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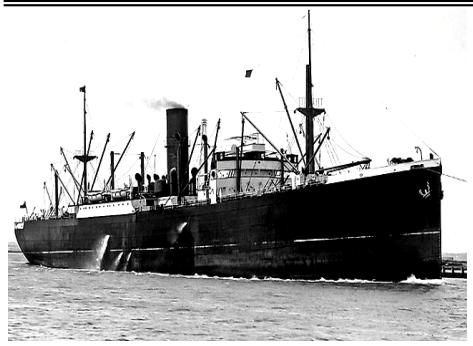
Wreck of the WWII MV *Limerick* found in ocean grave off NSW



The New Zealand-owned freighter the MV Limerick in its hay-day.

An enduring World War II maritime mystery has been solved with the discovery of the wreck of a merchant ship that sunk off NSW in 1943.

The 8700-tonne New Zealand owned freighter MV *Limerick* was lost off Cape Byron, on the NSW north coast when it was torpedoed by the Japanese submarine I-177.

The wreck was identified late last year by fishermen in 100m of water about 18km east of Ballina.

Two men went down with the ship and 70 more were rescued by the navy minesweeper escorts HMAS *Colac* and HMAS *Ballarat.*

"Two of Limerick's crew were killed after jumping into the sea, including NSW resident and the ship's third officer Mr John Edgar Willmott of Edgeroi and a New Zealand national" Minister for the North Coast and Member for Ballina, Mr Don Page, said.

"This is a reminder of the huge sacrifice paid by merchant seamen during the war on the home front keeping food, materials and supplies going" Mr Page said.

The *Limerick* was travelling in a convoy of five merchant ships bound for Brisbane from Sydney.

The largest ship in the convoy, the *Limerick* became separated from the other vessels due to engine trouble before the Japanese submarine attacked.

At 1am on April 26 a Japanese torpedo slammed into the port side of the ship. By 6.30am she had sunk beneath the waves.

During this time Japanese submarines were known to roam the east coast of Australia, in search of vulnerable vessels such as the *Limerick.*

The 3D image created by Dr Hubble of the MV Limerick off Cape Byron on the NSW coast.

In April of 1943 alone, five ships, 87 people and 25,000 tonnes of valuable wartime supplies were lost as a result of these attacks.

NSW Water Police and the state Office of Environment and Heritage conducted an initial survey of the site with a side-scan sonar, but were hampered by bad weather.

NSW authorities then approached Australia's Marine National Facility, which operates the CSIRO's ocean-going research vessel, the 66-metre *Southern Surveyor*, to try locate the wreck.

The vessel was already engaged in geological research between Yamba and Fraser Island and under University of Sydney geologist Associate Professor Tom Hubble it was able to create a 3-D image of the wreck.

"Confirming the wreck as MV Limerick is in the national interest. We were already in the area, we had the necessary technology and technical expertise and in the end it didn't take long to create a 3-D image of the wreck," Dr Hubble said.

Of the whole experience Dr Hubble said "Really quite emotional, and everyone felt that on reflection," he said. "It was exciting to see the wreck come up and then you think, well there are a couple of chaps who died when she went down and we've been able to find the wreck and that will give their families a certain amount of relief and closure I guess." While the wreck lies in Commonwealth waters, the NSW Government will ensure that the Limerick is properly protected under the provisions of the Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976. NSW Environment Minister Robyn Parker said the OEH was consulting with the Office of Veterans' Affairs to notify next of kin of the two men who died in the Limerick.

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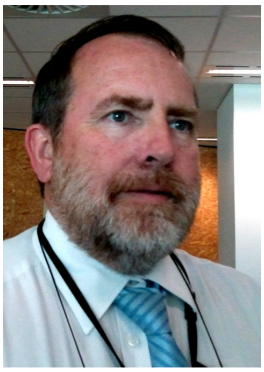
From the president...



A Murdoch University postgraduate team is currently researching and developing a business / marketing plan for the AAMH. This is an initiative that came from the 2012 *Finding the Future* seminar workshop and I look forward to reporting to members on ideas generated by the Plan later in the year.

The development of a business plan has brought sharply into focus the need to think about what maritime history is all about.

Maritime history encompasses a wide range of subjects including exploration, trade and dominion, naval history, ships and shipwrecks, whaling and fishing, piracy, maritime law, ports, yachting and other leisure pursuits. The broad range of displays within Australian maritime museums is evidence of scope of maritime history.

Similarly, the Australian Association for Maritime History's publications, public lectures and other activities regularly feature a broad range of maritime history topics. Maritime historians use global, national, regional and local approaches of study; and often cross boundaries incorporating other disciplines such as marine science, archaeology, climatology and cultural history.

The late Professor Frank Broeze, a cofounder of the Australian Association for Maritime History, defined maritime history as being the study of the relationship between man and the sea. He believed that maritime history should be defined as widely as possible and identified six broad overlapping categories: using the resources of the sea and its subsoil, transportation, political power projection, scientific exploration, leisure, and culture and ideology.

After some research and discussion, particularly around the use of the terms 'Man' and 'Sea', the following definition is offered: *Maritime history is the study of people and their activities in, on, around and under the waters of the world. This includes oceans, estuaries, rivers, and creeks.*

Check out our website for further details. While on the Internet, have a look at our new entry on Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Association_for_Maritime_History). As Australia's leading maritime history organisation our entry on Wikipedia will ensure the public are provided with an authoritative source for their interest. Improvements to the entry are welcome.

The Executive Committee has met in February and March to keep our initiatives for 2013 on track. At the March meeting, the Committee welcomed Justin Pyvis's initiative to commence an upgrade of our website over the coming months. The next meeting will be held on 14 June to coincide with the Kenneth McPherson Memorial Lecture at the WA Maritime Museum. The public lecture is to be delivered by Emeritus Professor Alan Powell and is based on his historical research into Australia's Monsoon Coast.

Ken McPherson Memorial Lecture: The sea and monsoon Australia

Professor Alan Powell.

The Kenneth McPherson Memorial Lecture has been held annually since 2011 in honor of Dr Kenneth McPherson.

Dr McPherson was an eminent historian of India's Muslim communities and an internationally acknowledged authority on the peoples and cultures of the Indian Ocean. Ken's 1993 book, The Indian Ocean: a History of People and the Sea is a critical source for those interested in maritime history.

Ken was President of the Australian Association for Maritime History at the time he took ill early in 2009. He died in early 2010.

This year's lecture will be presented by Professor Alan Powell, Emeritus Professor of History, Charles Darwin University.

The maritime history of Australia's monsoon coast, stretching from Broome to Cape York represents a complex and ancient heritage. These stories are shaped by the permeable movements of seafarers through the coasts, islands and open waters of Australia's northern edge and those peoples living in and above this zone.

The strong and lengthy sea links between Western Australia and the Northern Territory offer a myriad of questions through which to explore this history. Did seamen from the Indonesian islands discover north Australia long before the coming of the Macassan trepang-gatherers in the late 17th century? Why is Macassan/Aboriginal interaction in Arnhem Land so much better documented than that in the Kimberleys? After recognizing the comprehensive seafaring of the Dutch who mapped two thirds of the continental coast, why is the great marine surveyor Philip Parker King who charted this area so little remembered (as compared with Matthew Flinders)?

Join Professor Alan Powell as he explores the monsoon coast through many of its signature storylines.

From the editor...

The past few months have seen a flurry of activity within the association.

In this issue I am pleased to introduce our new Secretary Colin Harvey and Book Review Editor for the Great Circle Howard Gray (see page 2).

I am also pleased with the continuing contributions of members of the Association to the newsletter and encourage all members to contact me with any suggestions or feedback.

On a sad note the next issue of the newsletter will be my last as editor as I leave Australia for the time being to pursue other interests.

The position of newsletter editor has tentatively been filled, although any enquiries about the position will be fully considered.

Finally, while I have not received any queries for the 'Question and Answer' segment of the newsletter this quarter I did receive a request from outside the organisation for a copy of a 1993 paper by Pierre-Yves Manguin presented at the AAMH New Directions Conference.

The paper is entitled *Pre-modern Southeast Asian shipping in the Indian Ocean: the Maldives*

Pre-modern Southeast Asian shipping in the Indian Ocean: the Maldives

Pierre-Yves Manguin

The people of Insular Southeast Asia, being the inhabitants of the largest archipelago in the world, have for long been routinely described as skilled mariners.[1] It is generally accepted that Austronesian speaking people, after leaving their homeland in Taiwan approximately 5.000 years ago, sailed south into Insular Southeast Asia, where they soon overshadowed pre-existing populations. From there, they went on sailing east into the Pacific, all the way to Easter Island, leaving few islands unpopulated, and west across the Indian Ocean, partly turning Madagascar, culturally and linguistically, into an offshoot of the Southeast Asia.[2] However, once lip service was thus paid to such obvious maritime adaptations and sailing talents, little else was usually said about the matter. At best, detailed studies of the surviving small sailing vessels of Oceania or Southeast Asia were carried out. For long, cultural diffusionists were thus content to endlessly discuss the origins and distribution of single or double outrigger canoes.[3] The unsuspecting reader was therefore largely left with the romantic but unsubstantiated idea that fearless Austronesians had paddled around half the planet on flimsy boats. Another prevailing theory contended that the peopling of the Pacific Ocean by Austronesians was the result of accidental island hopping.[4] And few bothered to understand how — in which practical circumstances — those same Austronesians that had remained in Southeast Asia had leaped across the Indian Ocean and reached west to Madagascar.

The Association now has a page on Wikipedia. This offers an excellent opportunity to increase the organization's exposure and inform the general public about maritime history in general.

The article includes information on the Association in general, our maritime book prizes, The Great Circle and the quarterly newsletter.

If you have an interest in learning more about your organization or want to add information to the article, head to:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Association_for_Maritime_History

http://www.aamh.asn.au/

New secretary: Colin Harvey

Born in Derby, England, his parents decided to emigrate in the early 1960's for sunshine and further opportunities. Out of the available options of Canada, South Africa, Rhodesia and Australia, the latter was the fortunate choice. He travelled to Australia in 1964 on the *MS Fairsea* on a 4 week voyage to Fremantle arriving at the old Passenger Terminal ironically on a rainy October morning.

The *MS Fairsea* belonged to the Sitmar line and was a converted passenger freighter launched on March 1, 1941. Fitted out as an escort carrier for the US Navy, she served on convoy duties in the north Atlantic and later saw service in the Pacific before conversion to a passenger liner.

Following high school education, Colin worked as a deckhand on one of the last two shark fishing boats operating out of Fremantle in the late 1970's before signing on as a cray fisherman and long liner operating out of Two Rocks. Realising the possible short term nature of a fishing career, he joined the WA Museum as a Technical Assistant taking part in extensive archaeological surveys in the Pilbara and the Goldfields.

He completed a BA at Murdoch with majors in history and economics whilst working in the field and then a Graduate Diploma in Public Policy. Joined the WA Department of Mines and Petroleum in the late 1980s where he is currently employed as a legislation and policy officer. Colin maintains an interest in fishing (now with a rod) and matters nautical, having owned various small yachts and boats over the years.

New book review editor for The Great Circle: Howard Gray

Howard Gray, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., Ph.D., has combined his interest in research, writing and all things marine to produce several successful works whilst maintaining a diverse career as a science educator.

His first book *Christmas Island Naturally – the natural history of a remote oceanic island, the Australian Territory of Christmas Island,* won an 'Award of Special Merit' in the 1982 Whitley Medal Awards.

In 1993 his *The Western Rock Lobster,* Panulirus cygnus, *Book 1: A Natural History* won the Whitley Medal of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW, their highest award, as 'the best book on Australian natural history' for that year. In 2000 his *The Western Rock Lobster,* Panulirus cygnus, *Book 2: A History of the Fishery* won the Fred Connell Award of the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council. His multi-disciplinary thesis on the same subject, *Skinnin' the Pots*, was awarded a Ph.D by Murdoch University.

In 2002 he was commissioned to record the history of one of the world's most successful fishermen's cooperatives in *Brolos – the first 50 years: the history of the Geraldton Fishermen's Cooperative.*

His recent release, *"Lucretia's Batavia Diary"*, has been very positively received by maritime enthusiasts at all levels. It is a historical-fiction account of the events of the Batavia shipwreck saga and the remarkable personal experiences of the femme-fatale aboard, Lucretia van der Mijlen.

With regret we say goodbye to Mike Stammers

It was with deep sense of loss that the Association recently learned of the passing of Michael K. Stammers on 30 January 2013. He died aged 69 after a long battle with cancer.

His museum career began as Curator of Folk Life at Warwick County Museum, but in 1969 he moved to Merseyside where he spent the rest of his career. He began as a curator in the maritime history department of Liverpool Museum, and played a key role in the development of the renowned Merseyside Maritime Museum, established in 1980. He became its first keeper, a post which he held until his retirement in 2003. In addition to his work at the museum he was also a distinguished author of many books and articles. His research interests ranged widely, reflecting his insatiable curiosity for all things that floated.

In the world of maritime heritage, Mike was perhaps our most accomplished modern practitioner, with outstanding curatorial, interpretation and collections management skills, who was also a fine scholar. Mike, in spite of a busy professional life as a museum leader, possessed a seemingly indefatigable ability to get his scholarly research into print and out to his many readers. This quality was displayed perhaps most markedly with his final work; *Emigrant Clippers to Australia: The Black Ball Line, its Operation, People and Ships 1852-1871* which he was able to see to completion despite his failing health. All those who knew Mike speak of his generosity of spirit, good humour and his willingness to share his knowledge with colleagues and the public alike. That, and an innate decency, sense of dignity and great kindness of spirit in dealing with people. He will be sorely missed by friends and family and all those within the field.

Upcoming conferences

AIMS Australia's Underwater Cultural Heritage Conference

October 2013 will see the AIMS Australia's Underwater Heritage Conference commence.

This year's primary objective will be to continue to encourage the Australian Government towards immediate ratification of the *UNESCO 2001 Convention for the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage* to meet the international best practice standards for management of underwater cultural heritage.

The Conference themes will highlight the variety and significance of our underwater heritage in Australian waters and overseas, and the significant positive value that Australia's ratification would have in the region.

Past conferences, including the 2012 *Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Underwater Cultural Heritage* have seen lively discussions by all participants and have received wonderful feedback. The main themes of the current conference will include: ratification of the Underwater Cultural Heritage Convention - State Reports on status, commercial exploitation of UCH - issues, consequences and options for control, training and information sharing - needs, goals, realities, *In-situ* preservation and conservation of cultural heritage, Australasia's Indigenous underwater cultural heritage, Australia's overseas underwater cultural heritage and techniques and technology in maritime and deepwater archaeology. Call for Papers, posters and presentations proposals are now open until the June 30 deadline. Interested parties are encouraged to submit a 250 word abstract addressing any of the session themes direct to the session chairs, whose details can be accessed at: http://www.aima-underwater.org.au/conference-2013/.

Empire faith and conflict symposium

Since the days of Ancient Civilizations the world has been shaped by the rise and fall of empires, the disputes of faith and the outbreak of conflict. From Mesopotamia to Rome and Byzantium to Gallipoli, civilisations have been shaped by three critical elements: empire, faith and conflict. Perhaps more than any other period of world history, the past century has seen empires brought to their knees faith pitted against faith, and conflict sweep the globe.

On the eve of the centenary of the Great War, the World History Association, the Australian Historical Association and the University of Notre Dame Australia invite you to join us for a unique opportunity to examine the intersection of empire, faith and conflict in world history, and their impact in shaping the modern world. Of all historical traditions and genres, including the Acient, Medieval and Modern ages.

Session themes might include (but are not limited to) imperialism, science and faith, mission, church history, gender studies, colonisation and post-colonialism, transnational, regional and national histories, histiography, art, artefacts and visual evidence, strategy, securing, terrorism and diplomacy, faith in war and myth and legend.

Call for papers proposals for individual papers are welcomed from a broad range of themes and historical periods. Scholars are invited to discuss the elements of 'empire, faith and conflict' as they can be considered individually in history or as they intersect with each other.

4th Symposium on Whaling and History

The Whaling Museum in Sandefjord, Norway, will host the Fourth Symposium on *Whaling and History* in June 2013. The conference will include the presentation of 18 papers by speakers from 13 countries from across the globe, making this a truly international conference. Among the presenters are scientists Dag Aavango, Peder Roberts and Julia Lajus from the Mistra Arctic Futures project. The speakers will cover a wide variety of fields and will in many instances present new material and analyses to the delegates.

The Whaling Museum in Sandefjord aims to place the history of whaling in a broad, international perspective. This aim has led the organizers to pose the following themes for the conference: cultural heritage; whaling societies; museums, heritage and history and environmental and political history.

It is hoped that the discussions arising from this conference will further our understanding of the historical and future importance of whaling.

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50th Anniversary of Batavia Discovery

Replica of the Batavia.

In 1629, the Batavia sank on the Houtman Abrolhos Islands west of Geraldton. The Batavia, of the Dutch East India Company, was seven months out from Amsterdam on her maiden voyage carrying 322 men, women, children, soldiers and sailors.

A coral outcrop 4.6 metres beneath the surface snagged the rudder and the Batavia slammed into the reef near Beacon Island.

Of those on board 40 drowned trying to swim to shore.

The wreck was made famous by the was made famous by the subsequent mutiny and massacre that took place among the survivors.

This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the discovery of the Batavia wreck.

The anniversary celebrations culminated last week with the launch of the book: *Lucretia's Batavia Diary* written by our new book review editor Howard Gray, a lectures by Jeremy Green and Hugh Edwards and the Dedication of Batavia Park to those who lost their lives in the wreck.

This year also commemorates the 40th anniversary of the Geraldton Maritime Museum (1973), the 20th birthday of The Batavia Coast Maritime Heritage Association and the 10th anniversary of the Launch of the Replica Longboat.

The WA Museum and partners from the University of Western Australia are conducting new research on the Abrolhos Islands, particularly mapping the terrain and trying to discover what was left behind by early shipwrecked mariners.

The focus for study over the past few weeks has been Beacon Island. It is believed this is where up to 180 survivors of the wreck were murdered and buried by mutineers from the ship.

Big plans for the celebration of Australia's centenary of Submarines in 2014

Next year will mark a century since the 1914 arrival of the HMA Submarines AE1 and AE2 in Sydney.

It will also mark 100 years since the establishment of the Australian Submarine Service (ASS).

These events in 1914 were followed mere months later by the beginning of World War I.

Australia's Submarine Centenary will commemorate submariners plus important places and people in Australia's submarine history e.g. VADM Sir Ian McIntosh, a Geelong Grammar graduate, LCDR Thomas Besant and the crew of AE1, LCDR Henry Stoker and the crew of AE2, LCDR Max Shean and SLT Ken Briggs, X Craft crew.

Celebrations culminate in late 2014 with activities, conferences and commemorative services in Fremantle WA. Raising the submarine profile continuously through to 2014, other submarine history items are being promoted and pursued at every opportunity.

Celebration week event planning includes launch of the Dolphin Scholarship, National Submarine Museum, SIA Conference, SAA AGM, Fremantle RPC's, Submariners Welcome and march through Fremantle and Perth events.

ANMM's director Kevin Sumption says it's time to start a conservation effort so all Australians can share its story

Commemoration of the 70th anniversary of midget sub attack

Wreck of the midget submarine M24.

NSW Heritage Minister Robyn Parker unveiled a plaque at North Mona Vale Headland in late May to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Japanese midget submarine attack on Sydney, which took place from 31 May to 1 June 1942.

The wreck of the M24 Japanese midget submarine – which was found by recreational divers off Bungan Head, near Newport in 2006 – is the only remaining midget submarine from the 1942 mission still located underwater, Ms Parker said.

Minister Parker said the dramatic setting for the plaque would allow visitors insight into the daring attack, the loss of the midget submarine off the point and to reflect on the 29 Allied and Japanese lives lost during the encounter.

"Since the discovery of the M24, there have been a series of surveys at the wreck site by the Heritage Branch of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH), with the support of other government agencies and commercial offshore companies.

"The ongoing archaeological surveys coordinated by the Heritage Branch have been heralded by the international cultural organisation UNESCO, as setting a global benchmark."

"Recent archaeological investigations at the site by OEH and the Sydney Ports Corporation, have contributed greatly to our understanding of the Japanese midget submarines and the technology developed during the dark days of World War 11," Ms Parker said.

HMAS *Melbourne* centenary

The centenary of the arrival of HMAS *Melbourne* at its namesake city of Melbourne in 1913 is to be commemorated with an exhibition and new book about this historic navy vessel.

The *Melbourne*, Australia's first light cruiser, was commissioned in Britain in 1912. She was a 5, 600 ton ship armed with eight 6-inch guns and her period in service included operations against German colonies in the Pacific in 1914 and escorting the 1st AIF fleet expeditionary force from Albany in Western Australia to the Middle East. Her post-war exploits include the rescue of the crew of a stricken American yacht during a hurricane in the Tasman Sea in 1922. Her years of useful service ended when she was decommissioned in Britain in 1928.

The exhibition is to be hosted by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. It includes memorabilia, photographs and documents and will run from18 February to 1 May. The curator is historian Andrew Kilsby, who is also the co-author, together with Commander Greg Swinden, RAN, of, *HMAS Melbourne 1913-1928; The Forgotten Cruiser*, that will be launched at a special event at 239 A' Beckett St, Melbourne, on 26 March, the official opening of the exhibition, and the centenary of the vessel's arrival in Melbourne.

Tall Ships Festival 2013 is upon us

Ships entering Sydney Harbour for the 1998 Tall Ship Festival.

In 2013 more than 20 tall ships from around the world will gather in Australia for the International Tall Ship Festival and Sydney Auckland Tall Ship Regatta – the first event of its kind in Australasia. Over 1,500 places are now available for members of the public to join a Tall Ship for ocean passages and coastal voyages to Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Hobart, Sydney and Auckland. Voyages are open to people of all ages and backgrounds, and no sailing experience is required. During each voyage a professional crew will explain and teach you everything you need to know about navigation, sail handling and square rig sailing. Participants will be able to explore the Australian coastline, meet people from around the world and gain a unique insight into our maritime history.

Rarely do Tall Ships from the northern hemisphere visit Australia, and most of the vessels sailing to Australia are undertaking World Voyages. As they sail the seven seas they will visit Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Antarctica and the Americas. The first vessels will arrive at Fremantle in July, and will spend several months exploring the spectacular Western Australian, Victorian, Tasmanian and New South Wales coasts.

Mr Stephen Moss CSC, President of the Australian Sail Training Association said, "We are delighted to be able to host the largest gathering of Tall Ships in Australia and New Zealand for a generation. This event will help to establish a vision of sail training within Australia and convey the excitement, challenge and romance of Tall Ship sailing to millions of young Australians".

The three month Festival Program will see Tall Ships celebrating with Parades of Sail, street parades and festivals in several cities, including the International Fleet Review – celebrating 100 years since the first entry of the Royal Australian Navy's Fleet into Sydney Harbour.

The Southern Swan in Sydney Harbour.

Restored *Nashwauk* anchor to go back on display in Adelaide

A historic anchor dating back to 1855 will soon be back on display in Adelaide.

Onkaparinga Council is consulting the community about where to display the anchor, which was recently restored by the National Museum of Australia.

The 3m anchor, from the SS *Nashwauk*, was on display at the Moana Tourist Park for 20 years before the museum borrowed it in 2010 to form part of an exhibition for Irish settlers.

The passengers aboard the SS *Nashwauk* were mainly Irish women migrating to South Australia under the colonial government's assisted passage scheme.

The ship foundered off Moana beach in 1855 and the women struggled to shore before walking to the Immigration Depot in Adelaide.

The council has proposed three different locations for the anchor, including Nashwauk Reserve behind the Moana Surf Life Saving Club, in front of the Moana Pioneers Memorial Hall or at the entrance to the Moana Tourist Park.

AAMH Executive

The AAMH is run by an Executive Council that has representatives from the states and territories. It is currently based in Western Australia.

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Australian Maritime Events Winter 2013

June

Friday 14	Western Australian Maritime Museum, WA	Kenneth McPherson Memorial Lecture
Thursday 20 – Friday 21	Whaling Museum in Sandefjord, Norway	4th Symposium on Whaling and History
Friday 21	Australian Maritime Museum, NSW	Lunch and curator tour: East of India with special guests
Sunday 23	Australian Maritime Museum, NSW	Family fun day: Colours of India
Tuesday 30	-	Deadline for abstracts for Australia's Underwater Cultural Heritage Conference

July

Tuesday 2	Maritime Museum of Tasmania, TAS	Free Public Talk
Saturday 27 - Monday 29	Fremantle, WA	International Tall Ship Festival
Sunday 28	Australian Maritime Museum, NSW	Author Talk: The Last Nizam: An Indian Prince in the Australian Outback with John Zubrzycki

August

Tuesday 6	Maritime Museum of Tasmania, TAS	Free Public Talk
Wednesday 7	Australian Maritime Museum, NSW	East of India: Lascars, tea and the monsoon trade – tour and lecture
Friday 23	-	Proposals for conference posters for Empire, Faith and Conflict Conference
Thursday 29 - Friday 30	Adelaide, SA	International Tall Ship Festival