth. During World War II it carried out anti-submarine escort duties, and in 1948 was handed to the R.N.V.R. for use as a drill ship. In 1952 it became the centre of attention when it sailed to Fremantle, and then to the Montebello Islands.



HMS *Plym* (Pennant No. 271) was 301.25ft length overall with a beam of 36.5ft. Displacement was 1,370 tons light and 1,830 tons full load. The frigate was driven by two triple expansion steam engines of 5,500hp giving a speed of 20 knots and a range of 7,500 miles at 15 knots. The normal complement was 140, and the armament consisted of two 4" quick firing guns in single turrets and ten 20mm Oerlikon anti-aircraft guns in both twin and single mounts. *Plym* also mounted a Hedgehog spigot depth charge launcher and 150 depth charges.

The following is a 'Posthumous Report' by an unknown sailor from the *Plym*:

On the way up from Fremantle in early August, the Captain was at last authorised to give the ships

company an idea of their future, though the full details were kept secret, as they have been right up to yesterday's announcement by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons.

On arrival at Monte Bello on August 8<sup>th</sup>, *Plym* moored firmly in the lagoon to six cables, and main engines were rung off for the last time. Whatever else might occur, there would be no anchor watches for us!

The first two weeks were really busy, and as many big jobs as possible were done before the "run down" of the ships company commenced with the draft of 22 men to *Campania* on Monday 25<sup>th</sup>.

This thin out didn't slow down the rhythm of work unduly, and preparations went on at a good rate to complete setting up the equipment, filling L.C.M's with stores, and distilling water up to maximum stowage capacity. All these and other jobs were completed by the weekend, and Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September saw the real end of the commission to 'Care and Maintenance', but for one more week we ran our own accounts before sending off a small draft on the 8<sup>th</sup> and changing over to a sub-mess of *Narvik* victualled by them.

With only 25 in the ships company, 3 officers and 7 scientists, we were becoming rather short-handed. The Captain, Engineer, and First Lieutenant took O.O.D in turn and, with a Boffin bowman, the Wardroom

used to run their own Cinema boat to the L.S.T's on film nights. Normally the Q.M's off watch took coxswain off the boat, with Cooks and E.M's blossoming out as experienced bowmen, but on occasions liberty men were taken aback to see their Captain bringing in the motor cutter to collect them from T2 pier with a Wardroom crew.

Work was hard for the remaining hands, even the routine of keeping the ship running, but not one defaulter was brought up during these final weeks and everyone did his job with a minimum of supervision. Scientists came and went in droves, setting up and adjusting their equipment ready for the test, and on Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> the "dress rehearsal" went off without a hitch, including a dummy evacuation just before dawn.



Further adjustments were made, and scientific finishing touches put to all the apparatus, Dr Penney and other top scientists came, approved and went, and First Lieutenants with working parties came on final rabbiting runs before it was too late. The boats, sailing and pulling in which had been one of our chief recreations, were carried off by their allotted L.S.T's and on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> the Stand By period began with the drafting of half our remaining men.



*HMS Plym being prepared for the test off Trimouille Island*

All ships had left the Lagoon the previous week, giving us a very doomed feeling as even the little Aussie lighters chugged past us to seaward, and tension began to heighten as more Boffins descended to make final adjustments and cold-bloodedly ask which bits of our ship they could take away as souvenirs.

After a minimum of delay D-1 was declared on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and that afternoon one more party left including the last cook. Supper that night out of tins was prepared by a keen amateur, and rather than tempt fate the dishes were virtuously washed up. A cancellation, more amateur cooking and unwashed dishes would be too much to face in the

morning, but fortunately luck held, the weather was right, the evacuation went to plan, and the Explosion took place at 0930 local time on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

So went *Plym*, but history was made in her passing, and she remains a proud memory to all who served in her.



*A piece of shaft from HMS Plym on the sand of Trimouille Island*

*Photo: Peter Worsley*



# Georgette Re-enactment

MHA member Tom Roberts reminisces on a re-enactment of the well-known rescue of passengers and crew of the steamer *Georgette* in December 1876.

Quiz question #1 of the December issue reminded me of my involvement in an event held on the centenary of the *Georgette's* sinking. Actually, it reminded me that I had been reminded of this occasion when a clipping from the *Augusta Margaret River Mail*, which arrived in my letterbox a few years back, resurfaced recently when I was searching for something else!

The article was part of a series describing Shane Gould's years in the area, and included a photo of the participants in this event. It was sent by friends of mine who pretended to confuse me with the handsome Terry Merchant. Hence the Texta arrow.

This is how I remember it: One night in the Margaret River pub, word got around that John Alferink, a thorough gentleman and the town garbo, had recognised the significance of a Sunday in the near future and reckoned it should be celebrated. Of course, we all knew about the sinking and rescue from our primary school years, but to discover that it happened right there at Redgate beach, where we went to get dumped in the surf when we got tired of getting dumped at Town beach, was exciting indeed. John's idea was a re-enactment. Later in the evening it seemed the obvious thing to do. So that's what we did.

Billy Isaacs was a shoe-in for the role of his ancestor, Sam, and John Terry's elder daughter Bridget was the right age for Grace, so the hero and heroine were taken care of. And who better for the passengers and crew than the boys of the recently formed Margaret River Rowing Club. Yes, rowing club. Being fearless, manly types, we quickly agreed, provided Shane Gould came along.

Shane had settled nearby, on a bush block, with her bloke Neil Innes, to escape the fame generated by her Olympic performances, and was doing her best to be reclusive. However, as this was a grass roots event in a small, poor, cow town, she agreed.

On the day, lacking a steam ship, we piled into Sandy Wise's tinny (it must have been a big one), dressed in the best the Red Cross op shop had to offer, and motored to a spot about 100m (maybe it was 50) off the beach where the anchor was let go. We then climbed overboard one at a time and made our way ashore. Billy and Bridget rode their horses into the shallows again and again to rescue us, just like the pictures we had all grown up with....except there were no breakers. It was flat calm! This is the only time I have seen such conditions at Redgate.

It was great fun, and naturally, afterwards there was a keg and barbecue on the beach.

What always tickles me is that John Alferink, the instigator, is Dutch, and had probably never heard of the *Georgette* before joining the Margaret River Historical Society.

Page 6. AMR Mail. September 1, 1999.

tumble turns, the life and times of



Shane Gould's (second from left) first public appearance in Margaret River after she arrived, in the 100th anniversary celebration re-enactment of the sinking of the *Georgette* ship in 1876. She is pictured with John Alferink (left), Bill Isaacs, Cliff Owen, Bridget Terry, Terry Merchant, Tom Roberts, John Herring, Merv Langle, Giles Hohnen, Stewart Thomas and Neil Innes.



# Why Climate Scientists Are So Intrigued By Sea Voyages of the 19th Century

By Kelsey Campbell-Dollaghan

<http://gizmodo.com/why-the-brutal-sea-voyages-of-the-19th-century-are-so-i-1746205997>

Life aboard a ship in the 18th or 19th century—especially in the far north or south—was treacherous. Now, the records of these brutal voyages are playing a surprising role in scientists' efforts to understand the future of the planet. If you've ever read *In the Kingdom of Ice*, which chronicles the race to the North Pole, or *Endurance*, a record of Shackleton's Antarctic voyage, you've heard about what life in these unexplored regions was like: Without the communications technology or technical gear of today, ships depended on only what they had. And, the logbooks, where captains and clerks kept track of information like weather and location, were absolutely critical.

There are hundreds of thousands of these logbooks, written by hand, and they contain billions of data points about climate from an era before conventional records were kept. They're a goldmine for scientists trying to understand our changing planet, but there's just one problem with using them: The handwritten script and the aging of the paper make it tough for computer vision algorithms to understand—so they have to be transcribed by hand.

That's the goal behind Old Weather, a project that brings together scientists and archivists from Oxford, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the UK's National Meteorological Services, and a handful of maritime museums where these records are kept. The idea is to put these logbooks online and ask people to help transcribe them through the internet, filling in some of the vast gaps in our understanding of the weather and climate. According to the NOAA, 21,000 people have helped transcribe more than seven million data points so far. For example, you can annotate the logbooks from the USS *Bear*, a whaling ship from Scotland that actually helped in Arctic rescue missions:

After all, our record of the climate doesn't actually go back very far. In the US, the Smithsonian started keeping track of the weather in the 1850s. And we have some records from other countries around the same time. But there are no comprehensive records of global weather data, until the modern day...*Except* for the billions of records kept by ships that were criss-crossing the globe, regularly recording extraordinarily thorough data about the weather conditions for centuries. Old Weather wants to get those observations out of these crumbling books and into our climate models.

The project relaunched its website recently, with new logbooks and better tools for transcribing them online. It's much easier to help them out now, and they hope that the redesign will attract more participants to the growing community. ("We have split them into shorter deployments of a year or two; so completing a voyage will be less of a commitment, and you'll have a chance for a bit of shore leave now and again," they write.) "It isn't about proving or disproving global warming," the project's coordinators explain. "We need to collect as much historical data as we can... To understand what the weather will do in the future, we need to understand what it did in the past."





# Eldorado Dredge

In Victoria lies a massive, derelict dredge.

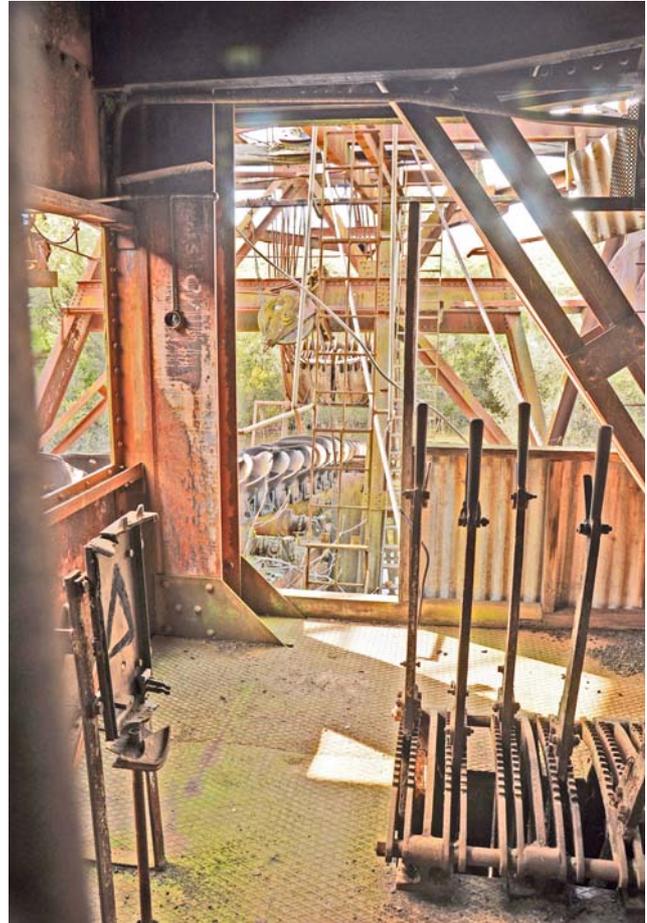
Near the very small town of Eldorado some 17 km east of Wangaratta in Victoria lies the largest bucket dredge in Australia. Assembled in nearby Reedy Creek in 1936, the dredge operated for 18 years until 1954 producing 70,664 ounces of gold and 1,383 tons of tin concentrate.

The dredge had 110 buckets and could dig to a depth of 98 ft below water level. Each bucket weighed 1.6 tons and could hold 12 cu ft of dirt. The dredge was electrically operated, a 6,600 volt cable running from shore across the pond to the dredge. The cable was supported above the water by 44-gallon drums. On board it was transformed to 440 volts for the main motors of 320 HP and 110 volts for minor motors and lighting. The dredge was manoeuvred using five cables anchored on shore, one from each corner and one straight ahead. The bucket ladder was raised and lowered by a double drum winch powered by a 160 HP motor.

Once the mud was inside the dredge it was run through various processes to separate out the gold and tin concentrates. The waste was ejected out the stern (?) of the dredge. The gold and tin in the form of a black sand was taken ashore by rowing boat to be further separated at an onshore plant.

The dredge has lain idle since 1954, and it is possible to go on board.

Peter Worsley



*A view of the control room (above) and the bow (left) of the dredge showing the gear necessary to raise and lower the bucket ladder*



*A stern view (above) of the massive, derelict dredge on Reedy Creek at Eldorado in Victoria. The spoil is ejected out along the chutes.*

*A few of the 110 buckets, each of which weighs 1.6 tons and holds 12 cubic feet*



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