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MARITIME HERITAGE ASSOCIATION JOURNAL

The seal population on Kangaroo Island is slowly increasing from the days of seal hunting in the early 1800s

See article page 16

Photo: Peter Worsley

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MHA End of Year Wind Up

When: 10:00am, 17 November 2024

Where: 33 Gosnells Road East, Orange Grove

It would be appreciated if you would bring a plate of nibblies or finger food to share
Robin and Pam will be supplying tea and coffee

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

This year there will not be a quilt raffle
Instead, the quilt will be presented to our hosts Robin and Pam

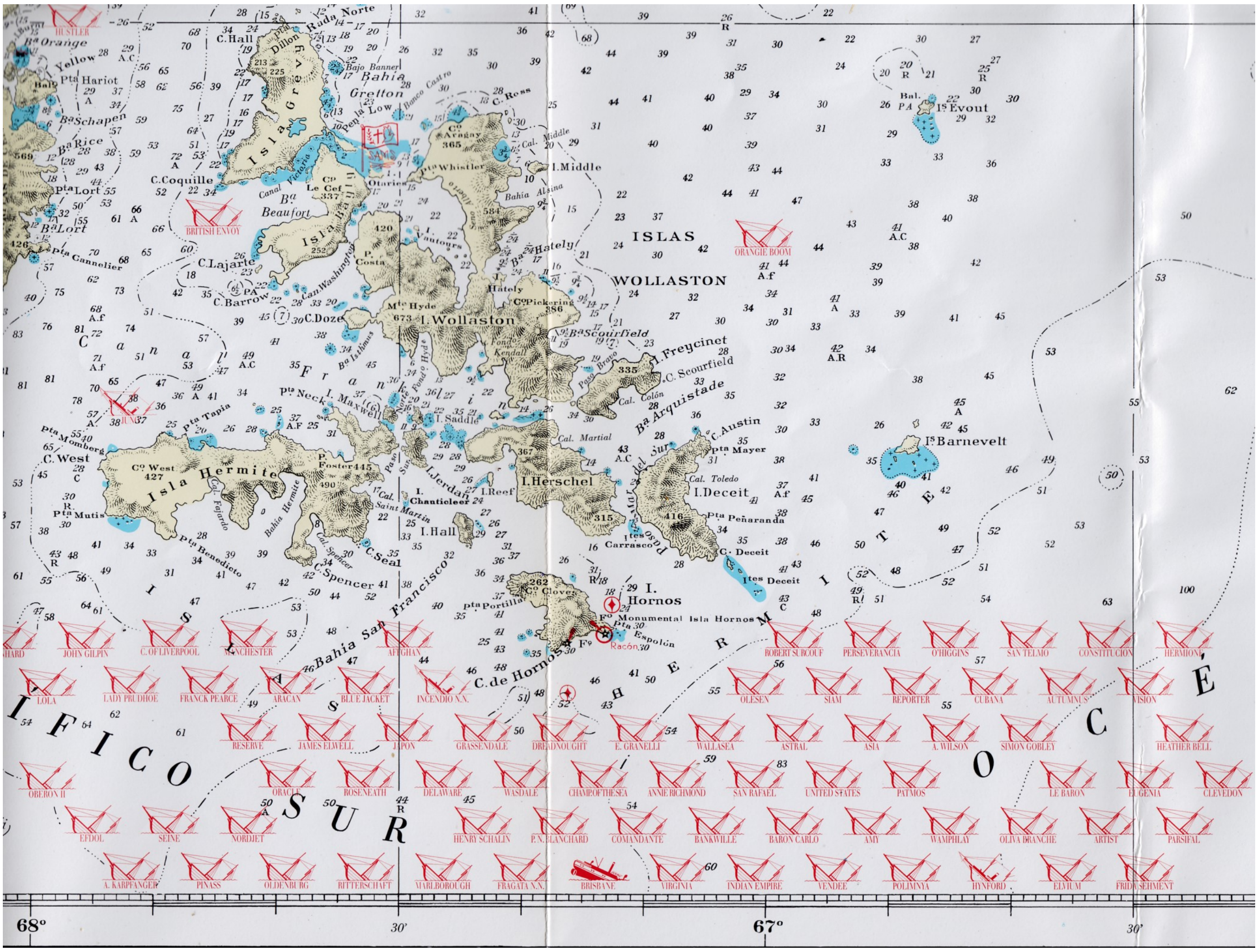
Cape Horn Shipwrecks

Cape Horn has always had a fearsome reputation as one of the worst places in the world to sail. In summer the wind is gale force up to 5% of the time, and in winter this rises to 30%. The strong winds of the Southern Ocean travel unimpeded around the earth at this latitude giving rise to large waves. When these waves encounter the shallower waters around the cape they become shorter and steeper. The winds and the current are also funnelled between Cape Horn and the Antarctic Peninsula. Couple this with the possibility of icebergs in winter and it is clear why Drake Passage was, and still is, a dangerous place to sail. Charles Darwin wrote: *One sight of such a coast is enough to make a landsman dream for a week about shipwrecks, peril and death.*

I have an Argentinian chart of Cape Horn dated 2000 which names 149 shipwrecks that occurred off Cape Horn between 1645 and 1990. Allan Villiers in his book 'Voyage of the *Parma*' names 32 large steel or iron windjammers that have gone missing round Cape Horn, and states that there were others Of those named by Villiers none appear on the chart. These 181 named ships are certainly not all those that have been lost trying to round Cape Horn, and it leaves one wondering how many sailors lost their lives there.

Peter Worsley

Cape Horn in benevolent weather



The Ditty Bag

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

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

The only incident of one submarine destroying another while both vessels were underwater occurred off the Norwegian coast during World War II. On 9 February 1945 the German *U-864* was torpedoed by HMS *Venturer*. *U-864* sank with the loss of all 73 crew.

The first purpose-built landing-craft of which we have a record were used in 491 B.C.. The Persian army built vessels specially designed to carry horses in their war against the Greeks. What would normally be the lower bank of oars and its rowers was set out as horse-boxes.

During the 1820s captured slave ships earned a bounty for the Royal Navy crews who made the capture. The bounty was based, not on the value of the captured ship as this became government property, but on the number of slaves freed.

The beautiful timber walnut now used for high quality firearm stocks and expensive furniture used to be so common in America that is was recommended for fence posts.

Moulding planes, used by shipwrights, boat builders and furniture makers come in a variety of shapes. George Washington ordered 50 of them from a factory in England.

Harbour gaskets: Broad, but short and well blacked gaskets, placed at equal distances on the yard, for showing off in a well-furled sail in port; there is generally one upon every other seam.

Smyth, W.H., 1867

The largest woodworking planes are coopers' planes. They are about 6ft long and used by fixing them upside down (i.e. blade uppermost) and sliding the barrel staves over the plane blade. It is used to trim the curved edges on the barrel staves.

Cape Mentelle was named by Thomas Nicolas Baudin in February 1803 after Edme Mentelle (1730–1816), a noted French geographer.

Two 'remedies' from about 1900 for curing travel/sea sickness:
1. To prevent car sickness take a sheet or two of writing paper sufficient to cover both the chest and stomach, and put it under the clothing next to the skin, making certain that the chest and stomach are well covered. The paper must be worn for the entire length of the journey.
2. To prevent sea sickness, take half a teaspoon of Epsom salts in a little water two nights at bedtime before sailing.

A 20-year old American had just received his SCUBA dive certificate and went on a treasure hunting dive off Florida. In 18ft of water he discovered a golden chalice from the wreck of the Spanish ship *Santa Margarita* in 1622. The chalice was sold for US$413,000.

The Naval Darwin Awards are given when IQ is inversely proportional to displacement.

As coastal erosion occurs along the beaches of Glamorgan in Wales, several skeletal remains have been revealed. These are believed to be the remains of shipwreck victims dating from the 16th to 18th centuries, though some may be very much older. Bodies had been buried close to the shore where they had been washed up.

The crews of Royal Navy ships in the early 19th century were a varied group recruited or impressed from many countries of the world. In 1813 a report stated that 6,600 Americans had been discharged from the Royal Navy in 1811–1812. This was the highest number of non-British sailors in the Royal Navy at that time. Now only British citizens can join the service.

11 September 1914: Australia's first military action and casualties of World War I occurred on this day when the German-controlled radio station at Bita Paka, New Britain, was captured.

The Murray River Flag carried by vessels that ply the Murray-Darling river system is the only flag in the world named in honour of a river.

A ship of the line needed over 1,000 blocks, all hand-made. By the end of the 18th century the Royal Navy was purchasing 100,000 blocks a year.

The Seaworthy(?) Pumpkin

You have all heard of the competitions to grow the biggest pumpkin. A family near Tumut, NSW, grew an enormous prize-winning pumpkin. Knowing that after the competition the flesh would be hollowed out and fed to stock, Adam Farquhason asked for, and received, the remaining shell. His aim was to carve it into a canoe and in it paddle his way down the fast-flowing Tumut River till it reached the Murrumbidgee, then continue downstream to Wagga Wagga.

He launched his vessel (it seems to have been more like a coracle) as the canoe *Cinderella* and set off paddling. Steering in the current and pushing off sand banks was the main occupation through the successful voyage, though by then his canoe was rather slimy inside, and starting to smell rather ghastly.

ABC Radio Overnight, 17 April 2024

Hungry Boys

Thanks to Ron Forsyth for this article from the *Macleay Argus*, 20 February 1897

A perfect army of well-to-do lads goes into the British merchant service every year. It is one of the few trades or professions where a boy may begin to earn something. Although he is seldom paid anything in money, he earns his board and lodging, and, after four years life at sea, with its good discipline, splendid air — and we regret to say bad food — he can pass an examination for second mate, and, provided he has a good discharge, get into one of our large steamship companies, which is the next best to being an officer in the Royal Navy itself. As there are many mothers with small means — widows perhaps, with a number of children out of all proportion to the income — the merchant service is always well stocked with apprentices, and a few particulars may be of interest. Eight out of every ten of these lads pay a premium; not a large one it is true, but yet they pay something, and only get exactly the same food as the ordinary sailor who enters without any premium whatever and receives wages from the start. The A.B.'s (able-bodied seamen) work in port from six to six; but the gentleman apprentice has no such hours, and consequently stores coming in late, of cargo requiring to be attended to after the regulation time, all fall to the boys. It is to them the extra work is given, it is they who have to row the skipper or mate to town and wait any number of hours for his return, and, although they could refuse, as a lad said the other day, after serving nearly five years at sea and retiring with excellent certificates of every kind, 'You see it doesn't pay to refuse to do anything, if you want to get on.' Poor lad! he had just come off a voyage that had lasted 163 days on a sailing ship, and his delight at fresh food was almost touching to behold. When we came to inquire into the matter he told us that in port the food was all right, because there fresh meat was procurable, and potatoes and an occasional vegetable was served; but as a sailing ship is often four or five months at sea at a stretch, they come to the end of their fresh food after the first ten days, and then begins what in his slang

parlance he called 'sea-whack.' The Board of Trade settles the food supply, but, as the lad remarked, 'The man who wrote that hadn't ever been to sea in all his life I should think, or he would often have known what it was to be a hungry boy.' One pound of bread, 'hard tack,' means 1lb. of ship's biscuits. The regulation is 1lb. of hard tack per diem, but the shipowners are generous enough to allow the boys to have as much as they want. They don't generally want very many as the biscuits are terribly hard. The 1/2lb. of flour is served as bread, the Doctor (viz. the cook) having made the flour into 'soft tack,' which is much appreciated by the boys. Of course we are only writing of sailing ships, called by the apprentices 'windjammers.' Steamers are generally much better provided for in every way. Now let us take the life of the ordinary apprentice. If he chances to go on deck at 4 a.m. for his watch he is lucky, for he is amply compensated for the cold or the heat by the fact that he gets an extra cup of coffee at 5 a.m. Of course without any milk, for milk is unknown at sea. We all realise that fresh milk would be impossible on a long sea voyage; but surely in its condensed form, which is very nutritious, it might be served sometimes. If the boy, on the other hand, goes on his watch at midnight, he does not get this extra cup of coffee, and he has had his last meal at five or six o'clock the previous afternoon, which last meal, be it said, has only consisted of tea and biscuit. There is no supper, and after such simple fare as milkless tea and hard ship's biscuits, it is hard lines to have to do four hours watch on deck suffering the pangs of hunger. He gets nothing till breakfast at eight o'clock the following morning. It is too long a spell without food, and certainly after bad weather, which they often get for days and days at a time (especially round Cape Horn), it seems hard that when breakfast comes they should have nothing hot, not even porridge, which is cheap enough we all know. They get nothing for their early meal but coffee and ship's biscuits. Therefore, let it be understood there are only three meals a day, and two of them composed of tea and biscuit, or coffee and biscuit, with a limited supply of butter and sugar, and no milk or meat of any kind. The 'Queen's Birthday' comes once a week. This means the doling or 'whacking out' of the Board of Trade allowance. One pound of butter (in hot climates half a pound of butter and half a pound of marmalade) is given to each lad to last him for a week; fourteen ounces of sugar — two ounces having been kept back to sweeten his lime juice, which he must drink or his name is entered in the 'log.' This lime juice is given out daily at eight bells (mid-day). Most of them like it very much, especially in the hot weather, and look forward to the half-pint a day as a treat.

As a rule, an apprentice must be sixteen, and in many companies he must be five feet high, but some shipowners will take the boys at fourteen; £25 to £40 is an ordinary premium for the four years' apprenticeship, and the firm generally return this money as wages during the four years the lad is in their service. When he leaves, the indentures are handed back endorsed, and a discharge for the period the apprentice has served beyond his indentures is given, with a good or bad character. Before he can go up for his exam, he must have a reference for twelve months' sobriety, and if the skipper will not give that, he must go to sea again for another year. But to return to the ships. There is, of course, no doctor on board; that we know would be impossible, so that if anyone is ill he has to get better or suffer and die. The apprentices live together in a house called the 'Half-deck.' The lads make their own bunks, wash their clothes and their plates, scrub the floors in turn, and work in every way exactly the same as an ordinary sailor. There are no comforts — none are expected— but a few of the dis comforts, such as the sweating from unlined iron beds which continually wet the bedding, might easily be avoided. It is said that the Germans and Americans feed their A.B's (they do not take apprentices) much better, and it is not unknown for a boy leaving a ship flying the English flag to be laughed at as 'the hungry one' as he passes through the dock. Of course, we do not say that boys cannot live on the Board of Trade provisions. They do live; but they seldom thrive, and to see the lads come off a long voyage covered with boils and sores, as often happens, shows the awful state their blood gets into on such provisions as are doled out to them. Added to which we know that want of food stunts growth, and therefore many of these lads would develop into much finer men were they better fed. As it is, the one thing probably that keeps them alive at all is the excellence of the air. Were it not for that, we shudder to think what would become of some of them, for our convicts are better fed at the nation's expense that the ordinary apprentice working hard for his living. Fresh beef and mutton are out of the question; but rice, tapioca, sago, dried peas, and vegetables, even fresh potatoes, tinned milk, canned meats, cocoa, porridge, &c., could all be doled out without any very great expense, and would be an enormous benefit to the apprentices who are working under the English flag, and helping to maintain the supremacy of England's trade on the high seas.

Whaling in a Torpedo Boat

Countess of Hopetoun

Thanks to Ron Forsyth for this article

Sir William Lyne was an Australian born member of the first Australian parliament. Although Tasmanian born, he became the premier of New South Wales in September 1899. With federation he considered himself, as head of the most populous colony, entitled to be Australia's first prime minister. In what became known as "The Hopetoun Blunder" he was appointed as the first prime minister by Australia's first Governor General, the 7th Earl of Hopetoun. Having campaigned against federation, however, he was unable to gain the support to form a government and Edmund Barton was subsequently sworn in. *The Bulletin* editorialised: *Among the men who can claim by merit or accident, to be front-rank politicians of Australia, Lyne stands out conspicuously as almost the dullest and most ordinary*.

Future prime minister Alfred Deakin is said to have described him as 'a crude, sleek, suspicious, blundering, short-sighted, backblocks politician'. In what was seen as an act of reconciliation, however, Barton appointed Lyne his Minister for Home Affairs.

William Lyne

Photo: Wikipedia

Lyne's credentials for conservation were also damning. He was largely responsible for pushing through the Tasmanian Parliament the bounty scheme that caused the extinction of the Thylacine (Tasmanian tiger).

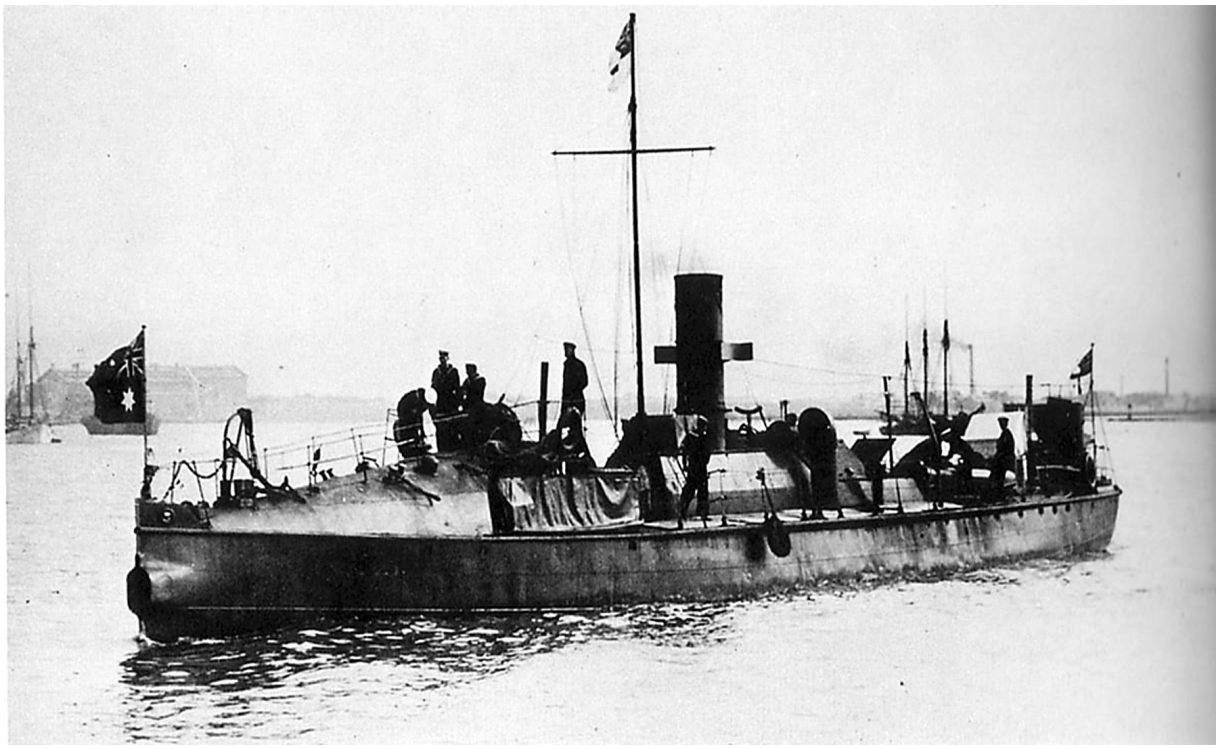
The papers of the day depicted a scene worthy of comic opera or a reincarnation of Colonel Blimp:

SIR WILLIAM LYNE'S DIVERSIONS
WHALING IN A TORPEDO BOAT
A BAY PICNIC.

It is well to be a Federal Minister it is better to an Acting Minister for Defence and best of all to be that Minister when the torpedo boats are run off the slips at the Williamstown naval depot for a little exercise down the bay. Possibly to still further his desire to circumnavigate the continent, the ex-Acting Minister for Defence (Sir William Lyne) and a party of friends accepted Captain Tickell's invitation and boarded the torpedo boat *Countess of Hopetoun* on Saturday. It was an ideal afternoon, with only a pleasant even breeze blowing and no rough sea to discomfort the voyagers. Everything pointed to a really enjoyable picnic. The unexpected happened once more and the picnic became a sensational marine excursion and developed into a mimic naval engagement.

"A whale! a whale!" The officers crew, and visitors on board could hardly believe their ears as somebody shouted over the exciting news. "A whale! a whale!" They craned their necks and far away from the boat which was about six miles down the bay south from the Gellibrand lightship they could see a big dark object moving slowly through the water while a small fountain seemed to be playing from the front portion of it. Instantly the torpedo boat ran straight ahead to the object which rose to the surface with an alarming commotion and discovered beyond doubt that it was a whale while round it sported two little whales - evidently a cow and two calves.

Having come up to within perhaps a quarter of a mile of the monster the engines were slowed down. The captain would have gone nearer to a hostile warship but a whale was a whale and he was not a whale and perhaps the whale would not observe the rules of naval warfare.



HMAS Countess of Hopetoun

Photo: RAN

The three whales lashed the waters into a white foam with their tails, that of the mother being of enormous size. She spouted and sounded and sounded and spouted, accompanied by her children and regardless of the fact that His Majesty's torpedo boat *Countess of Hopetoun* with the ex-Acting Minister for Defence aboard, was in her vicinity. The sight stirred the daring spirits on the boat. "Let us shoot her," they said. The idea caught on as the Americans say and the *Countess of Hopetoun* was moved into position in a masterly manner. A Nordenfelt was trained on to the biggest whale. The gunner took a long and careful aim. 'Whiz!' went the bullets which disappeared somewhere in the waste of waters and the monster not liking the noise flipped her tail and disappeared.

The gunner looked surprised. Nothing had happened. Undaunted however, by one failure - the sighting must have been a trifle defective - he got to work again. The little steamer cut through the water at 16 knots an hour and the spouting was eagerly looked for. "There it is on the starboard side," somebody called out and answering her helm beautifully the *Countess of Hopetoun* completed another fine evolution. Again, the bullets went hurtling over the water and again the three whales twisted their tails high in the air as if in defiance and derision and sounded.

They came up somewhat close to the torpedo boat which with a graceful sweep beat as fast a retreat as she could. The mother whale appeared to be about the same size as the *Countess of Hopetoun* at least those on board say so. Movements which would have excited the admiration of Captain Mahan were executed. In point of seamanship and manoeuvring the whales were badly beaten but they did not appear to be much disturbed. Shot after shot was fired, without result. The whales were travelling too quickly; they rose and all too rapidly the torpedo-boat was steaming too fast - something or other disturbed the aim of the gunners. If there are some landsmen who cannot hit a haystack there are apparently naval men who cannot hit a whale.

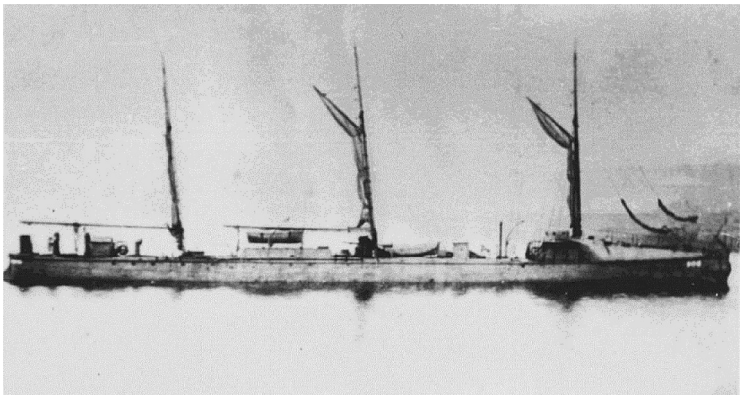
However, the whales disported themselves to their hearts' content without coming to any harm. 'If I only had a harpoon!" Sir William Lyne is said to have ejaculated in despair. A mental picture of the Minister standing well forward with a harpoon passed over his right shoulder and do-or-die look in his face caused the gunners to redouble their exertions. But just as they would, the shots never found their object. It was suggested that if a torpedo were launched it might hit something but as the something may not have been the whales, and there appear to have been some doubt as to whether there was a torpedo on board, they were spared this new danger. "Ram them," somebody said in grim desperation, but nobody cared to risk the chance of Jonah's face, with the age of miracles passed.

After 'some splendid sport,' therefore, the chase was abandoned. The engines had been given a good run, and the gunners had had some novel practice. Sir William Lyne had been highly entertained, Captain Tickell had displayed how he could handle his craft, and altogether the picnic had been a great success. (*Argus*, 28 October 1902).

All in all, it was a harmless day of fun (no animals were injured) at the taxpayers' expense.

* * * * *

Torpedo boat *905* was temporary rigged as a three-masted schooner carrying 1,800 feet of sail for her delivery to Melbourne from whence she was built in the yards of Yarrow & Co at Poplar in London. At one hundred- and thirty-feet length, seventy-five tons displacement she had a top speed of twenty four knots. Owing to her narrow beam of 13ft 6in and draught of just 7ft 4in she was entrusted to Captain Amos Jackson who had experience in the delivery of light draught steam vessels. Her original crew of Scandinavians were not impressed with her. They apparently did not like the prospect of sailing to the antipodes in a craft of such limited dimensions and of so queer an appearance."



TB 905 *rigged as a three-masted schooner for her voyage to Australia*

Photo: RAN

Leaving London on 19th December in 1891 it was estimated the voyage would take about four and a half months. When she had not appeared at Cape Town and been unheard of by April the next year, she was feared missing. Built at a cost of £14,500 this would be a devastating loss to the infant navy. After 154 days at sea, however, she arrived at Port Phillip Bay on 22nd of May. With a crew of six, Capt. Jackson had weathered a tempestuous passage. They had had to heave to under close reefed fore and main trysail with oil bags hung out to still the waters for days on end.

"With the exception of being imprisoned in a reeking damp submarine dungeon, there is probably no life more intolerable than that spent on board a modern torpedo boat on a long voyage. The officer and crew are kept constantly in a cramped and stooping position; they have no deck to exercise upon, and no opportunity of exercising their stiffened muscles between port and port. In the present case all hands have been for over five months cooped in the inside of a sort of cigar under canvas at the sport of gales, and daily and nightly finding themselves amid waves of enormous magnitude, compared with which they appeared a mere toy upon the waste of waters (*Mount Alexander Mail*, 26 May 1892).

Captain Jackson may well have avoided Cape Town for fear of his crew abandoning him.

In July that year she was christened *The Countess of Hopetoun* at Williamstown by her namesake, the Governor's wife, to the strains of 'Rule Britannia'. She joined a fleet of torpedo boats – *Lonsdale, Nepean, Childers* and *Gordon.*

The *Countess* sported 2 x 1inch guns, 2 x BL Nordenfelt guns, had 3 x 14inch torpedo tubes and was powered with a 1,189 h.p. compound surface condensing engine.

Although never firing a torpedo in anger, she did service during World War I as a minesweeper before being scrapped in 1924.

Did You Know?

In 1739, during the conflict known as the War of Jenkin's Ear, Vice-Admiral Edward Vernon was ordered to *destroy the Spanish settlements in the West Indies and distress their shipping by any means whatever*. He took his orders seriously, and on 21st November of that year captured the city of Porto Bello in Panama. This victory was celebrated in England, and London's Portobello Road, famous for its antique stalls and markets, was named for Admiral Vernon's victory.

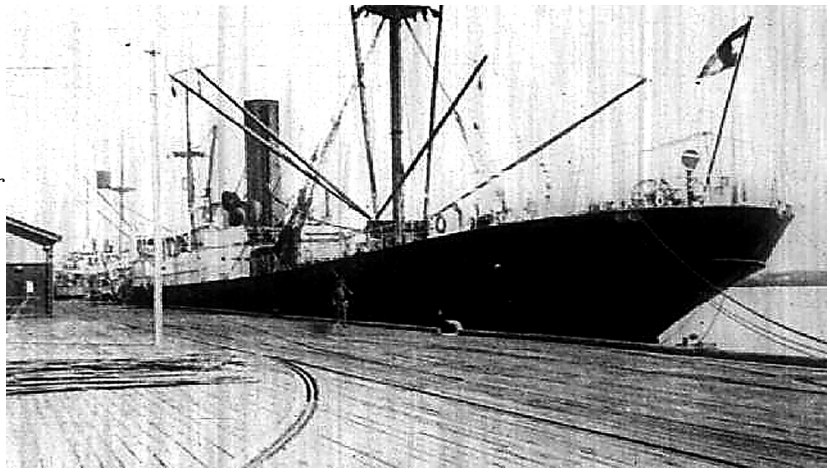
Prizes of War in Fremantle

A Prize of War is a piece of enemy property or land seized by a belligerent party during or after war or battle. Even the Romans had the *spoila opima* (rich spoils) consisting of the armour, weapons and other items stripped by a Roman commander from his defeated foe's body after combat. This was considered an honourable entitlement. There are now international rules defining how prizes are claimed, and these lay down rules about what cannot be claimed as prizes. The Geneva Convention provides:

> *All effects and articles of personal use, except arms, horses, military equipment and military documents, shall remain in the possession of prisoners of war, likewise their metal helmets and gas masks and like articles issued for personal protection. Effects and articles used for their clothing or feeding shall likewise remain in their possession, even if such effects and articles belong to their regulation military equipment.*
>
> *Badges of rank and nationality, decorations and articles having above all a personal or sentimental value may not be taken from a prisoner of war* (Geneva Convention, Article 18).

Despite the above convention, many soldiers returned after a war with 'souvenirs' collected after battle. What were true, legitimate Prizes of War, were the many guns, tanks, planes and other weapons now at the Australian War Memorial. The largest prizes of war were, however, captured enemy ships. Australia captured 40 enemy ships during World War I, at least three of them at Fremantle.

The first prize was the Norddeutsher Lloyd Steamship Company's ship *Greifswald* (5,461 tons, Captain Albert Meyer) which arrived at Fremantle early on Thursday 6 August 1914. After leaving Bremen carrying a general cargo, the *Greifswald* did not sight another ship until it reached Fremantle. He was told to anchor in the usual anchorage. The following morning the anchor was raised and the *Greifswald* entered Fremantle, the crew removing hatch covers ready to discharge cargo. As the ship was tying up alongside I Shed the agent boarded and advised Captain Meyer that war had been declared. A guard was placed on the ship and none of the 46 crew were allowed ashore. Soon after this the officers, but not the rest of the crew, were allowed to wander freely around Fremantle for a number of days until all were interned on Rottnest Island. Like the other two ships taken as prizes, the *Greifswald* had no radio.

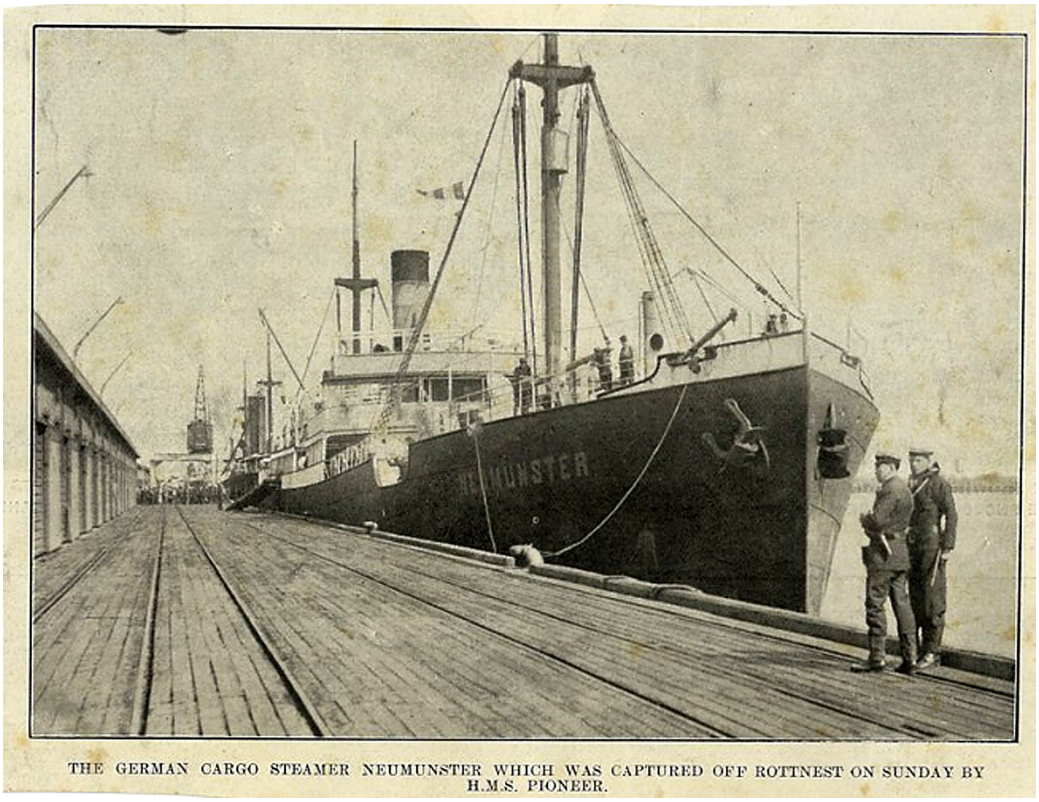


Greifswald *alongside the wharf at Fremantle*

The *Greifswald* was re-named *Carina* and was used as transport *C-5* between Australia and Europe during World War I. In 1926 the *Carina* was sold to Georgios Vergottis, Greece, and renamed *Captain Rokos*. On 17 February 1931 the ship ran aground in the West Indies and three days later was abandoned as a total loss.

At 6.30am on 16 August 1914 the German-Australia Line cargo ship *Nuemünster* (4,424 tons, Captain Karl Hermann) was stopped by the light cruiser HMAS *Pioneer* after a shot across the bows just south of Rottnest Island. *Pioneer* fired the shot as *Nuemünster* had failed to stop when ordered, and in fact even after the shot Captain Hermann thought it was just a warning that that he was approaching dangerous reefs. A second shot was fired before the *Nuemünster* stopped. Like the *Greifswald*, the *Nuemünster* had not seen any ships on the voyage out. After following *Pioneer* closer to Fremantle Captain Hermann was ordered to anchor and an armed guard was sent across from the cruiser. A Fremantle pilot then took the *Nuemünster* into Fremantle where it was officially detained. An armed guard was placed on the vessel to prevent

the 42 crew going ashore, although, again, the officers were allowed to wander around Fremantle. That crew also were subsequently taken to Rottnest Island.



THE GERMAN CARGO STEAMER NEUMUNSTER WHICH WAS CAPTURED OFF ROTTNEST ON SUNDAY BY H.M.S. PIONEER.

The *Nuemünster* was re-named *Cooee*, and in 1926 was sold to Finland where it was re-named *Bomarsund*. The steamer was scrapped in 1935 at Ghent, Belgium.

The final World War I prize was the Norddeutsher Lloyd Steamship Company's cargo ship *Thüringen* (4,994 tons, Captain Busche)) which arrived in Fremantle three days later than expected due to striking heavy weather. It had departed Bremen on 8 July and had on board 800 tons of general cargo for Fremantle. Having sailed well south of the Cape of Good Hope no other ships were seen. On arrival off Rottnest island in the early morning of 28 August 1914 the steamer was stopped by HMAS *Pioneer* firing two shots across her bow. A boarding crew was put aboard and the *Thüringen* was brought into harbour and moored to No. 2 river buoy pending the decision of the Prize Court on what was to become of the cargo. The 46 crew plus two German stowaways were interned on Rottnest Island. There is no mention of the officers from this ship being allowed to wander around Fremantle.

An interesting item thought to be related to the taking of the *Thüringen* is held by the State Records Office, Perth. The boarding officer from HMAS *Pioneer*, Lieutenant Dalglish, stated that:

> *I was received by the third officer, and was taken up to the bridge where the captain was. I informed him the ship was a prize and he asked why. I informed him that war was declared between Great Britain and Germany… I then went down to his cabin and he produced all his confidential books, which I locked up in a safe. Then paymaster Ramsay came in, and we examined them together…*

The key held by the SRO is a key from the *Thüringen* and is believed to be the key to that safe.

The *Thüringen* was renamed *Moorina* and was leased to the Indian Government. In early November 1915, while in the Mediterranean carrying Indian troops, the *Moorina* was sunk by gun fire by German submarine *U-35* off the island of Crete.

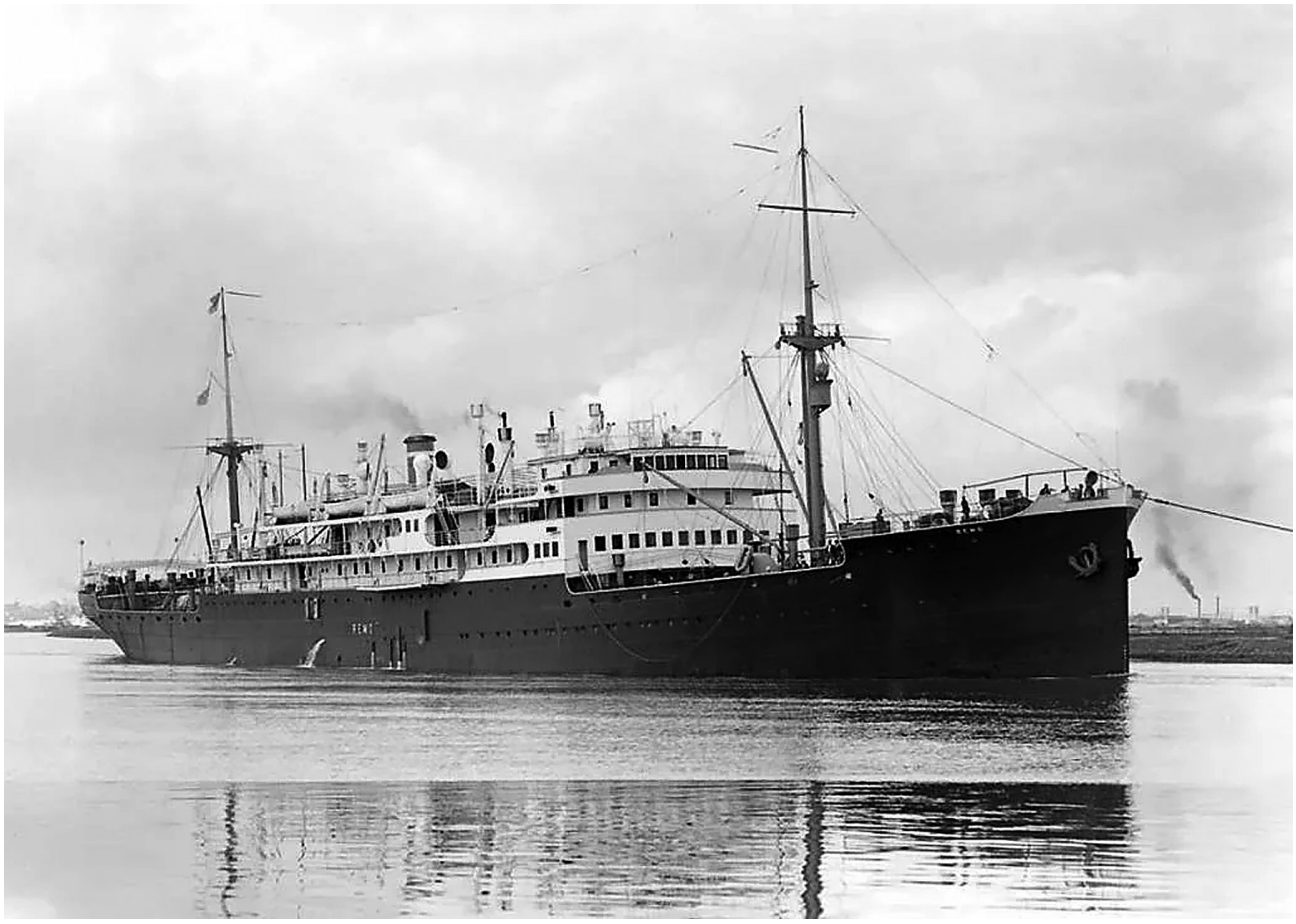
The crews of the three vessels were taken to Rottnest on the *Zephyr*, while it was expected that the steamers would be sailed to the Eastern States by prize crews to unload the reminder of their cargoes intended for the various ports there. On 18 September 1914 the first Prize Court ever held in Western Australia was held in the Supreme Court before Acting Chief Justice Burnside. He granted the claim to allow the discharge of the cargoes destined for Fremantle, but reserved his decision regarding the sailing of the three vessels to other ports within Australia to discharge cargo for those ports. He considered that the vessels were prizes of Fremantle, and once they left, they would pass out of the control of the court.

The first and as far as I know the only ship taken as a prize of war at Fremantle during World War II was the Lloyd Triestino ship *Remo* (Captain Guiseppe Dani, 9,870 tons) seized on 11 June 1940. The ship had arrived in Fremantle on 7 June, but the Australian Government delayed its departure citing Customs problems, although

there was only eight tons of cargo for Fremantle. This was effective, and the day Benito Mussolini declared war the *Remo* was taken as a prize of war.

There were 229 passengers from eight different countries on the ship; Hungary, Poland, Greece, Yugoslavia, Estonia, Finland and Italy. Those passengers declared to be enemy aliens were sent to Victoria for internment. The crew were at first transferred to Rottnest Island, but later classed as internees and taken to Harvey Internment Camp. About 18 months later the crew were taken to Victoria where their classification was changed to prisoners of war.

The *Remo* was subsequently sailed by an Australian crew to Sydney. On arrival it was re-named *Reynella* and was used to carry food and war material between Australia and Britain. By 1949 the ship was considered no longer suitable for the Australia-Britain trade and was offered for sale to the Italian Government who then handed it back to its pre-war owners. The company again called it *Remo*. In 1959 the *Remo* was scrapped at Kure, Japan.



Remo

Peter Worsley

Cheap Yachting ?

Yacht racing especially in the modern cutters of 150 to 170 tons, is very expensive. The wear and tear of spars and gear is incredible. I believe that in the yachting season of 1895 H.R.H. the Prince of Wales's vessel the *Britannia* sprang or carried away three masts; and some of his competitors were not more lucky. So that a modern racing yacht with a crew of 30 men may, if successful, easily knock a hole in £1,000 for racing wages alone, to say nothing of cost of spars, and sails, and gear, &c. Of course, in comparison with a pack of hounds, or a deer forest, or a good grouse moor, or pheasant preserving on a very large scale, the expense of yacht racing at its worst is modest.

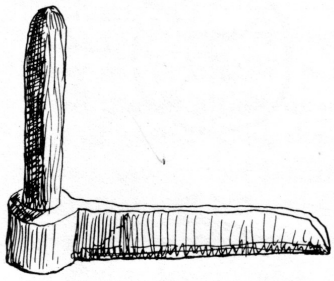
Sir Edward Sullivan, 1895


Norddeutscher Lloyd
Bremen
Hansa-Kogge
Vollschiff
Erster Lloyddampfer „Bremen"
Einbaum
Erster transatlant. Dampfer
Wikinger
Wilh. Jöntzen, Bremen.

QUIZ

Answers to June

1. There have been four WA governors who were previously naval men. Captain (later Sir) James Stirling, Captain Charles Fitzgerald, Admiral Sir Frederick George Denham Bedford and Rear Admiral Sir Richard Trowbridge KCVO KStJ.
2. A froe is a cutting tool with a wooden handle and steel blade at right angles. It is used for splitting timber by holding the handle, resting the blade on the timber and hitting the top pf the blade with a mallet.
3. Sydney Parkinson sailed with Cook on *Endeavour*
   William Westall sailed with Flinders on *Investigator*
   Charles-Alexandre Lesueur sailed with Baudin on *Geographe*.
   (Leseuer had actually joined the expedition as a volunteer gunner.)



Froe

Quiz

1. In a square-rigged vessel what are stirrups?
2. After whom was Matilda Bay named?
3. You have learned what a froe is used for – what is a moot used for?

How Kangaroo Island got it's Name

Matthew Flinders anchored the *Investigator* on the evening of 21 March 1802. They were in a bay on the north coast of an island to the south of the mainland of what would later be named Australia.

Flinders had been surprised during the day to see no signs of life on the island——no people, not even smoke. The next morning however a number of kangaroos were seen feeding peacefully on the shore, and, having gone almost four months without fresh meat this was most welcome. He and his crew were even more surprised to find that when approached the animals showed no fear. He later recalled:
Our landing gave them no disturbance….I killed ten, and the rest of the party made up the number to thirty-one….[T]*he poor animals suffered themselves to be shot in the eyes….and in some cases to be knocked on the head with sticks.*

In honour of the slaughter and subsequent feast, Flinders named the island *Kangaroo Island*.

The birds and seals as well as marsupials were extraordinarily tame because there had been no people living and hunting on the island since the end of the last ice age, when sea levels had risen and cut the area off from the mainland. This isolation had also happened, of course, in Tasmania. But while Tasmania had maintained its population of Aborigines, Kangaroo Island had not. They had either retreated north as the water rose, or a remnant population left behind was too small to remain viable. There have been no stone tools in use on the island later than 10,000 ago, though earlier artefact finds have been fairly abundant. This had been a long enough period of time for the animals to 'forget' to be cautious. Within a very short few years their natural fear of man returned.

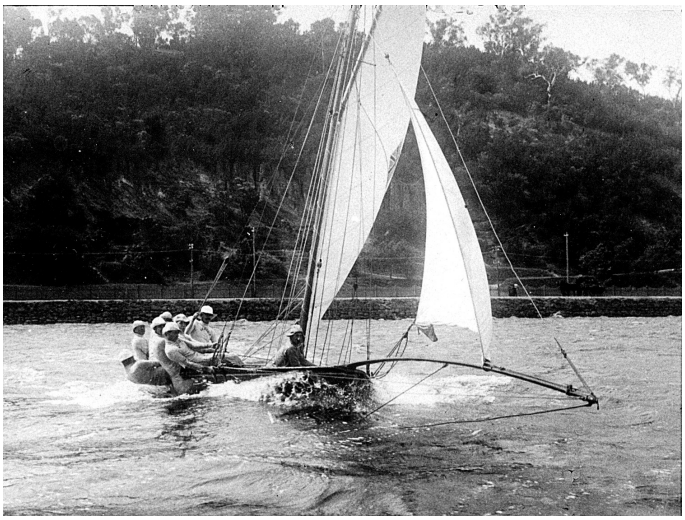
Jill Worsley

18ft Skiffs

Letter to the editor from our old yachting mate Tony Duvollet

The lack of an Editorial in the Vol. 34, No.3 issue of that esteemed publication, the Maritime Heritage Association Journal both surprised and disappointed me at first. But then the photo in lieu of an editorial more than atoned for your sins. It brought to mind when I was an apprentice shipwright on Sydney Harbour in the mid-sixties. At the barber I used to visit (I had quite a head of hair those days!) in Balmain, Sydney. I would sit in the barber's chair, sitting perfectly still, staring at this black and white photo. All I could see was a mass of billowing sails. I knew it was a yacht but I could not work out where the hull was! Turns out it was an 18ft skiff with gaff main, gaff tops'l, two jibs, a very large and billowing Genoa, a waters'l under the boom and another under the extremely long bowsprit! Couldn't see any crew!

When the 18ft skiffs started racing (late 1800's, early 1900's?) the only rule was that the hull, between perpendiculars, had to measure 18foot. Which of course led to outrageous sail areas, extremely tall masts and unlimited crew! If they started with, as per your photo, nine crew and during the race the wind died off, the skipper was allowed to drop off crew as they rounded the marker buoys and the club boat following the race would pick them up! How times, and the craft, have changed since then!



Setting Sail

Nearly 3,000 years ago in the Late Bronze Age, the poet Homer composed the *Odyssey*. It is the story of a 10-year voyage home from their victory at Troy made by Odysseus and his warriors. Having heard no news for many years, his teenage son Telemachus set sail from the island of Ithaca in an endeavour to learn the fate of his father.

> "*My friends, follow me," he ordered: then "we must get the stores on board."... He led off and the crew fell in behind. They brought down all the stores and stowed them in their well-built galley, taking their orders from Odysseus' son. Telemachus then followed Athene on board. She took her seat on the after-deck and he sat down beside her. The sailors cast the hawsers off, climbed in, and took their places on the benches. And now, out of the west, Athene of the flashing eyes called up for them a steady following wind and sent it singing over the wine-dark sea. Telemachus shouted to the crew to lay hands on the tackle and they leapt to his orders. They hauled up the fir mast, stepped it in its hollow box, made it fast with stays, and hoisted the white sail with plaited oxhide ropes. Struck full by the wind, the sail swelled out, and a dark wave hissed loudly round her stem as the vessel gathered way and sped through the choppy seas, forging ahead on her course.*

Does this description of setting sail sound eerily familiar? (Though you may depend more on the Met Bureau than Athena to send you a fair wind) The quote is from Book 2 of the *Odyssey*, a literal translation from the Greek by E.V. Rieu, 1946.

The Women Sealers of Kangaroo Island

Information for this article has been predominantly gained from Rebe Taylor's book *Unearthed: The Aboriginal Tasmanians of Kangaroo Island* (Wakefield Press, 2008).

Kangaroo Island off the coast of South Australia was uninhabited when visited by Matthew Flinders and Nicolas Baudin in 1802. Aboriginal people from the mainland had lived there previous to the separation of the island due to the rise of the sea at the end of the last Ice Age, and the Ngarrindjeri still have stories of their ancestors and the creation spirits who formed the island landscape.

Nat Thomas became the earliest known permanent settler, arriving in 1825. He had been a crew member on the *Belinda* wrecked earlier en route from the eastern States to source seal skins in waters west of Bass Strait. (He had served under Phillip Parker King on board the *Bathurst* on his surveying voyage in norther Australia waters 1821–22 before becoming a sealer.) He and his Aboriginal wife 'Betty' never left even when opportunity arose.

The seal skin industry on K.I. had begun about 1815 and was well established by 1825 when Nat Thomas arrived:

> *In almost every bay and inlet on the southern coast of the island were campsites of a few rough huts. The caves behind the beaches were stuffed with dried and salted seal, wallaby and kangaroo skins.*

Most of the men were employed under Articles of Agreement signed with merchants based in Sydney, such as Simon Lord. In spite of common belief, few were escaped or ex-convicts though probably all were very tough men. They brought with them the first Aboriginal women to have lived on the island for 4,000 years.

These women had been predominantly taken from tribes living along the north coast of Tasmania, though others came from Bruny Island and a few were Ngarrindjeri from the nearby mainland. At the height of sealing, there were perhaps 40 women working n K.I. alongside their masters. We know the names of 22 of those taken from Tasmania, though there were possibly many more who were never recorded. The main source of names is missionary George Augustus Robinson who campaigned to have all Aboriginal women living on K.I. and the islands of Bass Strait taken into care on his mission station on Flinders Island. He named 14 women on K.I. and noted their original home areas. Amongst them was 'Betty', 'wife' of Nat Thomas. Others were tribal sisters of Truganini, later supposed to be the last of the Tasmanian Aborigines. What was not known at the time of her death in 1876 was that there were several women who had remained alive on K.I., and these women have direct de-

scendants who acknowledge them today as forebears. Among them are children of Nat Thomas and 'Betty'.

As sealing grounds in Bass Strait became depleted the sealers with their attendant Aboriginal 'wives' moved on. Many of the women did not therefore remain on K.I.—they either went on to sealing grounds in Western Australia or returned to Bass Strait islands with their masters who were increasingly turning to whaling. It is unlikely that any returned to their home lands.

The Aboriginal women taken to K.I. had played an important and diverse role in the sealing industry, while their descendants were employed in the pastoral industry after sheep were introduced and shepherds and shearers were needed. The first women were important to the sealers not only as sexual companions, but their particular skills contributed to success in the industry. Hunters from birth, they worked alongside the men killing seals, preferably by a heavy blow on the nose, which did not damage the skin. The women would then flense the animal and prepare to either dry the skin or pack it with salt they had collected and fold it, depending on the planned end use of the product. If it was to be dried, before being pegged out they would sew up the flipper holes with sinew saved from the tails of kangaroos or wallabies they had hunted for food and skins.

The women had other skills of value. As well as setting traps for animals, they could find their way through bush and find water. As Tasmanians, they could dive for crayfish. They tended gardens and carried out domestic chores such as child minding, cooking, and sewing skins into family clothes. It is to be applauded that in recent years their contribution has become increasingly recognised, though even this is a slim reward for the work they did.

Jill Worsley

A Good Towing Feat

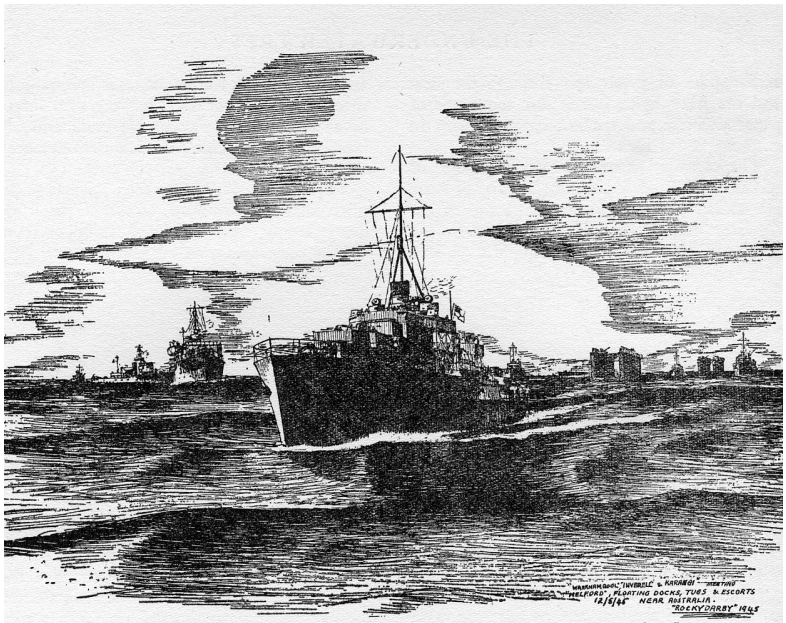
The following story is from *H.M.A.S. Mk. IV*, published by The Australian War Memorial in 1945. The author is given as 'Rocky Darby'.

There was a sigh of relief in the Naval Staff Office, Darwin, when A.F.D.18, and her escorting vessels and tugs, were safely anchored. For the rattle of cables through hawse pipes on this occasion marked the completion in Australia of long and eventful tows which had commenced, in the first place, at Greenock, Scotland, when *A.F.D.20* - a sister dock to *A.F.D.18* - had departed from that port in December 1944, in tow of H.M.R. tugs *Destiny* and *Eminent*.

Earlier in the war *A.F.D.20*, being identical with an enemy floating dock then located in Norwegian waters, was used by midget submarines of the Royal Navy as a practice target, it being intended later to carry out a midget-submarine operation against the enemy dock. In addition to acting as a practice target, *A.F.D.20* also docked the midget submarines before they proceeded on their successful mission against her German opposite number.
H.M.R. tugs *Destiny* and *Eminent*, with *A.F.D.20* in tow, commenced the long tow to Darwin on the 31st December, 1944, when the vessels departed from Greenock for Gibraltar. New Year's Day was passed in fine weather, but shortly afterwards the weather deteriorated, causing *Destiny* and *Eminent*, together with *A.F.D.20*, to pitch and roll so heavily that *Eminent's* steering gear carried away. Although her engineers repaired the damage with the aid of the galley fire, *Eminent* was relieved by another tug so that she could put in to an adjacent port for repairs. Rough weather continued until Gibraltar was reached on the 12th January, 1945.

Following the completion of various repairs, *Destiny* and *A.F.D.20* departed from Gibraltar on the next stage of the voyage, leaving *Eminent* to follow. *Eminent* overtook the tow at a most opportune moment when *Destiny* was in trouble. *Eminent* took over the tow, and *Destiny* proceeded to Oran for repairs.

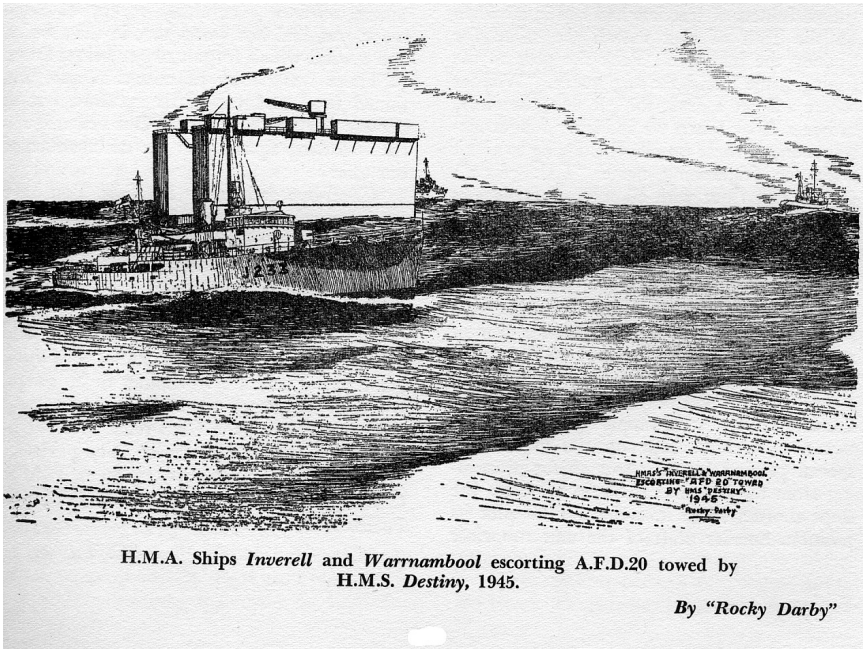
Eminent and *A.F.D.20* proceeded to Bizerta where they were joined by *Destiny,* and sailed for Malta, reaching there on the 27th January and leaving again five days later for Port Said. Good weather was experienced on passage, and port was reached on the 7th February. Six days later Suez was left astern and a good-weather passage was made down the Red Sea until, two days before reaching Aden, a considerable swell was ex-



H.M.A. Ships *Warrnambool, Inverell* and *Karangi* meeting H.M.S. *Helford,* floating docks, tugs and escorts, near Australia, 12/5/45.
By "Rocky Darby"

perienced. Arriving on the 21st February, tugs and tow departed from Aden on the 25th of the month and reached Cochin at daylight on the 10th March. Here their numbers were swelled by *A.F.D.18* and her tugs, and escort vessels for the passage to Australia.

The whole convoy departed from Cochin but was soon reduced in numbers. Shortly after leaving port *Eminent* caught fire in her engine-room, and although the fire was extinguished by her crew she had to proceed to Colombo, towed by H.M.R. tug *Cheerly.* To add to the troubles *Destiny* had a fire, but got it out successfully. Some days later *A.F.D.20* broke adrift from *Destiny* in the early hours of the morning, and it was five hours before the tow was secured again. *Cheerly,* however, rejoining the convoy, eased the situation for the other tugs. Water and fuel supplies being low by this time, the tanker *Eagles Dale* rendezvoused and supplied the vessels with those necessities.



H.M.A. Ships *Inverell* and *Warrnambool* escorting A.F.D.20 towed by H.M.S. *Destiny,* 1945.
By "Rocky Darby"

Heavy weather was again encountered, and seas commenced breaking over the docks to such an extent that their boats were in danger of damage. Good seamanship, however, and an ingenious idea of raising and forming a breakwater around them, saved the boats from harm.

By this time the convoy was near Australia, and H.M.A.S. *Warrnambool* and H.M.A.S. *Inverell* having joined, these ships were ordered to escort *A.F.D.20,* towed by *Destiny,* and proceed independently towards Darwin, which was reached on the 22nd May. *Destiny* and *A.F.D.20* had by this time completed a voyage of 11,313 miles, with a steaming time of 2,036 hours at an average speed of 5.56 knots.

In the meantime H.M.A.S. *Karangi* had joined *A.F.D.18* and company and provided them with stores and fresh provisions. *A.F.D.18* with her attendant vessels arrived in Darwin on the 24th May and remained there until towed by H.M.A.S. *Heros* and *Salvestor* to Thursday Island for onward passage to her destination. The escorting vessels for this part of the voyage were H.M.A. ships *Goulburn* and *Tamworth*. *A.F.D.20*, towed by her constant companion *Destiny,* assisted by H.M.A.S. *Sprightly,* also departed from Darwin to continue her voyage to her destination. Other vessels which were in this convoy from Britain and India to Australia were H.M.S. *Helford,* H.M.S. *Plym,* H.M.S. *Odzani,* H.M.S. Usk, H.M.S. *Barle,* H.M.S. *Advantage* and H.M.S. *Empire Sam.*

Editor's Note: The HMS *Plym* mentioned above is the 1,370-ton HMS *Plym* in which an atom bomb was detonated at the Monte Bello Islands on 3 October 1952. Most of the vessel vapourized, but not all. I have seen a few scraps from it on Trimouille Island, and parts, including a propeller remain on the bottom of the lagoon.

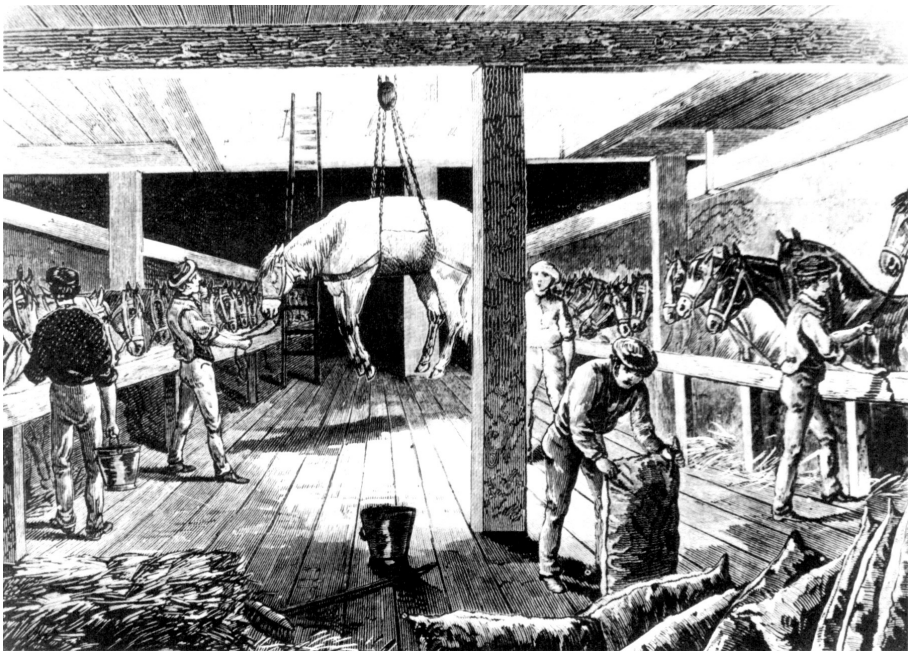
HMAS *Karangi* also took part in the atomic bomb explosion (code-named Operation Hurricane) as a service vessel laying moorings, towing landing craft, collecting samples after the explosion, etc.

Early Equine Imports

Australia used to ride on the sheep's back, but it was horses that made this possible. The first horses brought in on the First Fleet were from South Africa – a stallion and three mares. Later imports were usually arranged on the quiet by Army officers turned land owners – even though this was illegal, as the British East India Company had a contracted monopoly on imports.

Initially horses required were general-purpose animals, but most of them were of inferior quality. The first thoroughbred stallion imported was 'Rockingham', while the first coaching sire 'Northumberland' arrived on the *Buffalo* in 1883. 'Shark', a grey Arab stallion arrived from India in 1804, also 'Hector' a Persian-Arab stallion about the same time. These three sires and later imports resulted in a great improvement in horse quality, so that imports from India over two short decades were replaced by exports to India – the majority of Australian horses becoming known colloquially as 'walers'. These were recognised as having superior qualities in tough conditions and are now a registered breed.

Jill Worsley



TSMV *Westralia*

The painting and article are by the late Pat Rodriguez, a former member of this Association

Owners:	Huddart Parker Ltd 1929–1960
Tonnage:	8,108 gross
Dimensions:	448ft x 60ft
Engines:	H & W diesels
Service speed:	16 knots

The Australian coastal liner TSMV *Westralia* was built by Harland and Wolff of Belfast to the order of Hoddart Parker Ltd of Melbourne. *Westralia* arrived in Melbourne in September 1929 after a fast passage of 30 days. The ship was beautifully appointed throughout and was quickly recognised for her speed and comfort.

Her regular runs from Sydney-Melbourne-Fremantle commenced in 1929 until the outbreak of World War II. On 2 November of 1939 she was requisitioned by the Australian Government for conversion to an armed merchant cruiser to serve in the Royal Australian Navy as HMAS *Westralia*. In this role she was equipped with seven 6 inch guns and two 3 inch anti-aircraft guns. She was also equipped with a Walrus sea-

plane and catapult. She commenced patrol duties between Fremantle and Colombo including the Gulf of Aden. These patrols and convoy escort work continued up until 1943.

In 1943 the tide of war in the Pacific was turning for the Allies from defensive to offensive. In February 1943 the ship was converted at Garden island, Sydney, to a Landing Ship Infantry (LSI). Her lifeboats were removed and replaced with landing barges and as an LSI carried in excess of 1,000 troops.

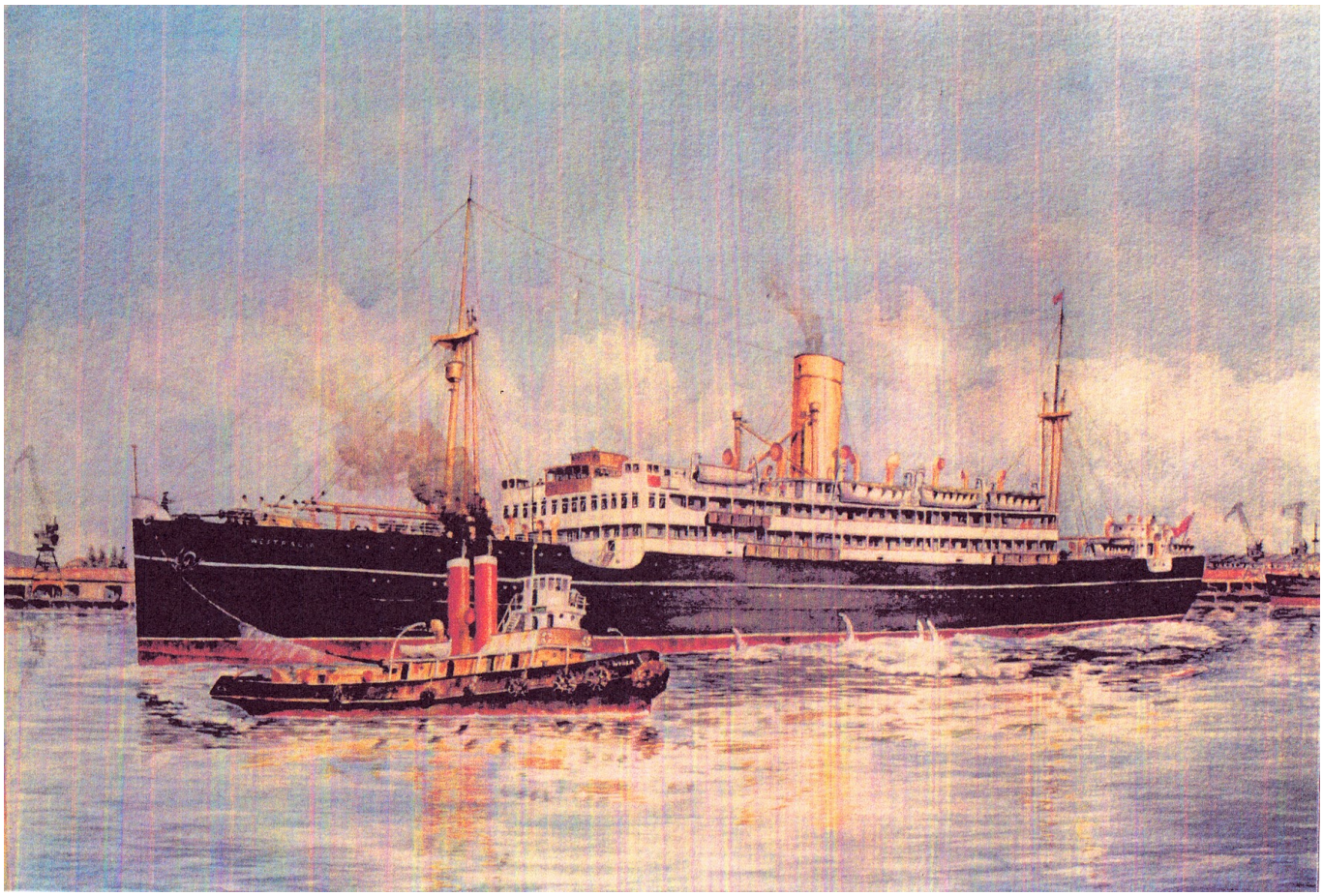
> Editor's Note: At this time the armament was changed to one 6 inch gun, several 40mm Bofors and 20mm Oerlikon anti-aircraft guns.

From 1945 to 1949 she was retained as a troop ship running to Japan and the Mediterranean.

Finally, in 1949, at considerable expense, she was refitted as a passenger liner. She recommenced her pre-war run of Sydney-Fremantle in 1950 and continued until 1960. Due to falling trade caused by air travel she was sold to Asian interests as a livestock carrier. Renamed *Delfino* she sailed from Australia to America with a cargo of sheep. Her name was again changed to *Woolambi*.

Finally, in December 1961, she was towed out of Sydney Harbour behind the tug *Nissho Maru* bound for the shipbreakers in Japan. A sad end for for such a beautiful ship after 32 years of loyal service to her country and owners.

The painting depicts *Westralia* as she would have appeared circa 1939. After World War II, she was refitted in 1950 with the promenade deck enclosed. The tug *Wyola* was operated by the Swan River Towing Co. and is shown with *Westralia* being 'short turned' to port, whilst the ship is going astern.



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