

MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

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

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HMS Warrior in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard

Photo: David Nicholson. See article page 8



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

The Maritime Heritage Association
invites you and your friends to attend a morning tea
and pre-launch presentation of forthcoming MHA publication

A Hazardous Life

*Captain George AD Forsyth, Mariner and First Harbour Master
for the Colony of Western Australia*

by

Ron K Forsyth & Ian K Forsyth

Also...

Raffle of a Jill Worsley Maritime Quilt

Display of Marine Art & Models

Prints & Postcards

Second Hand Maritime Book Sale

Display of Traditional Maritime Hand Tools

at the

Robin Hicks Sailmaker and Rigger Workshop
33A Gosnells Road East, Orange Grove, WA 6109

Sunday 8 July 2018

10 am – 2 pm

(Bells & whistles 11.30 am)

RSVP for catering:

Marcia van Zeller 0418 949 784 or vanzellerm@gmail.com



Presidential Tidings

Tidings: from the Old English Tidung meaning news and information. (Ed.)

Tn the last twelve months the MHA has prepared the ground for a Great Leap Forward.

There has been gradual and meticulous progress with publication projects, particularly *A Hazardous Life: Captain George A.D. Forsyth (1853-1894) - Mariner and First Chief Harbour Master for the Colony of Western Australia* by the brothers Forsyth, Ian and Ron. We now have a formal agreement regarding publication with the Forsyths, and the design and preparation is in Julie Taylor's more-than-capable hands.

A set-back with a grant application submitted to Lotteries WA will not greatly subtract from the impetus to publish Tim Blue's *Whalehunters of the West* (if that is the current working title). All praise to the professionalism and drive of the publications committee, in particular our honourable secretary Marcia van Zeller.

The *MHA Journal* continues to be a publication in which we can all take considerable pride, many thanks to our indefatigable editor Peter Worsley. Our Treasure Bob Johnson once again reports a vibrantly health financial situation. And in Cyberia our internet profile remains impressive thanks to Bob's expertise as web-master.

For many of our members, and the committee, the annual pre-Christmas get-together at the Hicks Maritime Museum is a highlight. Last Christmas's iteration was as convivial and impressive as any I can remember. Great thanks to Doris and Robin Hicks, and other members of the family, for the continuation of this venerable tradition.

The MHA took a significant role in the commemoration of the sesquicentenary of the arrival at Fremantle of the last ship to carry convicts to Western Australia – the arrival of the ship *Hougoumont* in January 1868. An informative and handsomely design banner, and a public lecture at the Hougoumont Hotel drew some attention to the ship in a series of events which were mostly about the arrival of Fenian political prisoners.

Thanks largely to the efforts of Ross and Barbara Shardlow the MHA made a very important contribution to the Albany Festival of the Sea on Easter Sunday. This will probably mark the beginning of much closer collaboration of the Albany Maritime Heritage Association and this Association.

So, in this impressively steady-as-she-goes situation, what of this "Great Leap Forward" you might ask? My current tenure as President has run for a decade if I am not mistaken, and my previous tenure in the previous century was not very much less: thus the committee are to be applauded for conveying to me the sentiment that they would welcome my standing down. (To some extent this was precipitated by an ill-judged and invidious internal notice which I authored.) Accordingly, I shall not stand for any position on the committee at this AGM. I confidently look forward to a new age of greater dynamism, impetus and concord – Let a thousand flowers bloom!

Nick Burningham

Note:

The following were elected at the AGM:

President: Julie Taylor
Vice-Presidents: Jill Worsley
Murray Kornweibel
Treasurer: Bob Johnson
Secretary: Marcia Van Zeller
Editor: Peter Worsley
Committee: Geoff Vickridge
Robin Hicks
Ross Shardlow
David Nicholson
Peter Worsley

You will also note that the journal will now be posted to you unfolded. This should improve its readability, although it does come at an increase in postage costs.

You will also notice that there is a central colour section. This 'Albany Supplement' is courtesy of our out-port committee member Ross Shardlow. As Ross explains in his article, he made a big shift to Albany, but hopes to provide regular illustrated articles for the journal.

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!)

Most readers will know of the offer of a £20,000 reward by the British Government in 1714 to ‘...any such person or persons as shall discover a proper Method of Finding the said Longitude.’ But did you know that long before that date Spain had offered a reward in 1567 to anyone who could solve the ‘longitude problem.’ By 1598 this was worth 6,000 ducats together with an annual pension of 2,000 ducats. This pension was promised even to the heirs of the eventual winner.

The first female known to have circumnavigated the world was Jeanne Baré (1740–1807). During the 1760s Louis-Antoine de Bougainville led a French expedition to the Pacific Ocean. One of the naturalists on the expedition was Philibert de Commerson, and his servant was presumed to be a young man named Jean Baret. In Tahiti it was proved otherwise, and the two were put ashore at Mauritius. When Baré later returned to France she became the first woman to have circumnavigated the world.

Arthur Edward Kennedy was governor of Western Australia from 1855 to 1862. He was travelling from Africa to England on the steamer *Forerunner* to receive his orders before taking up the governorship when, on 25 October 1854, the steamer hit a rock off Madeira. Of the 19 passengers on board, 14 drowned. Kennedy was one of the lucky five to escape from the wreck.

The riveted iron windjammer *Lancing* was so well built that, towards the end of its days, it ran full tilt into an iceberg while sailing at 6½ knots. It then swung round broadside on to the berg, and remained grinding and bumping against it for half an hour. The only damage suffered by the ship was seven rivets loosened and some minor rigging damage.

The Dépôt des Cartes et Plans de la Marine, the French equivalent of the Admiralty’s Hydrographic Office was established in 1720. This was 75 years before its British counterpart, and in the interim the Royal Navy had to rely on French charts.

The first written description of an Australian bird was that given by Diego de Prado who sailed with Torres between Cape York and New Guinea in 1606. He described Torres Strait Pigeons, *Dracu-*

la bicolour, ‘...we anchored and found plenty of very large pigeons all white...’ Torres, de Prado and his men undoubtedly ate them.

The Australian territory of Heard Island was named after Captain Heard of the United States ship *Oriental*, who discovered it in 1853.

Have you ever wondered how the rock bar at the mouth of the Swan River was formed? According to a Wadjuk legend, a crocodile from the north came down to the Derbal (estuary of the Swan River). It was attacked by the wild dogs who lived on Cantonment Hill. One bit off its tail, so it slid back into the river where it died. Its body formed that rock barrier across the river.

Robert Fitz Roy, commander of the *Beagle* on its famous voyage with Charles Darwin on board, went on to become famous for his work in meteorology. He became the first head of the UK Meteorological Office, pioneered a system of storm warnings, invented the phrase ‘weather forecasts’, and invented the forecasting of weather changes by using readings of a barometer.

Camber: The part of a dockyard where cambering (the curving of ship planks) is carried out, and timber kept. Also, a small dock in shipyards where timber for masts and spars was kept to weather and pickle in salt water. It also provides shelter to small boats.

All gaff jaws and saddles must be kept greased...Tallow has still not been surpassed as a general purpose grease for lubricating leather-work. It smells like sheep, which are far sweeter than most animals, including hardworking humans, and it is available from all family butchers.

Tom Cunliffe, *Hand Reef and Steer*, 1992

In the 1890s a channel was dredged in the Canning River upstream from Salter Point. It was about 2¼km long and 1.2m deep at low water. Interestingly, most of its length was staked and wattled to assist against the sides caving in.





Can You Dance the Quadrille?

The clipper ship *Lightning* published a weekly newspaper called the *Lightning Gazette*. At that time the favourite dance was the quadrille. It was danced by passengers and sailors alike as part of the entertainment on the long voyage to Australia. However, the sailors needed instructions in this dance, so the *Lightning Gazette* instructed them:

Heave ahead and pass your adversary yard-arm to yardarm; regain your berth on the other tack in the same order; take you station in line with your partner, back and fill, face on your heel and bring up with your partner; she then manoeuvres ahead and heaves all aback, fills and shoots ahead again and pays off alongside; you then make sail in company until stern on with the other line; make a stern board and cast her off to shift for herself; regain your berth by the best means possible and let go your anchor.

Ship's Regulation No. 11 stated:

Dancing and promenading on the poop from 7 till 9 p.m., when all passengers may enjoy themselves, but not abaft the mizzen mast. The promenaders are not in any way to interrupt the dancers, but will be expected to promenade in parts of the poop where dancing is not being carried on.



QUIZ

Answers to March

1. Melville Water was named after Robert Saunders Dundas, 2nd Viscount Melville, First Lord of the Admiralty 1812–1827.
2. Henry Wiley Reveley was the Swan River Colony's first Civil Engineer. Among the buildings he designed were the Roundhouse at Fremantle, the old Courthouse in Perth, and the first Government House.
3. The leech is the aft side of a fore-and-aft sail and the outer edge of a square sail which is to the lee. The luff is the leading or weather edge of both a fore-and-aft and a square sail. On a square sail the leech and luff alter as the yard and sail are swung across the ship.

Quiz

1. What are Flinder's bars?
2. What is a monkey's fist?
3. Who was captain of the *Georgette* when it was wrecked at Calgardup (Redgate Beach) just south of the mouth of the Margaret River?

VOLUNTEERS.



God Save the King.

LET us, who are Englishmen, protect and defend our good KING and COUNTRY against the Attempts of all *Republicans and Levellers*, and against the Delights of our NATURAL ENEMIES, who intend in this Year to invade OLD ENGLAND, our happy Country, to murder our gracious KING as they have done their own; to make WHORES of our Wives and Daughters; to rob us of our Property, and teach us nothing but the *dem's d'art* of murdering one another.

ROYAL TARs

Of OLD ENGLAND.

If you love your COUNTRY, and your LIBERTY, now is the Time to shew your Love.
REPAIR,
All who have good Hearts, who love their KING, their COUNTRY, and RELIGION, who hate the FRENCH, and damn the POPE,
TO

Lieut. W. J. Stephens,
At his Rendezvous, SHOREHAM,

Where they will be allowed to Enter for any SHIP of WAR, AND THE FOLLOWING BOUNTIES will be given by his MAJESTY, in Addition to Two Months Advance.

To Able Seamen,	-	Five Pounds.
To Ordinary Seamen,	-	Two Pounds Ten Shillings.
To Landmen,	-	Thirty Shillings.

Conduct-Money paid to go by Land, and their Chetls and Boddling first Carriage free.
Those Men who have served as PETTY-OFFICERS, and those who are otherwise qualified, will be recommended accordingly.

LEWES: PRINTED BY W. AND A. LEE.



Is This a First?

In the early morning of Sunday 27 April 1908 a severe cyclone struck the Broome area. The pearling fleet were at sea, and 44 vessels were destroyed together with well over 100 of their crew. Among those drowned was Alexander McLachlan, a diver well-known in Fremantle for his work on two of the best known wrecks around Fremantle. McLachlan had entered the pearling industry about 1903, and owned the luggers *Iona* and *Lord*. The following article appeared in the *Daily News* of 30 April 1908, soon after McLachlan's death. Of interest is McLachlan's use of an engine driven compressor in diving. Is this a first for pearl diving in Western Australia?

The late Alex McLachlan, master and part owner of the pearling lugger Iona, was for a considerable time a well-known personality in Fremantle shipping circles. As a salvage diver, he was prominently in the public eye in connection with several of the big wrecks that have occurred in the vicinity of Fremantle, notably the Carlisle Castle and the City of York. These salvage operations resulted in his savings being considerably

augmented, and in partnership with Mr Joe Fowlie, of Market-street he invested in a lugger and plant, with which he tried his fortune on the Broome pearling ground. A new idea in the shape of an air-compressor, the combined suggestion of Plummer Bradbury, of Perth, and McLachlan, was installed. The new equipment consisted of a one and a half horse power Campbell oil engine, furnished by Messrs Barre, Johnson & Co., with the addition of two cylindrical air reservoirs on each side of the hold of the lugger, which carried a reserve supply of air sufficient to last for one hour. This air-compressor took the place of a hand-pump generally in use, and although hurriedly made, it proved an immense improvement on the more costly and extra labour necessitating, which requires a crew of four coloured men to work. With the engine and air-compressor McLachlan at the outset worked with the assistance of two white men. The ordinary manning of a lugger necessitates one white man and six coloured men, so the saving becomes very apparent, even contrasting the difference in wages payable to coloured men as compared with a white crew.

Mystery Shipwreck Found in North-West

In April 2018 a previously unknown shipwreck was found by scientists on board the Australian Institute of Marine Science research vessel *Solander*. The wreck is 37m

long and 7m wide, and was located in 60m of water. Their discovery has been reported to the Western Australian Museum for further investigation regarding its origin..

MHA's Journal reaches the world

The MHA Journal editor was surprised and delighted to receive an email in November 2017 from Kelley Geary, an American maritime heritage enthusiast who administers a Facebook page dedicated to the Asiatic Fleet.

Ms Geary is granddaughter of Henry Franklin Thaw, EMc1, USS *Edsall* DD-219, a Clemson-class destroyer of the US Navy. The story of *Edsall's* last battle, culminating in her destruction by the Japanese on 28 February 1942, was reported

in the March 2013 edition of the Journal. Ms Geary thanked MHA for sharing the story of the *Edsall* through our Journal, and ultimately over the Internet.

Several years ago MHA completed an indexation project for back issues of the Journal to 1990. Thanks to this initiative, people searching for maritime heritage topics over the Internet are able to find information from past MHA Journal articles.



James Cook and the Shilling

The following is from *Memorials of the Sea* by The Reverend William Scoresby, son the famous whaling captain William Scoresby.

It is somewhat curious that the course of life, in respect to the adoption of a seafaring profession, of two individuals,—Captain Cook and my Father,—whose names are associated with much of interest in the history of Whitby, and who became, in their relative degrees, conspicuous as adventurous seamen,—turned upon apparently trifling incidents; and, as to the exciting of feelings of disgust with their previous occupations, of a similar character.

James Cook, like my Father, was, in early youth, employed along with his father, in agricultural labours. His turn of mind, however, being suited to something requiring more tact than the ordinary toils in which farmers' boys were wont to be engaged, he was removed from the work of the field to that of the counter, with the view of learning the business of a country shopkeeper. It was at the fishing town of Staiths, about ten miles north-west of Whitby, and at the shop of a Mr. W. Sanderson, haberdasher, where Cook, at the age of sixteen or seventeen, entered on his new employment; and it was whilst there that the incident, which led to his abandonment of domestic trade for sea-life, occurred.

It happened, as the early record goes, that, at a period when the coinage generally in circulation was much defaced and worn, a new and fresh looking shilling was paid in by a customer. Cook, attracted by the comparative beauty of the coin, and thinking with regret of its going forth again in the ordinary progress of business, substituted the sterling value, and appropriated the new coin, as "a pocket-piece," to himself. It was ill-advised that he did so without previously asking permission or intimating his purpose; for the shilling had been observed by his master, its abstraction was detected, and Cook was suspected and charged with dishonesty,—a charge which the production of the shilling from his pocket seemed to confirm. His keen sense of right feeling, and of what was due to himself,

rendered this incident so painful, that he determined, if he could get permission to do so, to leave his employment, as a shopkeeper, and, indulging a strongly imbibed prepossession, turn to the sea. The unmerited suffering was abundantly compensated by that good and gracious Providence, whose dispensations reach to the humblest, and specially regards the oppressed. The young shopkeeper—turned apparently by this fretful incident from his monotonous pursuits, and stimulated to seek an adventurous profession, and not opposed, but kindly aided, by his master, who had become perfectly satisfied of his integrity—was led into those paths of distinction whereby he became so highly conspicuous, if not chief among the circumnavigators of the globe!

"It is worthy of remark," says Dr Young, in his life of Cook, "that the coin which so forcibly attracted his notice was what is called a South-sea shilling, of the coinage of George I., marked on the reverse S.S.C., for South-sea Company; as if the name of the piece had been intended to indicate the principal fields of his future discoveries."

Reference:

Scoresby, W., 1851, *Memorials of the Sea: My Father: Being Records of the Adventurous Life of the Late William Scoresby, Esq. of Whitby*. Longman, Brown, Green, and Longman, London.



Whitby c1842

by James Duffield Harding (1798-1863)



A Visit to Portsmouth

Reading Tony Duvollet's excellent article on the HMS Warrior was the inspiration for me putting fingers to keyboard to provide this brief narrative of a great day out in Portsmouth.

Due to an unusually generous offer from Air Garuda, I had an opportunity to visit the UK in early 2017. The main purpose of the trip was to visit relatives in Scotland and Shetland, but I also took the opportunity to visit a number of museums in England. By chance I had seen an article concerning the recent acquisition of an 18inch railway gun by the Fort Nelson Royal Armoury Museum. As it happened, the fort was in close proximity to the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard for which I had bought tickets over the internet. (This is something I can recommend. Most UK museums offer this service and it usually works out cheaper and you can bypass the queues when you get there.)

Fort Nelson was one of several built on the south coast of England in the late 1800s as protection against the French with this particular site chosen to protect the Portsmouth Naval Dockyard. It is now part of the Royal Armoury and boasts a wonderful collection of guns including a section of the Saddam Hussain super gun. Since the Dockyard was the primary reason for being in Portsmouth I had to cut my visit short, but I did manage to see the newly installed 18 inch monster.

After leaving Fort Nelson I moved on to the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard which is a collection of several standalone museums plus the main dockyard complex. Situated on west side of Portsmouth Harbour is the Royal Navy Submarine Museum and the Explosion Museum of Naval Firepower. On the Eastern side of the harbour is the dockyard with its iconic exhibits, *HMS Victory*, *HMS Warrior* and the *Mary Rose*.

The Royal Navy Submarine Museum is housed in a distinctive building shaped like a submarine and features a collection of items depicting the Royal Navy's long history in submarine warfare. Of particular interest was the full sized reconstruction of a Holland 1 type submersible. This was the first submarine to serve with the Royal Navy dating back to 1913. Also on display was the famous X class midget submarine. This was the type of craft that managed to damage the German battle ship *Tirpitz* in April 1944. Outside the museum is the last remaining WW II submarine, the *HMS Alliance*. (As with the "O" class submarine

at the Fremantle Maritime Museum, guided tours are provided for the *HMS Alliance*.) In common with all British maritime museums it has a collection of superlative models plus a wonderful array of artefacts, paintings and special exhibits.

My next stop was the Explosion Museum of Naval Firepower. This is an interactive museum housed in the Royal Navy's former Ordnance Depot and situated on what was locally known as "Priddy's Hard". Leading up to the main building is an impressive array of guns, torpedos and guided weapons. Inside there is a collection of ship models, ammunition and of course, more guns! The display of ship-to-ship and ship-to-air guided missiles is truly remarkable and utilises the very latest in museum presentation practise. The 1/24th scale of the *HMS Victory* was particularly impressive and interestingly made by a German model maker over an 8 year period. (He should have taken lessons from Brian Lemon!) Time was running out so I had to make my way to the dockyard on the other side of the harbour. When the weather is fine it is possible to catch a ferry but since it was the middle of winter I had to take a taxi.

The Historic Dockyard is a huge complex and it would take several days to do it justice. Although the *Victory* and the *Warrior* are the highlights of the museum, I had seen them before so I headed straight for the *Mary Rose* enclosure. The following is an excerpt from Wikipedia...

The Mary Rose is a carrack-type warship of the English Tudor navy of King Henry VIII. After serving for 33 years in several wars against France, Scotland, and Brittany and after being substantially rebuilt in 1536, she saw her last action on 19 July 1545. While leading the attack on the galleys of a French invasion fleet, she sank in the Solent, the straits north of the Isle of Wight.

The wreck of the Mary Rose was rediscovered in 1971. It was raised in 1982 by the Mary Rose Trust, in one of the most complex and expensive projects in the history of maritime archaeology. The surviving section of the ship and thousands of recovered artefacts are of immeasurable value as a Tudor-era time capsule. The excavation and raising of the Mary Rose was a milestone in the field of maritime archaeology, comparable in complexity and cost only to the raising of the Swedish 17th-century warship Vasa in 1961



The housing for the remnants of the vessel is nothing short of extraordinary. It is built on three levels with each level featuring hundreds of exhibits which were found with the wreck and including many other items relevant to that time in history. Unlike the *Vasa* which is nearly fully intact, only a section of the hull still remains and this is enclosed in glass except for the walkway on the top level. This is to keep the environment around the wooden hull under the best possible conditions for its preservation. For the enthusiast of this period of naval history, only a full day would do it justice.

Back in the dockyard I made my way to the First World War gunboat *HMS M.33* which rests in a dry-dock only a stones throw from its modern counterparts. She is the sole remaining survivor of the Dardanelles Campaign and one of only three British warships from WW1 still in existence. This wonderful old ship was fully restored and opened to the public in August 2015. Unfortunately time didn't allow me to do anything other than take a photo of her.

Close by is the iconic *HMS Victory*, unfortunately not looking her best since she has had her top masts removed, however still an impressive and awe inspiring sight. Commissioned in 1778, she fought in many battles; none more famous than The Battle of Trafalgar when she was commanded by Vice-Admiral Nelson, who as we all know, was killed at the moment of a great victory over the Franco-Spanish fleet in 1805. (The 21st of October, the day of the battle, is still celebrated each year here in Western Australia, as it is all over the world by those connected to the Royal Navy.)

It was now getting close to closing time so I took the opportunity to have a quick look at "Boathouse 4". This is a new innovation since

my last visit and allows interaction with those actually building or restoring small wooden boats. There were all sorts vessels being worked on and visitors are encouraged to get amongst the wood and tools associated with the skills of boat building. An elevated walkway provided an ideal vantage point to see all that was going on. Specialist exhibitions are put on from time to time such as "The Forgotten Craft" which told the story of the small boats which are so important to the navy.

On the way out of the dockyard I passed *HMS Warrior*. The *Warrior* is remarkable in many ways. Although built only 55 years after the *Victory*, she was more than twice the tonnage, built from iron instead of wood, was sail and steam powered and boasted muzzle as well as breech loading guns. When she was commissioned in 1861 the *Warrior* was the most powerful warship in the world and although she never fired a shot in anger, her revolutionary design set the standard for all battleships for the next 30 years. I did manage to take a few photos just as the sun was setting, remember this was winter so it was only about 5:00pm!



Replica of the Holland 1, the Royal Navy's first submarine

If you are in any way interested in big guns, the Royal Navy, submarines or anything to do with the sea, Portsmouth is the place to visit when in the UK, you won't be disappointed.

David Nicolson



Our Albany Epiphany

By Ross and Barbara Shardlow

The first time I tried to get to Albany I was, quite literally, run out of town by the police. That was Easter 1968. Fifty years later, at Easter 2018, I was welcomed back to Albany – not as visitor, but as a resident Albanian.

When Barbara and I moved to State Street in Victoria Park in 1978 it was a place of chooks, church-bells and anonymity. Over time we purchased the properties each side of us to establish the “Staterooms”, a random assortment of artrooms, archives and workshops; headquarters for the Maritime Heritage Association, SOBA and the Australian Society of Marine Artists – and the (not so) occasional artist-in-residence. For a time we had six artists working on site and it was from these rooms that I drew up the sail and rigging plans for the sail training barquentine *Leeuwin*.

On completion of the *Leeuwin* project I was at a bit of a loss. Painting sailing ships was not an easy way to earn a living and I wondered if I should try something else. I tried to get my old government job back as a book illustrator only

to find I was no longer qualified to do the work I had been doing for 13-years. I applied to become an assistant draughtsman for the newly formed *Endeavour* Replica project but failed to ‘measure up’ to their requirements. In spite of my earlier bad experience when the police took exception to my Morris Minor (and me), I thought I would have another look at Albany. On our 13th Wedding Anniversary, Barbara and I were sitting on the slopes of Mt Adelaide gazing out over the waters of King George Sound. It wasn’t going well. My diary for 30 January 1989 records:

We go into Albany. We look for places where we might live. We look for stately or cute Victorian homes with magnificent views of the harbour. We don’t find any. We have our lunch overlooking the sea. We “discuss” our future . . . then fate stepped in – the ‘Leeuwin’ came through the entrance & beat out to sea. It is a remarkable sight. There before us is one of my works.

That was my epiphany – I would be a marine artist — but we are ‘Partners in Time’, and Bar-



bara's epiphany was yet to come.

Later that year, with Graeme Henderson and Sally May from the Western Australian Maritime Museum, we formed the Maritime Heritage Association, which we officially launched on board the barquentine *Leeuwin* on 30 March 1990. I have, over various terms, been president and secretary of the MHA. Barbara has also been secretary. Amongst our early achievements was the removal of the gates on-to Victoria Quay, the establishment of the B-Shed Boat Building School (later Wooden Boat Works), the saving and relocating of E-Shed, participation in the Classic & Wooden Boat Festivals and in 1997, the 'Flotsam and Jetsam' Marine Art Exhibition at the Moores Building in Fremantle.

The following year I joined the newly formed Australian Society of Marine Artists and entered my first painting in ASMA's Second National Marine Art Exhibition, which was held at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney. As this was a significant step in my career I chose, for the subject of my painting, the epiphany that got me to where I was, "*Leeuwin* Beating out of King George Sound". The painting won the inaugural President's Medal, which was presented to me on

1st May 2000 by Graeme Henderson, at that time Director of the Western Australian Maritime Museum. I was made WA State Vice President of ASMA the following year and in 2003 I had the honour of being elevated to Fellow of the



Clive Jarman: Storm Brewing Middleton. Oil on board, 8x10 inches. Artist's collection.

Painting en plein air ("in the open air") Clive captures the fleeting effect of light and atmosphere off Middleton Beach, Albany.



Australian Society of Marine Artists.

Forty years after we purchased the Staterooms in Victoria Park the chooks and church-bells had been pushed out by the insidious encroachment of urban infill, we had been broken into thirteen times and parking meters appeared in our street. The final straw came when the council slapped an order on us for “harbouring rats”! We had 28-days to sort the place out or face a heavy fine. While filling up the largest skip-bin I could order, a couple walking their dog stopped to ask, “do you want to sell your backyard?” In my despair I replied, “Backyard? You can buy the whole bloomin’ property if you want to” – and they did.

In 2013 we rang eight-bells and lowered the colours for the last meeting of the MHA at the Staterooms. Barbara and I resigned soon after. The MHA, in not accepting our resignation, bestowed upon us an Honorary Life Membership for our contribution to maritime heritage.

While attending a course in Estonian Lace Knitting at the Albany Summer School in 2016, Barbara was standing on the slopes of Mt Adelaide gazing out over the waters of King George Sound. The time had come for Barbara’s epiphany – “why aren’t we living here?” As our 40th Wedding Anniversary was only a couple of weeks away, Barbara suggested we return to Albany to celebrate that occasion. Strolling hand-in-hand through the streets of Albany we spotted a house for sale that had sweeping views over Princess Royal Harbour. The advertising pamphlet (that Barbara just happened to have in her pocket) professed it to be “The Harbour Master’s House c.1910” – so we bought it.

We then faced the daunting task of relocating 40-years accumulation of ‘good stuff’ including the entire contents of two houses, studio, library, workshops, a small timber yard, two boats and the contents of sundry outbuildings. Our good friend Gordon Hudson extended the realm of his ‘Art Management Services’ by generously insisting we borrow his 7 x 4 foot trailer, assuring us it would be sufficient for the job. Little did he know that it would take forty-four loads and 41,683 km (more than the circumference of the planet) to complete the task over a period of 18-months.

The Albanians seemed to know we were coming before we did. Attending our first Curatori-



On the road again, this time with my dinghy Heather-Jean built by Ron Hill in 1947. I covered over 40,000 km with the loss of two windscreens and one speeding fine.

al (history lecture) at the Museum of the Great Southern, Public Programs Officer Malcolm Traill greeted us with, “Ah, you’re Ross and Barbara – we knew you were coming, welcome to Albany.” I had no say in becoming a volunteer on the replica brig *Amity* and Barbara, having joined the Albany Lacemakers, was informed by a friend that she had won a First Prize for her bobbin lace at the Albany Agricultural Show, and then I was invited to hang a few of my paintings in Albany’s 10th Anniversary ‘Festival of the Sea’ exhibition at the Albany Boat Shed.

As I had only completed one small painting since my arrival in Albany, the hanging of a few paintings had to be a ‘retrospective’ showing. The Albany Maritime Foundation, who manage the Albany Boat Shed, gave us full support and a free hand and everything fell into place from then on. Under the auspices of the Maritime Heritage Association and the Australian Society of Marine Artists, the hanging of a few paintings ran into a full ‘Celebration of Marine Art and Maritime Heritage for Albany and the Great Southern and Coastal Regions’. Local modeller Norm McQuade set the pace with 20 ship and boat models, which included his newly completed scratch built model of HMC Brig *Amity*. The MHA was well represented; Clive Jarman set up a delightful display of his regional en plain air oil paintings, Robin Hicks commanded a spectacular display of traditional shipwright and sailmakers tools, and thanks to Tom Saggars, author, historian and patron of the arts, I was able to borrow a few of my paintings from his collection to hang on the



Paintings by Ross Shardlow and Clive Jarman, models by Murray Johnson, Brian Lemon and Rod Mackay.



Entry statement for Albany's Festival of the Sea exhibition in the Albany Boat Shed.

walls. It was a highly successful show, not just for the display of marine art and maritime heritage, but for the warm reception, cooperation and the sense of belonging that was extended to us from the Albany community. I was even asked to judge 'Best Boat' in the Build a Boat in a Day Competition. Regrettably, the vessel I judged to be Best Boat did not prove to be the Best Performer and was last seen making a leewardly course out through the entrance in the direction of Breaksea Island.

We are indebted to the Maritime Heritage Association and the Australian Society of Marine Artists for their support; also to the mariners, artists, friends and family (passed and present) who stood behind us along the way.

Albany is a picturesque town of natural beauty steeped in history and the traditions of the sea. Albany has no traffic lights and no parking metres and the comforting sound of chooks and church-bells can still be heard.



Oldest-known message in a bottle found on WA beach 132 years after being tossed overboard

Article and photo courtesy the ABC and Kym Illman

@Perth family has made an extraordinary historical discovery after becoming bogged on a West Australian beach. Tonya Illman was walking across sand dunes just north of Wedge Island, 180 kilometres north of Perth, when she noticed something sticking out of the sand.

"It just looked like a lovely old bottle, so I picked it up thinking it might look good in my book-case," she said.

But Mrs Illman realised she had likely uncovered something far more special when out fell a damp, rolled up piece of paper tied with string. "My son's girlfriend was the one who discovered the note when she went to tip the sand out," she said. "We took it home and dried it out, and when we opened it we saw it was a printed form, in German, with very faint German handwriting on it."

The message was dated June 12, 1886, and said it had been thrown overboard from the German sailing barque *Paula*, 950km from the WA coast. After conducting some of their own research online, the Illman family were convinced they had either made an historically significant discovery or fallen victims to an elaborate hoax.

Between 1864 until 1933, thousands of bottles were thrown overboard from German ships, each containing a form on which the captain would write the date, the ship's coordinates and details about its route. It was part of an experiment by the German Naval Observatory to better understand global ocean currents. On the back, the messages asked the finder to write when and where the bottle had been found and return it, either to the German Naval Observatory in Hamburg or the nearest German Consulate.

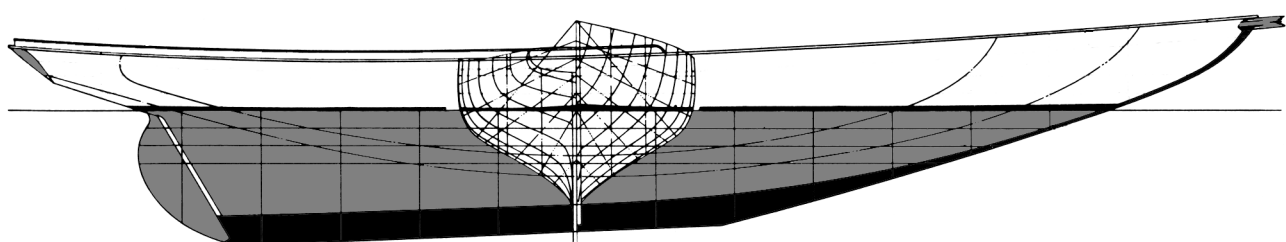
The Illmans took their find to the Western Australian Museum, where assistant curator of mari-



time archaeology Ross Anderson conducted a series of investigations. He determined it was a mid-to-late 19th century Dutch gin bottle, and the form inside was written on cheaply-made 19th century paper. But more needed to be done to shore up the bottle's authenticity, and he contacted colleagues in the Netherlands and Germany for help. The colleagues compared handwriting samples from the form and the captain's entries in *Paula's* meteorological journal.

"Extraordinary finds need extraordinary evidence to support them," Dr Anderson said. "Incredibly, there was an entry for June 12, 1886, made by the captain, recording a drift bottle having been thrown overboard. "The date and the coordinates correspond exactly with those on the bottle message. The handwriting is identical in terms of cursive style, slant, font, spacing, stroke emphasis, capitalisation and numbering style."

Discovered 132 years after it was tossed overboard, it is the oldest-known message in a bottle in the world. The second oldest was just over 108 years old. Kym and Tonya Illman have loaned their find to the WA Museum to display for the next two years.





Ships of the State Shipping Service

By Jeff Thomson

FRANK KONECNY IMO Number : 8820937

The second of the three locally built vessels from Australian Shipbuilding Industries, Jervoise Bay was the *Frank Konecny* (Yard No 292), built for Westpac Banking Corporation for charter to the State Shipping Service.

As built the *Frank Konecny* was 1,571 gross registered tons, 3,454 deadweight tons, 92.7 metres overall, 83.9 metres between perpendiculars, 15.1 metres breadth, 5.6 metres draft. One MAN/B&W Alpha 6S26MC 6 cylinder diesel of L903 bhp gave a service speed of 13 knots with a controllable pitch propeller. The launching of the vessel, due on 13th November 1990, was delayed several days by union action.

In August 1995 the vessel was returned to her Australian owners and then sold to Briese Schiff GmbH of Germany and renamed *Wotan*. In 1996 the ship was sold to Straits Shipping Pte Ltd, Singapore, and renamed *Straits Joy*. During 1998 the vessel was sold to Conway Castle Shipping Co Ltd, Antigua, and renamed *Marie Therese*. In 2003 the ship was again sold to Bristol Strait GmbH, Antigua, and renamed *Bristol Strait*. During 2005 the vessel was sold to J. Stahmer, Germany, and renamed *African Express*. Later sold to Partenreederei M.S. "Johannes", Antigua, and renamed *Angola Express*. In August 2007 the vessel was sold to Irbe Redereja Sia. Riga Latvia and renamed *Irbe Loja*.

Still listed in 2007/08 Lloyds Register.



A few years after Jeff researched and wrote the above article the Frank Konecny was again sold (probably in 2013) and renamed Katerina



My Time on *Singa Betina*

The twelfth episode of Ted Whiteaker's tale.

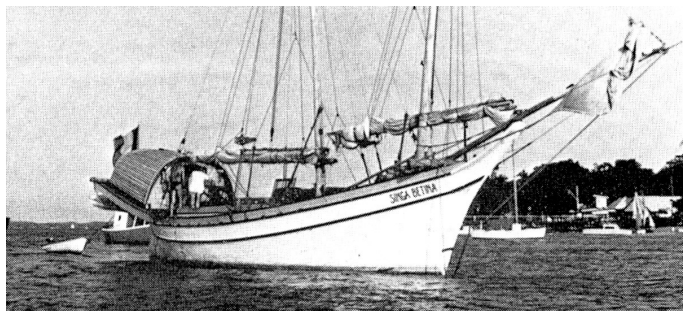
I wanted to start pulling down the engine to find out what damage had been done, but the water was a little too rough here, so next day we got the outstation dinghy to tie up alongside and push us on to Gikal, about five miles further along Nalwarung Strait. The best anchorage here was in the lee of a reef outcrop that was all but covered on high tides. We arrived with the outgoing tide running strongly to the east, but after turning out of the current flow the dinghy was unable to make headway against it to get into the sheltered water on the western side of the reef, so we anchored close alongside to wait for the tide to change in our favour. The Yolngu were very concerned about this spot, as it was a powerful dreaming site and their fear of the possible consequences of disturbance was showing in the whites of their eyes. We were very close to the edge of the outcrop, and as we let go the anchor, an odd feature appeared in the murky water a metre or so off the bow. It looked like a giant jellyfish a metre or more below the surface, with a translucent white outline, a little less than a metre in diameter, which appeared to be pulsating. We only had a brief glimpse of the thing before it faded into the murk, but those Yolngu who had seen it were very quiet and looked worried. They brightened up considerably when the tide eventually turned and we moved away to our anchoring spot. There was no explanation given about the object. I asked about it, but was politely brushed off. It was secret knowledge, and we were not sufficiently indoctrinated into Yolngu lore to enable any clarification.

A decade or two later, a “close-up” brother related a story that seemed relevant to the object we had observed. This brother was another Johnny, who was a little older than me. We were considered to share the same father and mother, rather than a simple extended classificatory relationship – the term “brother” could well refer to a man from a distant tribe who shared the same “skin” grouping, but may not necessarily be a blood relation. (To avoid confusion with all the Johns and Johnnies in this story, and in deference to the protocols limiting the use of Aboriginal names, this brother will be henceforth referred to as “Johnny B”.)

Johnny B and his family had been spending a few days at Nanginbarra outstation, on the northeast tip of Elcho Island. While wandering the beach

spearing fish, he noticed a large, white translucent object pulsating just under the surface in about a metre of water. Johnny was regarded as an elder of the clan, well versed in Yolngu law and the legends of the dreamtime, and claimed there was no story known about the object among the locals responsible for that particular area. He could not tell if it was a rock of some description, or something else. He approached and cautiously put forth his spear to prod it, when he received a powerful jolt as if from an electric shock, and collapsed unconscious into the water. Luckily, he was observed by his family, who pulled him ashore. He was in a semi-coma for almost two weeks before recovering. The incident was much discussed by the Yolngu and was a mystery to all. The similarity of Johnny's description of the object to what we saw at Gikal was striking.

I got on with the job of pulling down the engine. The cylinder head was removed, and the valves and tappet assemblies, and the head itself, appeared to be in good order. However, fine specks of white metal were found in the oil filter, suggesting crankshaft bearing breakdown. It was pointless going any further with dismantling the engine completely, which would be better done back in Gove.



The easterlies were still blowing strongly, and with the precarious state of our rotten sails, I was apprehensive about getting around Cape Wilberforce, a major headland at the end of Malay Road at the turning point from the shelter of the English Company Islands to the full blast of the Dry Season winds of the Gulf of Carpentaria. There is a narrow passage between the Cape and the Bromby chain of shoals and islands stretching off to the northeast. In adverse conditions, strong currents and turbulent water are funnelled into the passage, where the compressed waves stand up in boiling confusion, smashing against the steep



cliffs of the Cape. It was a spot to be treated with respect.

I established contact with Cabbage, who was still in Gove, using the Gikal radio, and arranged for John and *Patricia* to come and tow us back. A week passed before *Patricia* turned up, and towed us up to Elizabeth Bay, on the lee side of Cape Wilberforce, where we anchored overnight. The easterlies blew up strongly the next day, so we stayed there for another night, and got away when the winds eased the day after that. We rounded the Cape at slack water without incident, finally arriving in Gove Harbour on 23 June after an absence of three eventful months.

We spent two months on anchor in Gove repairing the engine. It took a few days to pull the engine down completely, to find the crankshaft bearing journals were badly scored. The shaft was sent by the first available weekly barge to the Perkins agent in Darwin for assessment. The results were not good. The damage was beyond repairable limits, and a new replacement shaft was eventually sent back, together with a new conrod for the number four piston, and new main- and big-end bearings.

While waiting out the inevitable delays with barge timetables and my slow progress with reassembling the engine, I took on a job for a few weeks on the internal fit-out of a 28-foot steel sloop that had been built by one of the machinery operators from the local bauxite processing plant. The work, alone inside the empty steel hull in a yard in the general industrial area, was tedious. Drilling countless screw holes in steel stringers and frames failed to inspire any *joie de vivre*, but the income was welcome. Our funds evaporated rapidly with the costs of the engine repairs and living expenses, although the latter were relatively minimal as we were well accustomed to living off the smell of an oily rag, and there were plenty of them around at the time.

For transport, I found a couple of dismantled Yamaha 50cc step-through scooters in the debris of one of the Boat Club sheds and cobbled together a single machine that actually worked. It had its quirks, and often required an exercising push-start to get it to go, but once it was up and running it usually got to wherever it was pointed. It passed registration, but only the once. We carried it on deck on our voyaging for transport in the communities, and on Darwin trips, but it rapidly rusted to such a decrepit appearance that I eventually left it in the rubbish dump at Galiwin'ku. The

end was signalled when the throttle cable collapsed with severe corrosion. I ran a light fishing line from the plunger in the carburettor to wrap around the twist-grip on the handlebar, which worked well when travelling in a straight line, but turning corners altered the dynamics of the linkage. To avoid either speeding out of control when turning left, or losing power altogether when turning right, the fishing line had to be unwrapped from the twist-grip and managed directly by hand – a bit like fishing for tiddlers, and an awkward exercise in one-handed steering on mostly gravel roads, especially with a pillion passenger.

While it was possible in those days to get around on such basic vehicles in the communities, Gove was a different matter. The little bike at its best had an absolute top speed of about 70kph. To achieve this relative exhilaration required no pillion passenger, with the rider hunkered down as horizontally as possible to minimise wind resistance. The 50cc engine valiantly strove to meet my lead-foot aspirations, and I enjoyed riding it – it certainly beat walking. When working on the fitting-out job, I often sped into town at lunchtimes to attend to personal business, and on one trip I was laid out flat on the bike and flying along when I realised the Transport Inspector was hot on my tail. I modified my speed, reached my destination, and pulled into the kerb to park. Brian, the Inspector, pulled in behind me and got out of his vehicle, looking furious. He berated me for speeding, and said that my brake light was not working. I was feeling a little sheepish and wondering what to say, but he was so hot under the collar that he solved the situation by default, saying sarcastically, “I suppose you’re going to tell me that you used your gears to slow down and not your brakes?” I could not but agree with him, and he seemed even more irritated by unintentionally letting me off as he had done, and stormed off in disgust.

There was no way that Brian would have tolerated my fishing-line throttle, and I cast a nostalgic glance back at the old bike as I walked away from the remains at the Galiwin'ku tip.

Seven weeks after limping into harbour, *Singa Betina's* rebuilt engine coughed into life. It ran satisfactorily on harbour trials, and we made plans to do a trading run to Elcho Island. We borrowed \$400 from Cabbage and Shan, and with our own finances of about the same amount stocked up on 1,000 litres of fuel. Nabalco, the Swiss consortium that ran the bauxite mining operation, provided bulk fuel by arrangement from a supply line to



a small jetty, servicing fishing boats, prawn trawlers, and others needing more than jerry cans from the service station in town. The town is ten kilometres from the anchorage in Inverell Bay, and transport was always an issue; bulky items are difficult to handle on a 50cc step-through scooter. We had our own empty 200-litre drums, mostly reclaimed from the nearby Nabalco industrial dump, and it was very convenient to simply fill them inside the boat. We carried five drums in the centre walkway of the cabin down below, and on later voyages carried up to seventeen drums in total: five below; five on deck each side of the cabin, and one on each side of the mast. It was a novel experience living aboard a fuel tanker.

With the few dollars remaining we bought a small amount of clothing, food and Log Cabin tobacco for trade. John Parry gave us a delivery contract for delivery of five rolls of poly-pipe; two for Mata-Mata, and three for Mapuru; which added to the financial prospects. The 100-metre rolls of two-inch pipe were two metres in diameter, and 300mm thick. Poly-pipe slips and slides easily on most hard surfaces, and the roll size and volume made them an awkward item to stow securely on deck, and equally awkward to get around.

On 04 September, 1983 we set off for Elcho, stopping overnight at Gikal. We bypassed Mata-Mata, which was then unattended, and spent the next night anchored at Yarriwuy, a long sandy beach on the north-west of Everett Island where a new outstation was struggling to establish itself. Next day, after a brief stop at Djurinalpuy, an outstation on the south-eastern side of Elcho not far from the entrance to Cadell Strait, we arrived at Galiwin'ku and anchored at Mission Beach. We sold bits and pieces of fuel and trading stock for a few days, then did a quick dash down the Howard Channel to deliver Mapuru's poly-pipe. We then returned to Galiwin'ku for a few more days of slow trading before setting off on the return journey to Gove.

On the way, we called in to Mata-Mata to deliver their poly-pipe, and with all fuel and goods sold, arrived with an empty hull in Gove. All up, including the Department of Transport and Works contract for the poly-pipe deliveries, we had made a profit, after accounting for all expenses, of \$570 during the two-and-a-half-week trip. It was only a small sum, but it was encouraging, and the demand for fuel meant that we could do better if we could carry more than five drums.

Accordingly, I went to see the local bank branch for a loan of \$1,000. The bank representative was quite amenable, asking only what would happen in the event of a disaster, such as the boat sinking – how would the bank get its money back? I dismissed the question, saying that I lived on board the boat, and had absolutely no intention of sinking. He must have been impressed with my optimism – the risk was accepted, and we started spending for the next trading voyage. The bank was on a winner, of course – the monthly interest on the \$1,000 borrowed (the loan product was called a “non-plastic credit card account”) was \$50, which equated to a 60% annual rate on the principal. It was a nice return for their money.

The Yirrkala Community had a well-established garden on reasonably fertile acreage which dated from early missionary days. Bananas, papaya, sweet potatoes, taro and sugar cane were grown nowadays under the supervision of Ilijah, a Fijian church worker. We did a trip to the gardens in a borrowed vehicle and bought two large chaff bags of sweet potatoes, the only crop that was available in season.

We carried out a raid on the shelves of Gove Woolworth's and bought up big on flour, tea, sugar, Sunshine powdered milk, biscuits, Winfield Red cigarettes and Log Cabin tobacco. Many of the older Yolngu men smoked tobacco in a *lunginy* – a pipe stem of hollow wood with a cut-down .303 bullet casing fitted for a bowl (old bullet casings were common in the Gove area; the remains of WW2 activity). Log Cabin was their usual tobacco of choice, with the “Capstan” brand a distant alternative. I was once given a pipe by a brother-in-law, and switched from my preferred rolling tobacco, Drum Mild, to Log Cabin for a while. I lasted about a week and a half before quitting and returning to Drum rollies – Log Cabin is a lung-buster in a *lunginy*.

We fuelled up with 2,200 litres in eleven drums – five below and three on deck on each side of the cabin. Transport and Works gave us a contract to deliver a crated water tank and piping to Mapuru. A local building contractor also wanted me to carry some plywood and framing timber, and a few rolls of vinyl flooring, to Galiwin'ku, where he was replacing rotten flooring in some of the older Education Department buildings. Before we left Gove, he asked me if I would do one of the houses for him. We agreed on terms, and I contacted Guy Alain, a Frenchman I had known for a few years who was living in Darwin with his Australian wife, Gina, and two young daughters.



Guy had expressed an interest in spending some time around the coast, and was more than willing to fly the family to Elcho and meet us there for a

bit of paid work.

To be continued.....

USS *Indianapolis* Found

In August last year the wreck of the battle ship USS *Indianapolis* was discovered. The ship was torpedoed on 30 July 1945 after delivering parts of the first atom bomb to be used in war to the island of Tinian. Its loss resulted in the deaths of 879 of the 1,195

men on board, making this the US Navy's greatest loss of life from a single ship. Only about 300 men went down with the ship; the rest succumbed to exposure and sharks in the four days before it was realised that the ship was missing, and rescue was made.

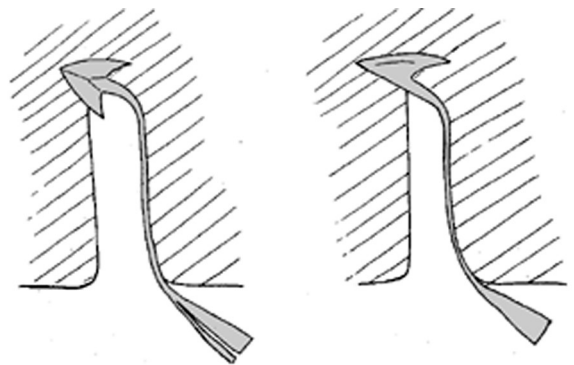
Why Only One Barb on a Harpoon?

Whaling harpoons came in both one- and two-barbed varieties. Why only one barb when it would seem that two would be better?



Hand-thrown whaling harpoons consisted of a pointed iron head with one or two barbs on the end of an iron shaft. The shaft ended in a socket into which the wooden haft was fastened. This haft was normally a sapling of the appropriate diameter, usually with the bark still on it as bark gave a better non-slip grip for throwing the harpoon. The whale line was attached to the iron shaft, as the wooden haft was often lost in the ensuing struggle with the whale. The iron was 'soft iron', very malleable, and would bend without breaking. In many instances the 'iron' as it was called was almost tied into a knot during the capture.

There was a problem with two barb irons; they could cut their way back out, and thereby a whale



would be lost. When the whale ran and force was applied to the whale line the harpoon shaft bent, and in doing so the two barb head could be bent and repositioned such that only one barb caught in the flesh to hold fast. The opposite barb would then be positioned with the sharp edge presented to uncut flesh. The force on the whale line and shaft, plus the motions imparted by the fleeing whale could cause the sharp barb to cut its way out. With one barb removed, only the single barb would continue to hold fast. The broad flat side





of its head would be pressed against uncut flesh rather than the sharp edge of the opposite barb.

Another difficulty with two barb irons was the size of the head across the barb tips. Blubber was difficult to penetrate; the larger the harpoon head, the more difficult it was to dart the iron deep enough to hold fast. A simple remedy was to eliminate one barb to reduce the width of the head.

The single barb iron was developed sometime around the early 1820's. No one in particular is given credit for this design. The first recorded use in the American fishery occurred in 1824. Reuben Delano, in *Wanderings and Adventures of Reuben Delano, Being a Narrative of Twelve Years Life in a Whale Ship!* Boston, 1846, wrote about his voyage in the ship *Stanton* of Fairhaven, 1824–1827. Early in the voyage in 1824:

Our boats were cleared away, and our first officer was soon "on and fast" to a good sized whale, with a one flud [barb] iron which did not hold him in tow fifteen minutes before it drew.

Note: Barbs were often called 'flue', probably a corruption of 'fluke'.

There was not much variation to the single barb design. Some barbs were long and curved while others were short and hefty. This harpoon became popular about 1840, but never completely replaced the two barb iron.

The single barb iron was short lived due to the development of the toggle iron (right) in 1848, but even so it was preferred by some and was found in some whaleships' inventories throughout the 19th century, although decreasing numbers of this type were used.

