



Volume 34, No. 2



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# MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL



The *Titanic* sinking on 15 April 1912  
Royal Museums Greenwich

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- \*Skipper of the *Leeuwin* no Longer a Mystery, part 2
- \*Connoisseur of Fine Yachts
- \*Charles Lightoller (1874–1952)
- \*George Sayers
- \*Fastnet Light



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## EDITORIAL

The MHA AGM was held at the South of Perth Yacht Club on Sunday 26 March, followed by a very pleasant lunch in the club's restaurant. The following members were elected:

President	Nick Burningham
Vice President	Jill Worsley
Treasurer	Bob Johnson
Secretary	Elly Spillekom
Editor	Peter Worsley
Committee	Gerard O'Neil
	Roger Price
	Tom Saggars

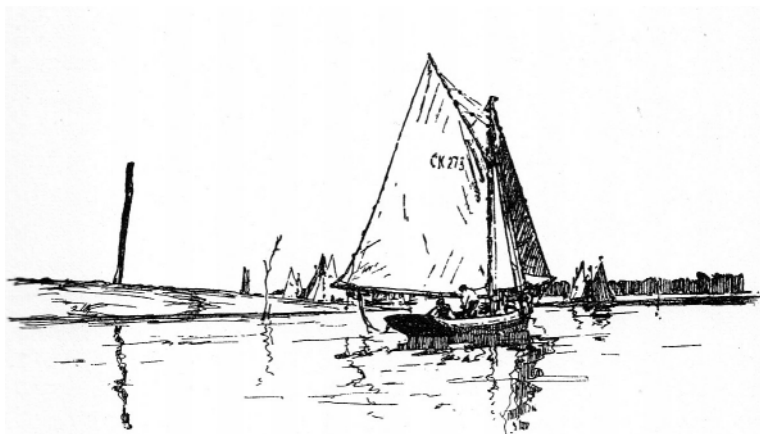
The MHA wishes to thank the Commodore and staff of the South of Perth Yacht Club for allowing us the use of their excellent facilities.

Please note that membership fees are due. The cost for the printing of the full colour journal has increased, as has the postage, however as the finances of the association

are sound, it was decided that there would be no increase in membership fees.

Membership fees remain:

	<u>1 Year</u>	<u>3 Years</u>	<u>5 Years</u>
Ordinary	\$35	\$100	\$155
Family	\$45	\$120	\$200
Institutional	\$110	\$300	\$480



## Did You Know?

The famous commerce raider *Seeadler* commanded by Count Graf Felix von Luckner during WW I was built in Glasgow by Robert Duncan & Co. as the 1,571-ton steel ship *Pass of Balmaha* for the Glasgow shipping firm of Gibson and Clark. It was sold to a Canadian company in 1908, and sold again in 1910 to another Canadian firm. With the outbreak of WW I the ship's registry was transferred to the neutral US flag. In June 1915 the ship was intercepted by the British cruiser *Victoria* off the coast of Scotland. Suspicious of the stated destination, a Royal Navy prize crew was put aboard and ordered to sail the *Pass of Balmaha* to Kirkwall, Orkney, for a thorough investigation. When nearing Kirkwall, and by now flying the British flag, it was captured by the German submarine *U-36* and taken to Cuxhaven. Re-named *Seeadler*, fitted with an auxiliary engine and concealed guns, the ship sank fourteen vessels and captured one before being wrecked in a storm on the island of Mopelia, near Tahiti.



## MHA AGM President's Report, 2022–23

The Maritime Heritage Association has taken advantage of relaxed Covid restrictions to engage in more public activities. Once again I report this without having been involved in any significant way, and not having been in Western Australia!

The MHA Book Club has been revived as a more genuinely public and inclusive club, and we hope it will go from strength to strength.

The Association's contribution to the 400 anniversary of the VOC ship *Leeuwin*'s encounter with Australia in October 2022 – a "Special Publication" of *The MHA Journal* presented important papers by Ross Shardlow and Nonja Peters containing new research and new discoveries.

Once again the MHA has presented detailed proposals for the appropriate development of Fremantle's Victoria Quay, reviving the Victoria Quay proposal developed in 2008 from the basis of Ross Shardlow's detailed and beautifully presented proposal back in the previous century.

One of the year's highlights for quite a number of members was the visit to the Woodman Point Lighthouse. Another was the successful participation in Maritime Day at Fremantle, in contrast to last year's aborted event (if I understand correctly).

A notable success is the second print run of *The Waugal and the Swan*, congratulations to Jill.

Our thanks are keenly offered to Bob Johnson, not just for his ongoing and impeccable services as Treasurer, but also his important work as Webmaster, maintaining and augmenting the Associa-

tion's presence in Cyber-space where all that really matters now resides.

Paul Reiffer has been representing the MHA on Fremantle Port's reincarnated Inner Harbour Community Liaison Group.

Thanks to all the committee members.

Our thanks go to Ross Shardlow for singlehandedly realising many of the MHA aims in Albany and the other southern outports ... and for keeping the MHA committee abreast of his many projects and achievements.

Special thanks to the Worsleys, Peter and Jill. Peter continues as Editor of our fine *Journal*, the publication which is the Association's main achievement and raison d'être these days. Jill has served by reaching out to the membership on many occasions.

Thanks also to Elly who has been our Secretary during the year and has now taken on the job of promoting sales of the second printing of *The Waugal and the Swan*.

Finally, my apologies for omissions from and misunderstandings in this report. I have been absent too long and remember too little.

Nick Burningham

### Addendum

What has been omitted from this report is that MHA was represented by Elly at the very successful Kaap Leeuwin Festival in October 2022.

## Reminder!

### Book Club at:

12 Cleopatra Drive, MANDURAH  
10.00am on Sunday 21 May.

Everyone welcome

RSVP by email or phone 9586 9003  
(necessary for lunch arrangements)







# 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!)*

Britain's oldest shipwreck has been discovered off Poole, Dorset. Analysis of a hull plank indicated the Irish oak tree from which it was cut was felled between 1242 and 1265, during the reign of King Henry III.

In December 1642 Abel Tasman made landfall on Tasmania, the island later named after him. His expedition had two ships, *Heemskerk* and *Zeehan*, and between them the two vessels have a mountain, a town and a winery named after them.

During the early days of Hobart Town the shortage of food became so acute that the pigs were fed on scraps left over from blubber processing onboard the whaling ships. As a result the pork began to taste of whale oil.

**Lubber line:** A mark on the inside of a compass bowl indicating the exact direction of the vessel's head

*Before 10 o'clock we had 20 and 21 Fathoms and continued in that depth until a few minutes before 11 and before the man at the lead could heave another cast the Ship Struck and stuck fast.*

Captain James Cook, 11 June 1770

In the USA when entering into a harbour the red buoys are kept to starboard and black buoys to port. In Australia (and UK) the green buoys are to starboard and the red to port as you enter a harbour.

R.M.S. *Carpathia*, the ship that rescued the survivors of the *Titanic*, was torpedoed by *U-55* on 17 July 1918. The wreck was located in May 2000 and identified in September the same year.

There are five steamship wrecks on Ningaloo Reef—*Perth*, *Mildura*, *Zvir*, *Chofuku Maru* and *Fin*.

The cat o' nine tails was a whip used to administer corporal punishment to Royal Navy sailors. It was kept in a canvas bag, and sailors never wanted to deal with 'letting the cat out of the bag'. You also needed clear room on deck to use it, or 'enough

room to swing a cat'.

Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz believed the US was fortunate that the attack on Pearl Harbour came as a surprise. Had the US known of the approaching Japanese fleet, the American fleet would have been sent to intercept it and been entirely lost to a superior force:

*Our fleet was two knots slower than the Japanese fleet and could never have brought it into conventional battle. The six Japanese carriers could have stood off and sunk our ships one by one in deep water. We would have lost all the able officers and crews that eventually manned the ships of the new Pacific fleet.*

In 1869 the UK built 942 vessels totaling 344,829 tons. Of these 521 (72,689 tons) were wooden ships, 379 (247,994 tons) were iron and 42 (24,146 tons) were composite, i.e. wood and iron. The tonnage of sailing ships was almost twice that of steamships.

The red and green port and starboard navigation lights were introduced in 1862.

Only six of the wrecks on the Western Australian coast are known to have carried large quantities of coins. The wreck with the most coins recovered by the Western Australian Museum is that of the *Batavia* (1629). The Museum has recovered 94,377 coins from this wreck, some of which are rare.

Shackleton's ship *Endurance* was built in Norway as a luxury yacht for two men, de Gerlache and Christefensen, and named *Polaris*. Launched on 17 December 1913, it was almost immediately sold to Ernest Shackleton for £14,000 when de Gerlache experienced financial difficulties. Shackleton re-named the vessel *Endurance*.

The 95-ton trading ketch *Ceres* was built in Cornwall in 1811 and traded until it sank on 24 November 1936. It was owned by the same family for the last 84 years of its 125 year working life.





## Charles Gibson Millar. Connoisseur of Fine Yachts

By Ron Forsyth

Many older West Australians remember Millars' Timber and Trading Co. It was amalgamated with Bunnings in 1983. Charles Gibson Millar with his brother Edwin Franks Millar were Melbourne based entrepreneurs. They left their mark in Western Australia as pioneers of the timber industry having secured the contract for the Great Southern Railway and with sawmills and merchandising.

The English periodical *Vanity Fair* of October 25, 1894, profiled Charles Millar along with his portrait:

*Scotch by descent, Irish by birth, English by education, and Australian by choice, he is a typical Briton, whose father was a civil engineer, an energetic scientist, and a cultured scholar. ...He owns railways, tramways, gold mines, sheep runs, timber forests, vineyards, and other properties in the fifth continent of the globe. ...He is an excellent host, who can tell a good story well; and notwithstanding all his wealth and all his virtues he is quite a modest man, who never does things by halves. Nevertheless he is a shrewd man of business, a good judge of his fellows, and a cautious pro-*

*jector of big schemes, who is supposed to have been born under a lucky star. Having done much to encourage yachting on the other side of the world, he is also the giver of the Australian Cup which is annually raced for at the Royal Yacht Squadron Regatta. His utter abhorrence of politics, and his robust abuse of our London climate, do not prevent his being an ardent Imperialist. He is also a good fellow.*

Charles' passion was yachting, and he was the proud owner of seven very fine craft between the years 1876 and his death in 1900 aged just sixty-one eventful years.

His first yacht was the twelve-ton cutter *Naiad* purchased in 1876. She was said to have been one of the first yachts in Hobson's Bay. Messrs. Hasting and Co of Williamstown, Melbourne built her 'rather for comfortable cruising than as a racer' (*Australasian*, 2 Jul 1881).

His next purchase was *Secret*, a larger cutter of 26 ton from Sydney. The Auckland built yacht was insured for £1,000 when she was lost on a hunting and fishing excursion in Bass Strait in December 1881 (*Australasian*, 31 Dec 1881).

In 1887 he acquired the 135-ton schooner *Red Gauntlet*. She was a large graceful, fast cruising yacht with an overall length of 101ft, a waterline length of 91.9ft, a beam of 19ft and a draft of 10ft 4in. This craft came with the notoriety of having been owned by Lily Langtry, mistress of a future King of England (Edward VII) and other notables such as Prince Louis of Battenburg. The schooner was admired by the people of Albany when she called at King George's Sound on her voyage out.

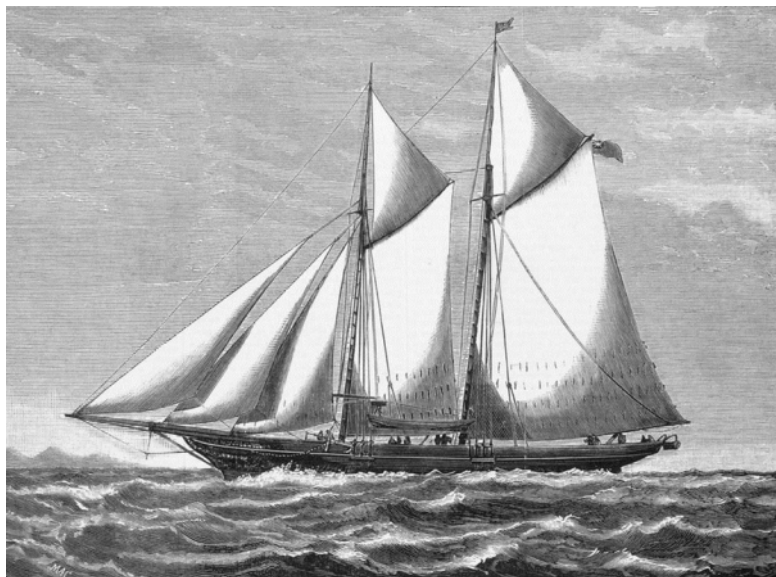
A tribute to the popular sailor and entrepreneur was published in the papers of the day:

*May the hospitable owner live to see his decks often full of happy faces. Long may his burgee fly at the Red Gauntlet's masthead in the noble pastime he has chosen for his leisure, and when the time comes for him to strike his flag as come it must to all tars whether jolly or otherwise—may the 'sweet little cherub that sits up aloft' keep a snug berth for both ship and captain, and 'so say all of us' (*Argus*, 26 May 1881).*



C.G. Millar

*Vanity Fair*, 25 October 1894



*Red Gauntlet*

Wikimedia Commons

The *Red Gauntlet* was wrecked cruising from the Malay coast to Port Darwin in August of 1887. She was uninsured, so a total loss to the brothers.

In replacement the Millars bought the *Undine*, a schooner with a colourful past:

*The Undine was built in 1872, for Baroness Rothschild, by Messrs. Camper and Nicholson, of Gosport, Hampshire. She is made of the best English oak, elm and teak, and still holds her class on the highest letter. Her length between perpendiculars is 115ft, with a beam of 23ft 6in and 12ft depth of hold. The tonnage is 207 according to mercantile measurement, but 400 by the yacht register. The draft of water aft is 13ft, and the ballast consists of 20 tons of lead and 66 tons of kentledge iron. About five years ago the yacht was purchased by the British Government, and stationed on the west coast of Africa as a slave chaser, on account of her great speed. The Admiralty then changed her station, and sent her out as a patrol ship in the South Seas, doing naval work between Sydney, New Guinea and the South Sea Islands. Steam vessels having subsequently been procured for this service, the Admiralty disposed of the yacht, and the Messrs. C. G. and E. F. Millar became the purchasers (Age, 18 May 1888).*

The *Undine*'s life was ended in March 1890 when wrecked in King Sound in the Kimberleys of Western Australia. Working in pearling as a mother craft for the Streeters of Derby she had been renamed *Ruby*. Entering King Sound the wind had failed and the tide carried her onto the rocks.

Moving with technology and the times the Millars' next acquisition was the steam yacht *Saide* in 1889. In mid-September of 1893 the people of Fremantle were graced with her presence. Mindful of his indebtedness to the Western colony for much of his wealth, he bestowed his considerable charm and hospitality upon thirty or so of the state's elite aboard (*Western Mail*, 9 Sep 1893). Millar's attendance coincided with the opening of the Southwest Railway. She had already called at Christmas Island (now Daw Island), Middle Island, Mississippi Bay and Esperance Bay in the Recherche Archipelago on a voyage to Albany in 1891.

Such opulence was a rare sight at Fremantle and 'Nauticus' rhapsodised in the *West Australian*, 11 September 1893:

*Perhaps one of the most beautiful and sumptuous yachts afloat was last week lying in Fremantle Roads viz., the Saide, belonging to Mr C. G. Millar, of the Royal Yacht Squadron.*

*... Viewed as you approach, here her long, rakish hull, painted as snowy white with a gold riband accentuating her beautiful lines and graceful curves, she at once strikes the yachtsman's eye as a flier. Saucily she sits, bowing her greetings to tiny ripplet or ocean swell, almost a thing of life, certainly a thing of beauty, her stem surmounted by a finely carved figure head of 'the white ladye' Saide, her tapering spars towering aloft. Altogether she impresses one as being what sailors would term a 'heeler.'*

*... I stepped onto her snow-white decks, the narrow planks of which taper at the ends, like a lady's finger, to the curves of the ship's sides. You are at once struck with the extent of deck room and space, with the exceedingly neat fittings, the general sense of a lightness and brightness, and withal the immense strength, and you feel at a glance that you are on the deck of an able ocean cruiser. I learned that the Saide was built to the order of the Duke of Norfolk, under special survey, to Lloyd's highest class by Ramage and Ferguson, of Leith (the builders of many famous yachts). She is a composite vessel of 400 tons gross measurement, 155ft overall, 24ft 7in. beam, 13ft 6in. depth of hold, drawing 15ft aft. She is an auxiliary steamer, brigantine rigged,*





*the engines being of 242 indicated horse power. The frames are of iron, and the planking of elm and teak fastened with copper bolts, and sheathed with pure copper. It was a condition with her first owner that she should be built extra strong, and have five water-tight compartments. She also carries 20 tons lead on her outside keel, and about 70 tons of lead and kentledge (scrap or pig iron) under this which, with the weight of her engines, boilers, water tanks, stores and coal make her remarkably steady though none the less very buoyant. The Duke of Norfolk used her for only two or three cruises, when she was sold by him to our well-known and respected fellow-colonist Mr. C.G. Millar, in 1888; arriving at Albany, her first port of call in Australian waters, in 1889, having steamed and sailed out from England via the Suez Canal. But, although the vessel had been specially built for the premier Duke and Earl Marshal of England, she did not satisfy the exigent tastes of such a keen yachtsman as Mr. Millar, who has had strong nautical proclivities from his youth. On her arrival at the port of Melbourne, the Saide was at once laid up for alterations and improvements, which were of such an extent that but little remains of the original vessel, save her hull. It is, therefore, interesting to know that all the beauties to be seen aboard are the work colonial artificers and artists and I can say without any hesitation that the work could not be better or more beautiful of its kind. When she belonged to the Duke, she was called The Star of the Sea. By Mr. Millar she was re-named the Saide. Her rig was altered from that of a fore and aft, schooner to a brigantine, showing an immense spread of canvas. When being remodelled and refitted in Melbourne she was supplied with new decks, companions, skylights, houses, rails, steering gear, pinnacles, in fact everything was renewed and remodelled, above and below. Her cabins are a positive dream of luxury and comfort, albeit in the most exquisite taste.*

*But, first let me endeavour to describe her above board. The decks, whose gleaming whiteness I have before referred to, are of specially selected American yellow pine, jointed with marine glue. The covering board, bulwarks, companions and skylights are of teak, the rails of American white elm. At the taffrail my attention was directed to a Bridson's patent buffer, an ingenious invention which has the effect of taking the shock from the main boom tackle when jibing, the mainsail alone having*

*1,000 yards of canvas. The wheel is known as Tasman's Patent Steering Gear and works like the fly wheel of a watch. The ornamentations above, as well as below, are of a most artistic and appropriate character. Even the little bell struck by the quartermaster and announcing the half hours and hours, which, fly all too fast on this beautiful boat is mounted beneath a fine bronze casting representing the tentacles of the octopus, the eight feet corresponding with the eight bells. The after binnacle stand, again, is supported by bronze dolphins, and these sportive and decorative fish also form the arms of the deck seats. The companion ways, six in all, include those leading to the after saloon, the steward's pantry, the engine room, smoking room, officers' quarters and forecabin. Forward of the forecabin scuttle is a neat steam winch, for heaving up the anchors or hoisting sail. The anchors are Trotman's patent, galvanised, and they are attached by galvanised chain cables. The roof of the smoking-room on deck is surrounded by a bronze iron rail, and this roof forms the bridge used for the navigation of the yacht in narrow waters. On the bridge is one of Sir William Thompson's patent compasses, and a semaphore to the engine room, also a steam syren. When under sail I was informed that the funnel telescopes in a few minutes, likewise the propeller feathers. The latter is of phosphor bronze and is one of Bevis' patents. The Saide carries four boats, dingy, gig, life-boat and a steam launch, and all these are models in their own particular way. They are carried on davits, and can be swung on board when at sea. The steam launch is fitted with surface condensing quadruple engines, and steams nine miles an hour on a consumption, of 10 pounds of coal. The Saide is a miniature man of war in her way, as there are on deck five brass cannon, four carronades and a 'long Tom,' also rocket gun and line. In addition there is a Maxim gun which will fire 600 shots a minute, and besides there are stands of arms in the owner's quarters and the captain's room, including Winchester, Martini-Henri and Snider rifles and revolvers - an outfit required when cruising in Eastern waters, where pirates abound. The sails are all of first class finest yacht canvas, and the running rigging of spiral four strand yacht cordage, which, when new is more like silk than manila.*

*Going below, by way of the after companion, we come to the saloon stewards' quarters, and then the dining saloon, an elegant and cosy*



compartment, about 16 by 20 beautifully panelled and decorated with carvings of walnut, Hungarian ash, and satin wood, in carved panels, pilasters and capitals. The sofas, chairs and furniture are upholstered in rich plush, of a colour between a bronze and seal. The ceilings are panelled and hand-painted in subjects which are a clever combination of the classical and conventional better known as the Louis Quinze style, whilst the skylight is in rich figured stained glass, representing marine and other flora and fauna. Beautiful swing lamps, with large and delicately coloured shades and side lamps light up the apartment at eve with soft and lambent gleam, and behind the panellings and carvings are book cases full of choice literature, and cellarettes. Next we come to the guests' cabins, the passage leading to which is panelled with polished oak. The panels are of satin wood and Hungarian ash, two beautiful woods, which are utilised in the ship with the best possible effect. They are upholstered in plush of the same colour as that utilised in the dining-saloon; and adjoining them are two bath rooms, with hot and cold water. Next comes the steward's pantry and store, amply furnished and equipped, and then the engine-room and boiler space, enclosed between iron bulkheads. An alley-way leads from the after rooms, between the engine room and coal bunkers, and by this means the owner can reach his quarters. Mr. Millar styles this his 'bad weather passage,' otherwise his quarters are approached from the deck through the smoking saloon. And here we have almost all that skill, taste and ample expenditure can accomplish. There are three rooms, of which the boudoir is panelled in carved oak of the Italian Renaissance period. It needs careful and intelligent inspection to realise the great beauty of these carvings. The sybaritic sofas and settees are upholstered in seal brown plush. There is a piano in carved oak case and the table, chairs, book-cases and lockers for nautical instruments are all en suite. The ceilings are hand-painted in soft and mellow tones, with the skylight glasses to match and down to the velvet pile carpet, into which one's feet softly sink, everything blends and harmonises into one beautiful whole, until what is reality appears to be a beautiful vision of luxury and magnificence hand in hand with the most consummate taste and elegance. The bedroom is a large apartment, it is impossible and ridiculous to refer to it as 'a cabin,' panelled in walnut, Hungarian ash and maple root, and fitted

with every conceivable convenience and comfort and adjoining it is a cosy dressing room which can be utilised as another berth. Altogether it would be difficult to imagine more chaste and elegant apartments.

Returning to the deck once more we find ourselves in the smoking room, which is of solid teak, the furniture upholstered in navy blue morocco, the ceiling being of a Moorish design, and bearing Arabic inscriptions of greeting and welcome, which well become a room dedicated to the use of the chibouk, narghileh, hookah or common pipe, and the fragrant cheroot. Next to the owner's quarters, and divided therefrom by an iron bulk-head are the captain's, officers', and chief engineer's cabins and mess room, all most comfortably furnished, whilst forward of this again is space for the crew, who are well housed and generally well off. The captain's room is quite a little scientific and mathematical studio, what with its chronometers and sextants, charts innumerable, and works on navigation, all neatly and safely deposited.

The Saide, full handed, carries a crew of 23. On board a yacht the owner is the legal master, and his rule is absolute, but ordinarily yachts carry one who is termed the sailing master. In this capacity Mr. Millar has an old and valued employee in Captain Colin Macdonald, formerly in charge of a thousand ton ship for the firm of C. & E. Millar. But, as Mr. Millar puts it, he sold the ship to secure the man—Captain Macdonald, who has had charge of the Saide ever since she has been in her present hands, and who has marked out many pleasant 'keel furrows' and sailed many long cruises in her. Amongst these was a voyage from Melbourne, through the South Seas to Japan, China and the Philippine Islands. On the return trip the Saide encountered a terrific typhoon in Japanese waters, coming through the ordeal in splendid style, and proving herself a splendid sea boat. She sails often as much as 13 knots 24 hours through, and has logged 14. She steams 9.5 knots on a consumption of four tons of coal, and can carry coal for 1500 miles steaming, condensing her own fresh water; in fact, as this description must show she is amply provided with every appliance which will conduce to comfort enjoyment and safety. Her officers and crew should be a very happy family on board such a beautiful boat and in the service of such a good and generous owner.





... Most of the officers have been in her for years, and their inclination to remain upon her can be best understood by those who have inspected her and who can appreciate the pleasant relations which exist between owner, officers and men. It should be also mentioned that the Saide flies the white ensign of His Majesty's fleet, the same as a man-of-war, a privilege only enjoyed by yachts of the Royal Yacht Squadron and the Saide is the only vessel privileged to do this south of the line.

Sold to a Pennsylvanian in 1895 she was renamed *Enterprise*.

For some time Mr. Millar had not enjoyed the best of health, and his visits to Melbourne had been at long intervals. After he sold the *Saide* he could not remain long without a yacht, and purchased the schooner *Verena*, 316 tons, a fine old vessel, built on American lines, which he used more as a house-boat. She had been built in 1872 and designed by Bernard Waymouth, who played an important role in the change from wood to iron ships and designed composite clippers such as *Thermopylae* and *Leander*.

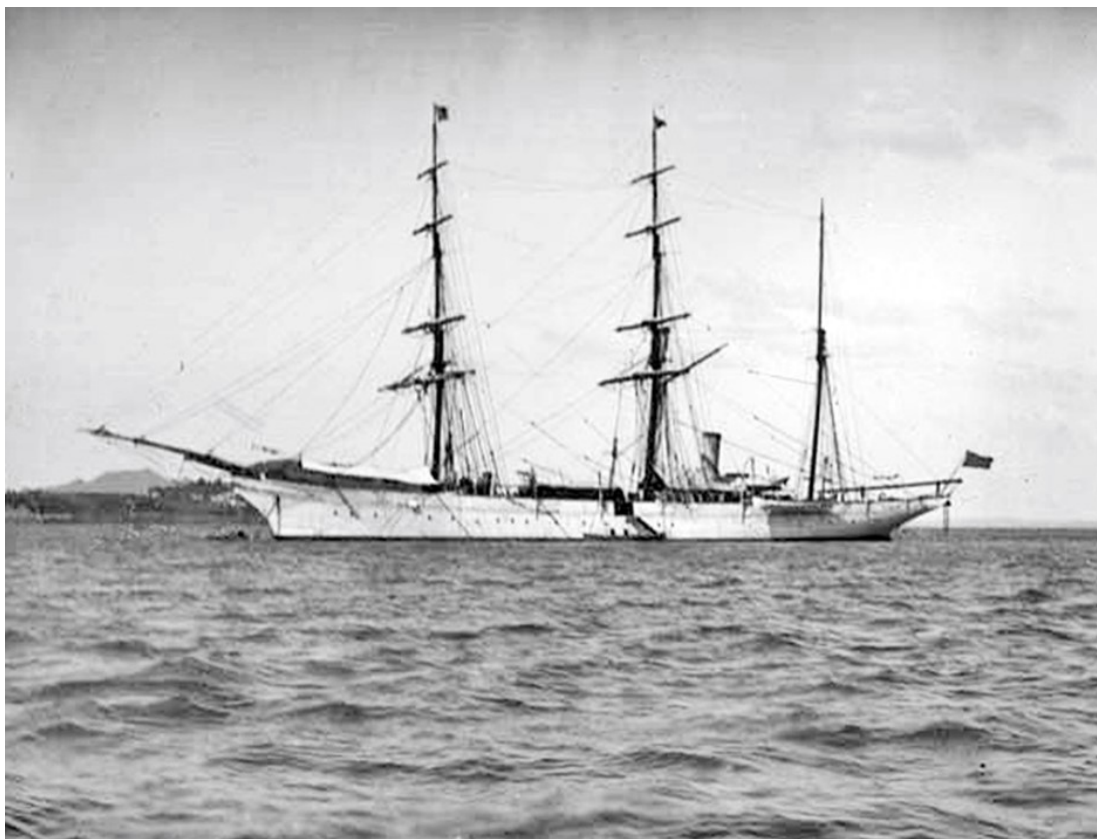
*Verena* had been inherited by the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Lonsdale, Hugh Lowther in 1882, along with a fortune that he managed to divest himself of dur-

ing a strange and eccentric lifetime, including running away with a circus whilst a young man. And herein lies another connection to Lily Langtry. Lowther was involved in an altercation with a rival for her charms, causing Queen Victoria to '...expect Lord Lonsdale to leave the country' (Douglas Sutherland, *The Yellow Earl, Almost an Emperor Not Quite a Gentleman*). Nevertheless, Lowther was to host Kaiser Wilhelm and his uncle, the Prince of Wales aboard the *Verena*.

The inactive life did not suit Millar, and a few months afterwards he sold the *Verena*, and purchased the famous ocean-going auxiliary, barque-rigged yacht *White Heather*. At 635 tons, she was a very fine vessel. (*Australasian*, 24 February 1900).

Millar's health deteriorated and he stated: 'I expect it will end in my being dumped out somewhere in the North Atlantic one fine morning with half-a dozen fire-bars at my toes' (*Australian*, 24 Feb 1900).

With failing health, he sailed from London wishing to revisit Western Australia, a source of so much of his great wealth. He passed away at Madeira in the Canary Islands.



*White Heather*



# SKIPPER OF THE *LEEWIN* NO LONGER A MYSTERY

Part 2 of the manuscript by Nonja Peters



*Profiel van Amsterdam, gezien vanaf het IJ (Profile of Amsterdam as viewed from the IJ), dated 1611*

*By Claes Jansz Visscher II*

Illustration: Open Access

On April 12, Buchelius observes that *Leeuwin* is to be manned by a crew of 175, comprised of 150 sailors, plus officers, assistants and boys. He expresses hope that *Leeuwin*, which is still in its Amsterdam Bay winter berth, will sail outside the pylons of the Amsterdam IJ and enter open water later that day (Fol.66v, p.102, [Fig.5]). The Oude and Nieuwe Waal in the IJ were safe berths for the ships, fenced off with a double row of pylons to break the waves (Buchelius Diary, Book 2, Footnote, 199, p.100). In open water, she was ready for the next stage of her journey to the Indies. It would begin on arrival in the harbour on Texel, one of

the Wadden Islands. Texel was crucial to the Dutch East India Company's commercial expeditions. It was where their ships anchored, off the Reede van Texel, to be loaded with provisions and stocked up on large quantities of iron-rich water from the Wezenputten. The water from these two enormous wells, located near the settlement of Oudeschild, is known to last much longer before losing usability. Once loaded and if the weather was fine the ship left right away.

The VOC had always sent their ships out as far as they could at set times and in fleets rather than alone. Three fleets were typically des-



*Dutch ships in the roadstead of Texel by Ludolf Bakhuysen, 1671*

Painting: Rijksmuseum, in Public domain





patched by the VOC to the Indies each year. One around Easter, another in September and the final one, known as the Christmas Fleet, departed naturally in December. Organizing the provisioning for departure in December and January had benefits. Compared to spring, summer and autumn other seasons, recruiting sailors were less complicated in the winter months. In addition, the food supply was cheaper, particularly the cost of meat, which was always at its lowest point following the harvesting and slaughtering seasons.

## BIGHT OF GUINEA AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Shardlow provides an extensive account of the mapping activity of the *Leeuwin* crew along the coast. It enables me to take up the narrative from inside Fort Batavia before, on *Leeuwin*'s arrival and during her sojourn there and when preparing for her homebound departure.

### FORT BATAVIA, JAVA 1622-1623

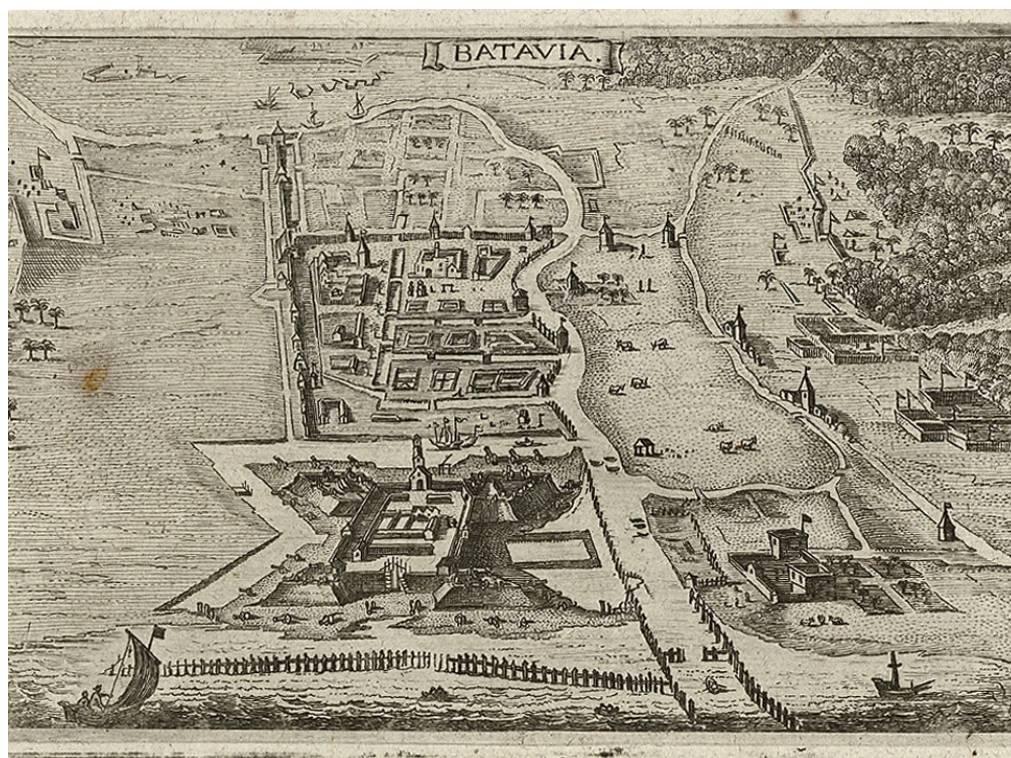
The section that follows is based on the minutes of the meetings and relevant resolutions reached by the Governor General and High Council of the Indies (*Raad van Indië*) 1621-1623, at Fort Batavia, the headquarters of the VOC in SE Asia.

From late 1621 until May 18, 1622, the minutes of the Council meetings in Fort Batavia occasionally comment on *Leeuwin*'s anticipated arrival with 80,000 reals, express anxiety about her late arrival, or the fear that she had come to grief. In one entry, the JPC speculates that she may have encountered adverse winds and sailed straight to Ambon, as had the *Eendracht*.

Fig.7. *Gezicht in vogelvlucht op de stad Batavia, 1629, Batavia, Het Fort Batavia*. Print maker: Adriaen Matham ). RijksMuseum. (Artwork in the public domain).

On October 8, 1621, the minutes record that the Council awaits two ships from Patria, the *Westvrieslant* and *Leeuwin*. However, they are taking longer than anticipated. The Council is desperate for the large amounts of capital they are carrying to avoid the embarrassment of not being able to meet the payment for their purchases from China and the Coromandel Coast and pepper from Bantam, Jamby, and Patany. **JPC also deliberates that some capital will be left-over to pay the English for spices from the Mollucques, Amboyna, and Banda (Colenbrander p.779).**

The purpose behind the last payment was The Anglo-Dutch Fleet of Defense Treaty signed on June 17, 1619. The treaty called for the two



*Gezicht in vogelvlucht op de stad Batavia, 1629, Batavia, Het Fort Batavia (Bird's-eye view of the city of Batavia, 1629, also showing Fort Batavia) By Adriaen Matha*

Print: Rijksmuseum, Public domain





powers to put aside their former grievances and work together. To enable this, they established a Council of Defense, comprising eight members who were to operate a united fleet of ten ships, five each, out of Batavia. Its objective was to defend the two powers' God-given rights to free and liberal trade in Asia. Its main aim was to end the Portuguese and Spanish monopolies. Before long, the English in the region voiced concerns that the Dutch were so much better placed to dominate the alliance. However, the English being better-placed financially, JPC expressed concerns about Articles 6, 7, and 8 of the treaty, which compelled the Council of the Indies to hand over one-third of their profit on the spice trade and half of the pepper trade to the English. Given the effort and capital JPC and his predecessor had expended to establish the VOC trade in spices and pepper in Southeast Asia, which was beginning to come firmly into Dutch hands, it felt like a slap in the face for JPC. Consequently, rather than buckle under the terms of the Treaty, Coen interpreted to use it as a basis to obstruct the English.

**On January 21**, the minutes note that there is *still no tidings of Leeuwin, God grant that she arrives before too long as our need for capital is now desperate*.

**On March 3**, the minutes of Governor-General and High Council of the Indies record concern that the *Leeuwinne* has still not arrived.

**On May 18**, the minutes note that on May 15, '*Godtloff, van't Vaderlandt 't lange verwachte schip Leeuwinne wel aengecomen* (God bless, the long-awaited *Leeuwin* finally arrived). There is no mention made of her encounter and mapping of the southland. They do express the hope that the awaited missives from Patria are on the English ship *Trial* (Colenbrander, Vol. I, p. 719).

None of the Council Resolutions concerned with *Leeuwin's* late arrival contains evidence to suggest any anger is being expressed by Council members, as claimed by some researchers as per Shardlow. It is certainly not implied by the promotion and change in work status conferred on skipper Jan Franssen when he arrives in Batavia, which I note later.

**On May 24**, the minutes note, that the three chests of silver bullion the *Leeuwin* brought from Patria would now be used to pay for the China trade (Colenbrander, 1920, Vol. III, p.907).

In the month following *Leeuwin's* arrival in Batavia, the Council of Defense sent her to take fresh food, water, and weapons to ships maintaining the blockade of Bantam from June 15, for 16 days which cost f714,135, and again from July nine for 15 days, which cost them another f700. *Leeuwin* was to remain in the Sunda Strait to also offer assistance to any newly-arrived ships languishing there due to the many sick on board. A condition the *Leeuwin* knew all too well, as pointed out by the Council. She had many sick on board when she arrived in Batavia (NA 1.04.02 (VOC) 1076 Fol 306 [scan 655]; Colenbrander, Vol III, p. 889).

It is outside the scope of this essay to comprehensively discuss the history leading up to the Bantam blockade. Additionally, it would not advance this account of the *Leeuwin*. Suffice it to state that up until now, the competition around the spice trade had led to several arrangements of alliances between the English, Dutch, and Bantammers. These rotating alliances led to mistrust, contract fraud, ship confiscation, detention or murder of staff, besieging or destroying trading posts or forts, and overall undermining of each other in every manner possible. But in this instance, JPC was in charge, and the Defense Treaty had persuaded the English to support Coen's blockade of Bantam (Colenbrander, p. 779). Although the English quickly withdrew, JPC had the military might to continue to block the Bantam harbour. Hence *Leeuwin's* brief participation. Leenstra notes that in the years after 1622, the Dutch and Bantam both came under attack by the ruler of mid-Java (Mattaram), which forced them to cooperate. As for the Defence Treaty, despite its projected 20-year alliance, it would dissolve in August 1622.

## Homeward Bound 1622

**On July 21**, the Council deliberate the question of whether to designate the *Delffshaven* or *Leeuwin* next *jacht van advis* (Colenbrander, p.900).

**On August 13**, the Council Resolutions conclude despite the issue of the Gentlemen XVII having chosen the *Delffshaven* that, the Council of the Indies saw fit to replace it with the *Leeuwin* as the next 'jacht van advis' (Colenbrander 1921, p. 896). The Council replaced Adriaen Willem Goeree with Cornelis de Maeijer (or Meyer) as *Leeuwin's* merchant and named Dirck Gerritsz. Crol (Krul) homebound skipper. The minutes mention that she is to be manned by a



crew of 70, and now fully laden, they wished to send her on her way asap (Colenbrander, 1921, p.900). The Resolutions note, in addition, that the accord had again been reached with the English, which the Council of Defense had endorsed, contained a request from the English to have their ship *Cleene Jems* travel back to Europe in company with *Leeuwin* (Colenbrander, p.901).

On September 6, the Resolutions records the assistance given the English collaboration by providing the *Cleene Jems* with 14 barrels of meat and bacon. This way, she could avoid waiting for a supply from England (Colenbrander p.752). The Council endorsed an earlier request from Willem van Antzen, Governor of Banda and Council member, that he be allowed to return to Patria on *Leeuwin* (Colenbrander p.902). Resolution Sailing Orders - Ordre: Voor d' Overhooffden van de Schepen de Leeuwinne ende Den Cleynen Jems, Gaende van hier in compagnie naer Europe, 6 September, 1622 Colenbrander Vol III, Sailing Order 6-9-1622, pp. 235/6 the collective order. Crol secret order (pp. 236-38).

The Sailing Orders were explicit instructions concerning the cooperation between the two ships. The regulations advised each skipper to maintain companionable travel to Patria until they reached the passage between England and France. Also, the lead position, which included flying their nation's flag, was to be swapped each month. They should stay close together to minimise attack from outside but, if it did occur, support each other. In addition, to avoid crashing into one another to light a fire on their ships at night. The secret order handed to skipper Crol by JPC warned him to be careful because the Council of the Indies still didn't trust the English. Consequently, he should part company with the *Cleynen Jems* before they reach the coast of France and England (Colenbrander Vol I, p. 752 [letter to Patria 6-9-1622]).

The *Leeuwin* arrived in Texel on May 19, 1623. In a letter from JPC to the Heren XVII, dated September 6, 1622, he notes,

*The Leeuwin and the Golden Lion departed from the Netherlands at the same time but one arrived here after four months, the other after 13 months, which is, indeed, a significant difference. As we (the Council) understand it, the reason for the long journey the Leeuwin and some other ships had endured, is that on encountering adverse winds while*

*sailing south from the islands of Cabo Verde, they'd held an easterly position for too long and this had taken them into the Bight of Guinea before they realised it. Conversely, skippers who'd been confronted with the same predicament and tried, instead, to regain south had quickly found favourable winds and crossed the equator.*

The latter experience led JPC to add, *it is, therefore, imperative that Your Excellencies advise future skippers to retain a westerly course after passing Cabo Verde, as this, it seems, will more readily enable them to cross the equator* (Colenbrander Vol. I, p. 718).

Leenstra 2022, notes that JPC's counsel is problematic because incidental evidence serves as its foundation. Furthermore, after 1623, VOC ships that spent days, weeks, or even months trying to cross the equator in vain, who feared running out of water, frequently topped up in the Bight. Leenstra adds that the knowledge to access favourable winds to cross the equator only slowly evolved partly due to the problem with longitude. Therefore the need for skippers like Jan Franssen to seek fresh water in the Bight was *sometimes* unavoidable. Consequently, JPC's last sentence on the topic, *Na ons gevoelen comt daer niemant oft hy wilter wesen, 'Nobody arrives there [in the Bight] unwillingly,'* can hold for differing reasons.

On January 2, 1623, the Resolutions of the Governor General and High Council of the Indies, notes among a list of employees who had changes made to their contract post-arrival in Batavia,

*skipper Jan Fransz. van Hoorn having come into the land with the ship Leeuwinne on a salary of f50 per month, carried a letter of instruction from the Chamber of Amsterdam that he be advanced to a position more in line with his capacity, as they found him to be a competent and appropriate person for such a promotion (Colenbrander, Vol. III, p.934). Given the Amsterdam Chamber's exceptional recommendation, the Council of the Indies has accordingly increased his salary by f20, thus from f50 to f70 per month. Moreover, that this was to continue until he reaches Patria.*

They also commissioned him to skipper the *Trouw*, a much larger ship than the *Leeuwin* (Colenbrander, Vol III, p. 934).



Unfortunately, little else has come to light about Jan Franssen's background, despite having scoured the notarial transport files at the Amsterdam City Archives, which often contain the skipper's name on the transport contract. I also checked the births, deaths, baptisms and marriage registers in the Regional Archives in Hoorn. My last hope is that Hoorn confirms that the Jan Fransz. (Fran's son) who married Marie Jansdr. (Jan's daughter) on Pentecost day, May 18, 1603, is the Jan Franssen who skippered the *Leeuwin* on its outbound voyage to Batavia in 1621. If so, it might reveal more about his private life.

I conclude this narrative by noting the immense impact, in Australia, of the *Leeuwin* name. To date, it is attached to flora, fauna, a suburb, a street, a vineyard, wines, an ocean current and a lighthouse.

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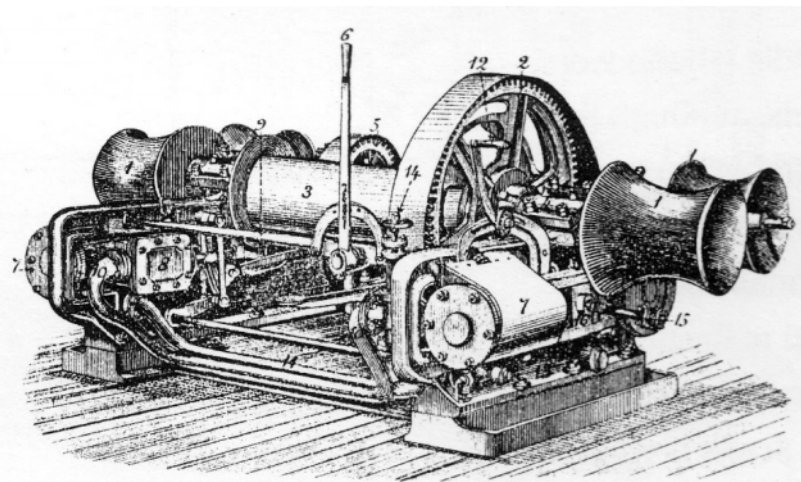
## QUIZ

### Answers to March

1. The captain of the *Flying Dutchman* was/is(?) Hendrick van der Decken.
2. *Titanic*'s two sister ships were: *Olympic*—scrapped mid 1930s and *Britannic*—sunk by a mine in 1916 during World War I.
3. The American whaler *Cervantes* was wrecked off the mid-west coast of WA in 1844.

### Quiz

1. What is a binnacle?
2. List three towns or suburbs in Western Australia which include the same name as ships wrecked in this State.
3. Where were the ex-Norwegian and later Albany whale chasers *Cheyne II* and *Cheyne III* built?







## CHARLES LIGHTOLLER (1874–1952)

By Roger Price

**S**urely no sailor's life was more remarkable or thrilling than that of Charles Lightoller, who survived the *Titanic* and the Dunkirk evacuation with many adventures packed in between - some captured in his 1930's autobiography *Titanic and other Ships*. Born in Lancashire in 1874 and virtually an orphan at age 13 he was apprenticed to the sea aboard a four-masted barque. In 1889 after surviving a storm in the South Atlantic plus a smallpox epidemic and a revolution in Brazil his second ship went down off Île St Paul - a speck in the south Indian Ocean. Saved miraculously eight days later by a passing windjammer the survivors found themselves in Adelaide for Christmas. In the following few years he pursued a varied seagoing career reflecting the global reach of the British Empire, including surviving a cyclone and fire off Calcutta as well as nearly dying of malaria off West Africa. Perhaps disenchanted with the sea, in 1898 he tried his luck on land, prospecting for gold (unsuccessfully) in the Yukon. By 1899 he had returned to England penniless, having hitchhiked across Canada as a hobo and cattle wrangler.

In 1900 he joined the White Star Line as fourth officer on the Southern Hemisphere route. While in Sydney, one night he and fellow pranksters raised the Boer flag and fired a cannon over Fort Denison in Sydney Harbour, for which Lightoller was wryly disciplined. Apparently, the good citizens of Sydney, whose sons were fighting in South Africa, had feared a Boer invasion. On one of his southern voyages his karma guided him to marry a Sydney girl. In these early years, Charles was often under the command of Captain Edward Smith, sailing on iconic White Star passenger ships, including (in 1912) the *Titanic*. On the fateful night of 14 April as second officer he was responsible for lowering the lifeboats on the port side, rigidly enforcing the 'women and children only' rule, later viewed controversially despite his undoubted valour on the night. Miraculously cheating death in the icy waters of the North Atlantic, he guided 30 survivors on an upturned canvas boat until rescued by the *Carpathia* at dawn. He was the most senior officer and the last survivor to be rescued. Though the subsequent 1913 British investigation, in which he played a major role, is now widely viewed as a whitewash many of his technical recommendations at the time passed into maritime law and probably saved thousands of lives.

Almost immediately in 1914 Lightoller found himself at war in the waters around Britain, serving initially on converted ocean liners. Surviving sinkings and a collision at sea he emerged at war's end a Commander and a decorated war hero - having sunk a submarine, harried a Zeppelin and been the first ever spotter to identify an enemy fleet from a reconnaissance plane launched at sea (off Iceland).

Armed such with a formidable record of prowess and valour, Charles should have been rewarded by his own command under the White Star banner in the post-war years. However this never happened for *Titanic* survivors, perhaps seen as 'Jonahs'. Resigning from White Star after 20 years of service, Lightoller with his wife Sylvia led a varied and full life. In 1929 they purchased and rebuilt a discarded 58-foot Admiralty steam launch now resting in Ramsgate Maritime Museum. They named it *Sundowner* and sailed British and European waters for many years, apparently even spying at the request of the British Government on the German coast just before WWII; on one occasion feigning drunkenness when apprehended.

In May 1940 as Britain faced defeat in Europe, Lightoller with his eldest son (later killed as a naval officer in 1945) and an 18-year-old Sea Scout helmed *Sundowner* to Dunkirk, returning with 127 evacuee soldiers. En route, they survived harassment by the Luftwaffe, including a near-miss where he used an evasion tactic taught him by his youngest son - an RAF pilot who had been killed on the first day of the war. Christopher Nolan was inspired by this incident when making his film 'Dunkirk'. Charles Lightoller continued in his 'Dad's navy' role until demobbed at age 72 in 1946. He died in 1952, having managed a boatyard in the post-war years. Seawater seemed to run in his veins until the very end.

Editor's note: The *Sundowner* was a 52ft auxiliary motor yacht, either ketch or schooner-rigged (depending on reference) and launched in 1912 as an Admiralty steam pinnacle. Bought by Charles and Sylvia Lightoller for £40 in 1929, it was extended by 6ft and fitted with a Parsons petrol-paraffin engine. It is now owned by the East Kent Maritime Trust and based at Ramsgate. The *Sundowner* is a member of the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships.



## George Sayers

1935–26 November 2015.

In the September 2022 journal I wrote a short article on the 40ft ketch *South Wind*, once owned by my friend George Sayers. George had led an interesting, but often very hard life before he bought the yacht.



As a very young boy he was sent to Watts Naval Training School in Norfolk, UK. This school for orphaned and abandoned boys between the ages of 10 and 16 was run by Dr. Barnardo, and organised along the lines of a ship with 'decks' and a 'bridge'. It was a tough life for a young boy. At the front of the school was a tall mast taken from a naval sailing ship at some time in the past. George told me that one of the things he

was made to do when he first arrived at the school was to climb the 150ft mast and stand on the truck with his arms outstretched to show he wasn't hanging on. He would have been 10 or 11 at the time.

Run on military lines, the hours were long, the food poor and discipline severe. Reveille was at 5.45am, after an hour of cleaning, sweeping and polishing, breakfast consisted of two thick slices of bread and some cocoa. The main meal was lunch, and as one ex-pupil later wrote:

*...the food left much to be desired. The soup served for lunch on three days a week was a thick muddy mixture of bones and chunks of meat with plenty of fat and gristle in it. The middle section was clearer while on top, for a good quarter of an inch, was green grease. Sweets was boiled rice with a few currants to sweeten it.*

As another ex-pupil wrote: 'Christmas at WNTS was over. Our total excitement consisted of two church parades, an apple, an orange, and cake.'

Lessons in such subjects as seamanship, physical training, parade and rifle drill and conventional schooling finished at 5.00pm. A 'light tea' was then served, followed at 7.00pm by cocoa and 'a helping of broken ship's biscuits'. Homework came afterwards, and then lights out at 9:00pm.



Watts Naval School





As George had to leave the school when he turned 16 in 1951, he was found a position as a cook on a steam trawler fishing out of Hull. He was not paid for this onerous job, but at the end of a three months or more voyage in Arctic seas each of the other crewmen gave him a small payment according to how each considered he had performed. After a few voyages George graduated to deck crew. Although this meant more, and more reliable, pay, the work was no easier. Going as far north as Nova Zemlya in all seasons meant that often the crew had to knock the build-up of ice (resulting from the near frozen sea breaking on board) from the bulwarks, masts and rigging.



*Seas breaking over the bulwarks (above) and the ice that formed when in the Arctic (below)*



In 1952 the 'Cod War' with Iceland began, with Iceland expanding its territorial waters so lucra-

tive fishing for British trawlers became more difficult.

After a few years working on the trawlers George was called up for National Service in Britain. After his initial training he was posted to the Royal Engineers and stationed in Gibraltar. At the end of his compulsory service he travelled to British Guiana, and joined a party looking for diamonds. This proved to be not very successful, so he obtained a job working on the oil rigs in the Middle East. This work lasted a number of years until he hurt his back, resulting in yet another move, this time to Western Australia.

George became a trawler skipper on one of the prawn trawlers in Shark Bay, but after a while his injured back forced him to give it up. He bought a metal detector and went out gold prospecting in the eastern Murchison and northern Goldfields area. He was successful, finding \$70,000 worth of gold with which he bought the ketch *South Wind*. With the help of MHA member Tony Duvollet they sailed the yacht to Geraldton, which is where I first met George who was living on board. There were a number of repairs necessary on the ketch, including a new stem knee, putting in a few sister frames to strengthen cracked frames, strengthening the deck beam between the cockpit and the main hatch and re-caulking the deck. I helped George with this work, and we became good friends. He would often ride his bike to our place for tea wearing a child's toy workman's style helmet. He had previously ridden without a helmet, but the police had told him to put one on – so he did.

George, because of his upbringing I guess, was a very independent man and also a great scrounger and hoarder of anything that might be one day useful. He would pick up bolts, nuts and washers off the roadside and put them in their individual containers on board the yacht. During our lunch break George would reminisce about his life, which is how I learnt so much about his past. One day I happened to mention the ship *Queen Mary* which





was in the news for some reason or other. Immediately George said: "I stowed away on the *Queen Mary* once." I said something to the effect of "you're kidding." "No" he replied, "I'll show you". He rummaged around in a drawer on the yacht and came back with a cutting from a Southampton newspaper. The article stated that George Sayers, aged 17 years, had stowed away on the *Queen Mary* at Southampton, was discovered after the ship left port en route for New York and locked up. He was still locked up on the ship when it returned to Southampton almost a week later, where he appeared in court and was placed on probation.

His independence and ability to do things by himself can be illustrated by the time after we had finished most of the work on *South Wind*. The solid Oregon mainmast was lying on the deck, as George had carried out a few minor repairs to it. At the end of the day he said that we would step the mast the following morning. The mast passed through the cabin top to a solid mast step on the keel, and the whole length must have been at least 40ft or more. When I got to the yacht early the following morning the mast stood in its rightful place with most of the standing rigging already secured. I said "how did you do that?" George

said, with a shrug, that it was just a matter of ropes, pulleys and patience.

A few days later George and *South Wind* disappeared from Geraldton. A week or two later we received a letter from him, written, as he so often did, on the inside of a jam tin label or it may have been the inside of a Gravox packet opened out. Evidently George had taken *South Wind* out sailing to check the rigging. The day had been fine and the weather, he said, just right, so he sailed from Geraldton down to Bunbury.

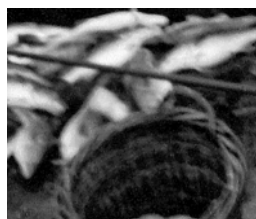
After a couple of years in Bunbury George sailed *South Wind* to the marina at Two Rocks. While there he suffered a stroke. The ambulance people had great difficulty getting him off the yacht as it was moored bow on, and this meant that they had to get him off in a stretcher along the bowsprit to the jetty. The incident scared George, and after he recovered, he sold *South Wind* and went back to his metal detecting. He obtained a flat in a northern Perth suburb, fitted out an old van as a camper and went prospecting from there. He later moved to Mogumber as he had obtained a little black dog which he wasn't allowed to keep at the flat. During this time he gave me his collection of photographs to mind. He intended to go back to England to visit his sister and wanted the photos kept safely, as his old house at Mogumber was none too secure.

After being in England George returned to Australia, but to Queensland instead of WA where he had many friends. Those of us in WA had not known of his move to Queensland, and it was only some months later we learned that he had died and been buried in a pauper's grave. We still have George's collection of photos (some of which have been used here), but many more memories of a kindly, independent and resourceful old seaman.

Peter Worsley







George as a young lad,  
and further photos from  
his collection





# Fastnet Lighthouse

The Fastnet Lighthouse is famous among the yacht racing world as it is the turning point for a 625 nautical mile race now held every two years. Organised by the Royal Ocean Racing Club, the race starts at Cowes on the Isle of Wight, the yachts head westward, sail round the rock on which the lighthouse stands and return to Cowes. This is one of three Classic Ocean Races, the other two being the Sydney–Hobart and the Newport–Bermuda. The inaugural race was held in 1925, and the winner was the ex-French pilot boat *Jolie Brise*, owned at the time by Lieutenant Commander Evelyn George Martin. This yacht won the race again in 1929 and in 1930 (until 1931 the race was held every year). In 1971 *Ragamuffin*, owned by Syd Fischer, was the first and only Australian yacht to win, although *Ballyhoo* (owner Jack Rooklyn) won line honours in 1977. Over the last few years the race has altered considerably, with different classes of yachts including multihulls entering. The race now finishes in France.

Fastnet Lighthouse is an Irish lighthouse on Fastnet Rock, some eight miles off the coast of County Cork. The word Fastnet comes from Old Norse *Hvasstann-ey* or *Havasstein-ey*, meaning 'Sharp Stone Isle'. The Irish name for the rock is *An Carraig Aonair* or 'Lonely Rock'. It is also called 'Ireland's Teardrop' as it was the last sight of Ireland seen by the emigrants heading to America during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Prior to there being a lighthouse on the rock, on 10 November 1847 the American packet *Stephen Whitney* en route New York to Liverpool struck the nearby West Calf Island, and 92 of the 110 passengers and crew were drowned. There was a call for a lighthouse, but it was not until January 1854 that work started. This lighthouse was built on the top of the rock from cast iron plates, but it was soon realised that it could not withstand the severe weather that at times struck the rock. It was noted that when large waves struck the tower it shook so much that dishes were knocked off the table and furniture overturned. The strongest gust recorded was 119m.p.h. (191km.p.h), so in 1895 the decision was made to build a stronger lighthouse.

Work commenced in 1897 on a stone lighthouse built a little lower down than the previous one. Designed by William Douglas, 4,300 tons of Cornish granite was used. Each of the 2,047 blocks of stone was cut to dovetail with its neighbour and shipped across to be laid to a height of 146ft (45m). The lower section was filled with a further 120 cubic metres of granite to a height of 58ft above the high water mark, where the entrance was placed. The light on the top of the tower has its focal point 159ft (48.5m) above sea level, and the light has a range of 28 nautical miles. The old lighthouse was dismantled except for the lower section which became an oil store until the light was changed from kerosene burner to electricity. Originally manned by six keepers, four on the lighthouse working in pairs, and being relieved so that each man spent four weeks keeping and two weeks ashore, in 1989 the light was automated. The Fastnet Lighthouse has the distinction of being the highest and widest (the base has a diameter of 52ft (15.9m)) stone lighthouse in Ireland and the UK.

The 2023 Fastnet Yacht Race will be the 50<sup>th</sup> held since 1925, and will still use the lighthouse on Fastnet Rock as the turning point for the race to the finish line.

