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NEWSLETTER
of
 **The Australian Association for
Maritime History Inc.**
Publisher of *The Great Circle*

Special Vlamingh tricentenary issue

New Members

The President and committee welcome the following new members: Ann Tate (WA), John White (ACT), Justice Ireland (NSW), Professor Simpson (SA), Adam Nolfé (WA) and Ruth Crosson (Qld), John Paskulich (WA), Denise Hindle (Qld), Brynmor Jones Library, Hull. (UK), Mr Ian Prigg (NSW). Other members are reminded that their subscriptions are now due. Please ensure cheques are payable to the AAMH, not the Department of Economics at Murdoch University.

Congratulations!!!!

Congratulations to AAMH members Dale Chatwin and Cynthia Hunter for successfully completing their post-graduate degrees. Abstracts of theses by members are always welcome for publication in the newsletter. Preferably about 500 words or less.

Chatwin, D. (1997). *A trade so uncontrollably uncertain? A study of the English southern whale fishery from 1815 to 1860.* Unpublished master's thesis. Australian National University.

Hunter, C. (1996). *Steam navigation in eastern Australia: Agent of change 1830-1850.* Unpublished master's thesis. University of Newcastle.

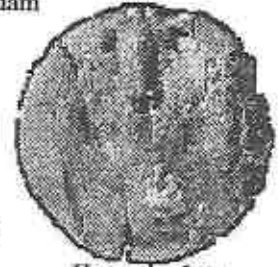
Vlamingh mania, or dust off those clogs Willem and roll out the rollmops

The visit of the Vlamingh flotilla to the west coast of Australia in late 1696 - early 1697 inspired a number of recent tricentennial events to commemorate the occasion. Australia Post was first off the rank with a portrait of Willem de Vlamingh by 17th century Dutch artists Jan and Nicholas Verkolje. The original was acquired by the Sydney National Maritime Museum for a reported A\$72,500, but members can get an excellent copy from the Post Office for 45 cents.

First local (WA) event was a reenactment of a landing on Rottneest Island on 24 December, 1996. No one is actually sure where the original landing took place, however an educated guess enabled a small group of VIPs including the State Premier Richard Court to be seated on a convenient beach to watch a group of men in period-costume row ashore. On January 12 members of the Dutch Royal family oversaw a reenactment of an exploration of the Swan River estuary. A small flotilla of local enthusiasts, again dressed in period costume were towed upstream in a pinnace built for the *Endeavour* replica project a few years ago. At Matilda Bay local Nyungar Aborigines presented the heir to the Dutch throne Prince Willem-Alexander Claus George Ferdinand with a map of the river system showing Aboriginal place names of the past, so as to remind him of who got there first. After lunch the flotilla set off for Burswood Park to unveil a commemorative statue of Vlamingh

being attacked by a black swan. The local Dutch-Australian community turned out in force, many dressed in colourful traditional costumes. There were several food stalls, but not a rollmop or Edam cheese in sight. A very large Heineken beer tent looked after the thirsty, and in the spirit of the VOC., a Dutch trade show tried to whip up some new business. On 12 February 1997 a crowd of important persons assembled on the northern end of Dirk Hartog Island adjacent to Shark Bay to erect a replica of an inscribed pewter plate left by de Vlamingh.

This island has a long history of platter placements. Vlamingh removed one mounted by the island's namesake in 1616, and Frenchman Jaques Hamelin placed his own in July 1801 apparently at a different location on the island. This is yet to be discovered, but some enthusiastic WA researchers hope to rectify this early in 1997. Vlamingh's original plate was removed by the French in 1817, and is now at Fremantle.



Hartog's plate

Vlamingh without the froth and bubble

Commodore Willem de Vlamingh, commanded a flotilla of three ships which visited the Swan River region in 1696-97. The expedition comprised of *De Geelvinck* under his direct command, *De Nijptangh* under Captain Gerrit Collaert and *Weseltje* under Captain Cornelius de Vlamingh, the Commodore's son, who attained his captaincy after the original skipper, Zeeman, died. The expedition had a strong fishing background, and both the hooker *De Nijptangh* and the galliot *Weseltje* were of designs which had evolved from the Dutch fishing fleet. The crews on all three ships totalled about 194 officers and men. The 57 years old Willem de Vlamingh had formerly been a whaler and a North Sea herring fisherman, and many of the crew would probably have had similar experience. Holland had led the European world in the export of preserved fish since 1384, when the technology for pickling fish was developed.

The primary object of their visit was to search for the ship, *Ridderschap van Holland*, missing since 1694. Of secondary importance was to gather intelligence and make charts for the possible future use of the VOC. Several groups reconnoitred Rottneest Island and the mainland. On 8th January 1697, 86 men led by Collaert, the skipper of *De Nijptangh* noisily tramped ashore slightly north of Fremantle in order to explore beyond the littoral. As well, there was an intention of capturing or purchasing native peoples, who then would be taken away, taught the Dutch language and persuaded to reveal further intelligence.

Vlamingh's men saw many fresh signs of Aborigines, but never met any. They came across the remains of fish meals and uneaten fish in the camps, drank from the wells, and nervously occupied at least one hastily abandoned Aboriginal camp overnight. To their great personal discomfort, some men also ate the untreated toxic nuts of the zamia palm *Macrozamia reidlei*. Vomiting blood is one of the worrying symptoms, and a young sailor died on board *Geelvinck* four days later, however it is uncertain if this was due to the zamia.

The Dutchmen found and probed Aboriginal faeces, and concluded that the Aboriginal diet was mainly comprised of plant material rather than fish. During their explorations of the Swan River system, they travelled some 24 km. upstream to the vicinity of what is now known as the Causeway, where they were ultimately confounded by shallow mud flats. On these they observed many human footprints, and it is near here that Vlamingh's 1997 statue was erected. The sailors remarked on the shyness of estuary birds, and of the profusion of fish. One of the species was the small bony Perth herring (*Nematalosa vlaminghi*). They saw only one kangaroo on the mainland, but shot several quokkas, (*Setonix brachyurus*) small kangaroo-like animals on nearby Rottneest Island.

While no direct contact with Aborigines was made, the translated journal of *Geelvinck* reveals a positive sighting by the crew of *Nijptangh's* sloop of two Aborigines on 11th January, who fled their riverside camp at the approach of the sailors. The journal of *Nijptangh* states that on the same date the crew of their sloop thought they had seen a crowd of men, who had vanished when the sailors went closer. At about two o'clock the next morning which was final day of explorations, the Dutchmen quietly set up an ambush near freshly abandoned campfires in the hope of catching some Aborigines, but without success.

The journal of *Weseltje* appears to be lost, but there is considerable information in Witsen's 1705 writings which does not appear in the two other ships' journals. Witsen had been one of the main sponsors of the expedition and by his own account he had taken possession of all the charts which had been drawn, and had interviewed crew members to obtain further details about the Swan River, or as he assumed it had been named, the Witsen River. He wrote in 1705, "In the river which has been named after me are many kinds of

fishes...They saw huts with a fire near...some fish...ready to be cooked, also some fish which were already eaten, only the bones were left so that the natives must have left in a hurry...There are a great number of oysters and crabs here." (Witsen, in Robert, 1972, pp. 173-178)

The crabs were *Portunus pelagicus* and the oysters possibly *Ostrea angasi*, however the Dutchmen were more excited by the profusion of black swans, (*Cygnus atratus*) and captured four specimens for transport to Batavia. Witsen later criticised Vlamingh for not undertaking a more thorough examination of the region, which was probably fortunate for the local Aboriginal population. Had he done so, the history of Australia might have been quite different.

The 1697 visit of Willem de Vlamingh to the Swan River has provided the first authenticated documentation associated with Aboriginal people and the fauna of the southwest region, but it should be recognised that Europeans were exploring the west coast of New Holland (Australia) at earlier dates. *Waeckende Boey*, under the command of Samuel Volkerson visited Rottneest on March 19th 1658 during a search for another Dutch Ship, *Vergulde Draeck* (Gilt Dragon) which was lost in the region two years previously. When Volkerson anchored the ship for careening, the first mate, reportedly an Englishman (Henderson, 1983) by the name of Abraham Leeman explored and charted the island on which he noted the existence of seals and other fauna. *Waeckende Boey* and another galliot taking part in the search, the *Emeloort*, sailed as close to the mainland as they dared, and fired cannon in the hope of attracting survivors. *Waeckende Boey* lost 14 men during the search along the coast further north and *Emeloort* apparently sighted from a distance at least five Aborigines at different places along the coastline (Collingridge, 1895), thus 1658 rather than 1697 could well have been the year that the Aborigines of the Swan River region obtained their first, if somewhat fleeting glimpse of Europeans. – Paul Weaver

Further reading: Schilder, G. (1985). *Voyage to the great south land: William de Vlamingh 1696-1697*. Sydney: Royal Australian Historical Society; Robert, W. C.H. (1972). *Willem de Vlamingh's explorations of Australia, 1696-1697*. Amsterdam: Philo Press. Henderson, J. (1983). "Vlamingh loses out." *The West Australian*. 29/1/83. p. 35. Collingridge, G. (Ed.). (1895). *The discovery of Australia*. (1989 facsimile edition) Silverwater: Golden Press.

Portuguese coin causes flurry in Victoria

Early in 1997 the Australian press carried reports about a Portuguese coin allegedly unearthed with the help of a metal detector on Mornington Peninsular near Melbourne. This has fuelled further speculation that Portuguese sailors were exploring the east coast of Australia in the 1500s. The silver coin which is badly worn has been examined by the Museum of Victoria which reportedly cautiously confirmed it is approximately 500 years old and of Portuguese origin. The discoverer who wishes to be known only as "Bob" is now endeavouring to locate other coin experts to further authenticate the coin and hopefully elevate its significance, and value. Hopefully there will be more news on this debatable subject. A few years ago there was another flurry of excitement further north when a lead fishnet sinker of apparent Portuguese origin was found in an archaeological excavation on Fraser Island. The latest find has excited Kenneth McIntyre (86) of Gelong who has long explored the hypothesis that Portuguese secretly arrived in Australia between 1522 and 1524. His book, *The secret discovery of Australia* (1977) provides excellent background reading to the subject. *The Great Circle* carried a critical review of McIntyre's book a few years back. Book dealer Jean-Louis Boglio, who generously donated a prize for our membership drive can assist in supplying this and other books cited elsewhere in this newsletter. The address is P.O. Box 72, Currumbin, Qld. Australia. 4223.

This issue's historical maritime recipe

You guessed it, Rollmops. This delightful dainty for deserving Dutch sailors has not really taken off in Australia in the past, one suspects because the thought of pickled raw fish has been too revolting for the majority population. Rollmops however are very tasty delicacies, and the pickling is in effect a cooking process. When ready they are quite firm, the flesh looks cooked, and there is no hint of that raw-fish taste which can make many so people gag. Small jars of the real thing are available from the gourmet shops, however they are quite easy to make from readily available Australian fish. The variety tested by this writer was the Australian herring, *Arripis georgianus*, also sometimes known as the Tommy ruff.

After scaling and filleting, the strips of flesh are placed in a bowl of water and soaked overnight in the refrigerator. The marinade in which they will be pickled for a week can be made from 500ml cider vinegar, 500ml water, and a grinding of 3 whole allspice, 3 cloves and 6 peppercorns. A bayleaf is added whole. The marinade is boiled, simmered for five minutes, then cooled. The fillets are rinsed, dried in a cloth then closely scrutinised for bones. The flesh is then garnished with prepared mustard, chopped capers, and onion rings. Roll the fillet from the thinner tail end, skin side out, with a quartered gherkin included. Skewer the rollmops neatly with toothpicks and pack into the marinade container. Place onion rings between the layers and on the top. All should be submerged in the marinade. Cover and chill in the refrigerator for a week or so. Serve as an hors d'œuvre garnished with parsley. Remember be sure the fish used is fresh, and do not use a metal container for the pickling, because an unhealthy metallic taste will result. Other types of fish could be used. Further reading: *The cooking of Germany*. (1970). Time Life International: Amsterdam.

Batavia replica to visit Oz

The Dutch built replica of the infamous Dutch ship *Batavia* wrecked in the Abrolhos Islands, off Western Australia in 1629 is to come to Australia for the year 2000 Olympics in Sydney. The toughest part of the voyage is to be made as freight on a modern ship via the Panama Canal, then across the Pacific. When unloaded in Sydney the replica will also visit Indonesia. Disappointingly no plans have been announced for the vessel to visit Western Australia where remains of its historical namesake lie asleep in the deep, and at the Fremantle Maritime Museum. A spokesperson for the organisers was reported in December as saying it would be an expensive side trip. A canny cynic might interpret this as a message for someone to come up with something more substantial than mere historical interest. "Events" are the "in thing" with Australian governments these days, and if entrepreneurs can make a good case there is a chance large sums of money will be handed over.

Information sought

David Stevens is developing a list of occasions when the RAN has enforced Australian security interests outside periods of actual war. Many of these incidents may simply have been regarded as a part of normal operations at the time and accounts of them not published. Operations suitable for inclusion will be varied, but likely to have involved RAN vessels showing a presence in remote or unusual localities, or threatening the use of limited force. Suggestions should be forwarded to: David Stevens, Director of Naval Historical Studies, Maritime Studies Program, Department of Defence, (Navy) APW2-G-11, Canberra ACT, 2600.

Mrs Lyn Simpkins of 95a Old Berowra Rd., Hornsby, NSW, 2077 is seeking information on "Training Ship Exmouth." She is unsure of where this was located, (UK?) but has a certificate relating to her great-grandfather's training dated 1877. Any information is requested. Mrs Simpkins also has some original material relating to the ships, *First of May*, *British General*, *Peterborough*, *Isabelle* and *Venus* on which her ancestor served.

Miss R.A. Wiltshire seeks an image of a ship, *Minerva*, circa 1800. The address is 3/43 Webb St. East Gosford, NSW, 2250.

Boat people numbers

Considering the paranoia which has accompanied the arrival in Australia of so called "boat people" over the past few years the actual numbers of persons involved has been surprisingly low. Between 1989 and the end of 1996 some 2,658 persons have landed on the shores of the lucky country after enduring long and dangerous voyages under arduous circumstances. Of these, only 473 were granted entry status, with 1,837 deported. 348 remain in Australia with their cases yet to be resolved. Many of these people are held in detention centres, as for example at Port Hedland, Western Australia. At least 73 babies have been born in detention, and are in the company of many other children.

Source: *West Australian*, 17/1/1997. p.3.

Famous passenger ships ending service

The 44,807 ton P&O cruise ship *Canberra* is making its final world cruise in 1997. Built in Belfast by Harland and Wolf, the vessel was launched by Dame Patti Menzies. Its maiden voyage to Australia took place in 1961 and heralded a new era in luxury oceanic travel. While the vessel brought many Britons to Australia it also played a significant role in transporting thousands of young Australians to Britain for "working holidays." The cost of a passage in the 1960s being not a great more than an air fare. While *Canberra* is a beautiful ship



Canberra

symbolic of all that is fine about ocean cruising, it also has an honourable war record having been urgently pressed into service by the Thatcher government to serve as a hospital ship in the ugly 1982 Falkland's War. This transformation resulted in two temporary helicopter decks being added. The eventual return to Southampton, with its decks lined with cheering troops provided for Britons one of the most memorable images of the twentieth century. *Canberra* returned to its more traditional role almost as quickly as it had gone to war and has been cruising the world's oceans since. The ship under command of Captain Rory Smith received a nostalgic welcome when it called in to Sydney in late February. It will continue in service until September when we can



Fairstar

be sure the tears will flow as freely as the champagne. The ultimate fate of *Canberra* is unknown, but it is not expected to remain in passenger service. Captain Smith is scheduled to take command of the new addition to the P&O fleet, *Arcadia*. Similarly the forty year old P&O liner *Fairstar* is to be paid off at the end of 1997. Like the *Canberra* she has a long and nostalgic connection with Australia, and has also served in war. Her replacement is a new luxury vessel *Fair Princess*. Another vessel with an occasional Australian connection which is going out of service this year will be the royal yacht *Britannia*. Her

ultimate fate is unannounced, however it would seem improbable she will go to a Hong Kong scrap yard. A respectable museum seems more likely. Any offers?

HMAS *Sydney* seminar 1997

The controversial circumstances surrounding the sinking of HMAS *Sydney* on or about 19 November 1941 off the NW Australian coast were the subject of a two day forum convened at the Stella Maris Seafarers' Centre in Fremantle over the weekend of 1-2 February.

The loss of *Sydney* is attributed to the disguised German raider HSK *Kormoran* which also sunk after the engagement. While many German sailors survived, (317 out of 397) there were none from *Sydney*. In all 645 Australians perished in a tragedy which accounted for 35 percent of RAN men killed in action during WW2. Subsequently the incident has provided the catalyst for a wide range of theories as to how such a powerful warship could have been overwhelmed by the raider. There apparently being no eye-witnesses to her sinking. The German account is that she was last seen proceeding over the horizon, on fire and badly damaged, and that the distant loom of an enormous night explosion marked her eventual end. Substantial confusion within the Australian defence forces at the time resulted in a delayed search, and in the wrong places. As to whether this was a result of massive incompetence, reflective of poor leadership, inadequate training of personnel and unsophisticated technological facilities available at the time, or as a result of a more sinister strategic decision has stimulated activity amongst many historians.

Officially little debris from *Sydney* was found, but more puzzling for some was that there were no bodies recovered from the presumed vicinity of the sinking or of the presumed drift region. A skeleton in a raft was found near Christmas Island months later, but is to this day is not officially recognised as being connected with the incident. This official attitude may be forced to change. It was revealed at the conference by Dr A.T. Bye that simple, but elegant oceanographic experiments with drift cards dropped on the supposed site of the battle demonstrated the strong possibility that the body was from *Sydney*. Furthermore a canvas shoe found with it

was consistent with Australian navy issue, a matter which until now has been disputed.

Unsubstantiated allegations that the Germans took part in an atrocious mopping up exercise following the battle will perhaps always be maintained by some people, however a paper by Wes Olsen ably demonstrated that total losses in war time sinkings were not unusual, and given the delays in establishing an effective search pattern, and the type of life saving equipment available, such an outcome could be reasonably expected.

Welcome too was a paper by German-Australian Jurgen Heinrich, who has delved into the German archives in the quest for further answers. Heinrich proposes that the raider had recently been repainted and was disguised as a Norwegian merchant vessel rather than as the *Straat Malakka*. This could explain why *Sydney* fell to its guns.

A central issue to the entire debate has been the allegation that a long-term conspiracy has existed to withhold material which conflicts with the official version of events. One hypothesis is that a Japanese submarine was involved and had this been revealed at the time it would have brought Japan into the war, but not the Americans. Pearl Harbour was yet to come. Another is that the British Admiralty, keen to capture enemy shipping intact, applied pressure on warship captains which resulted in unsafe practices such as getting in too close, too soon. Whatever the truth, it seems apparent an official cover-up of some sort occurred, but there is enormous uncertainty over why. For example was it the result of the need for domestic security, or because of more far reaching strategic reasons? Could it also have been an effort to protect high ranking incompetents and that this policy was extended to cover these individuals in their post-war roles?

Australian researchers over the years have been confronted with many difficulties in obtaining official documents, due in no small part to the mindless culture of secrecy in various government departments. In an attempt to overcome these difficulties the Australian Archives through the skills of employee Richard Summerrell released at the conference a 188 page guide to Commonwealth records relating to the *Sydney* incident. (The print run was only 200 copies and researchers should act quickly to obtain a copy at \$10.) Summerrell believes as far as possible his search has been exhaustive, and with his stated high security classification, he has accessed many areas beyond the scope of the ordinary researcher. However at the conference he whetted appetites by saying that an "intelligent" researcher may yet be able to find more material. He admitted to a question put by one of these people that it was possible for old documents to be attached to a new one and thus be squirrelled away for another thirty years. There is no doubt there are some important documents missing from the archival collection and Summerrell addresses this issue in some depth in his guide.

The unsatisfactory aspects of the *Sydney* incident have generated divisiveness in the Australian community. The families of those killed are many, and widespread. For them the grieving continues to the present, due in no small part to the lack of real commitment by government and its ever changing procession of ambitious politicians, whom by their glib utterances generally display an appalling appreciation of Australian history and the true magnitude of the debt owed to Australian servicemen who lost their lives.

An RAN spokesperson at the conference said the RAN feels blame is unfairly directed at it in this respect, and stated categorically the Navy has no knowledge of the wreck sites, and that in any case, while extremely interested in proceedings it was not the role of the modern Navy to seek answers to such unresolved questions of history. Many would disagree. Furthermore it seems inconceivable

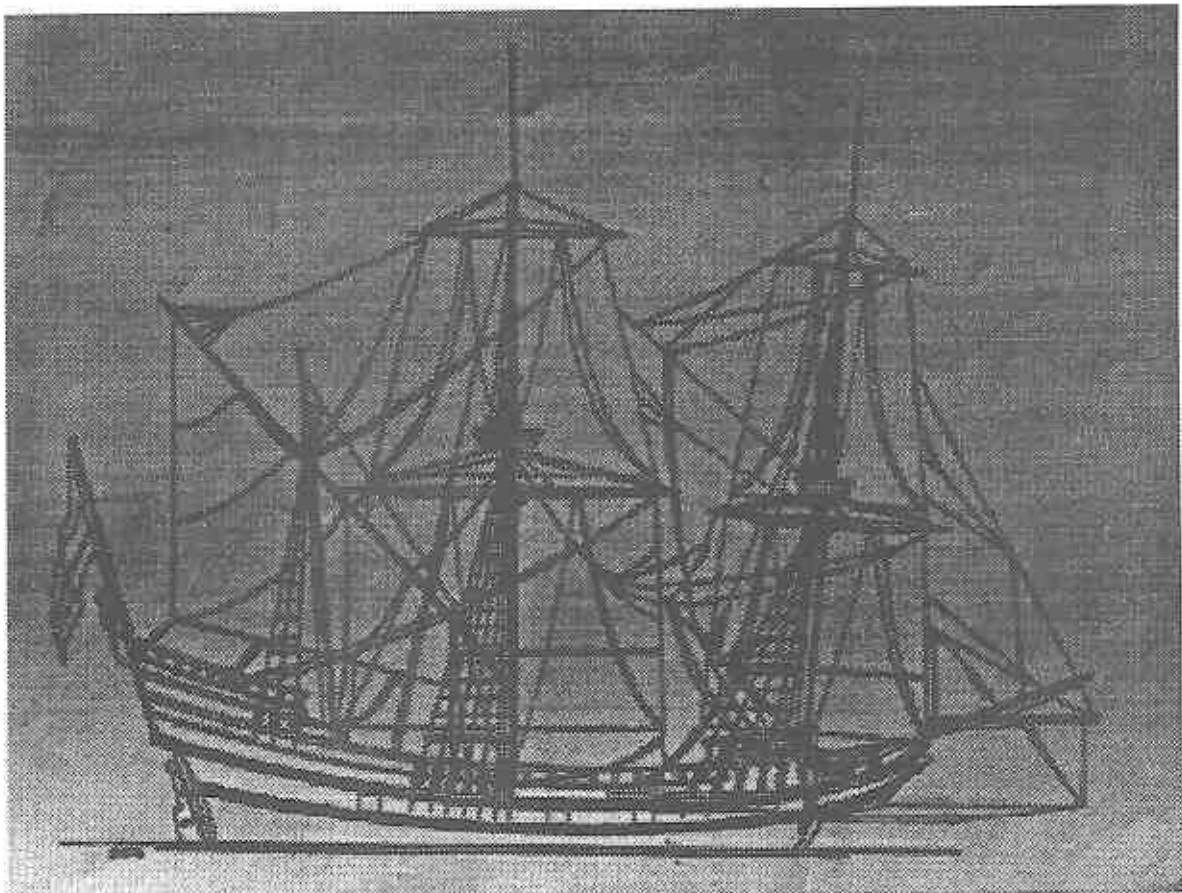
in the light of the intensiveness of the cold war and the long-time operation of the former US communications base at Exmouth, and the recent establishment of a submarine base at HMAS Stirling, that the location of every large "boat" sized piece of metal on the ocean floor in the region not was accounted for, and the information shared in joint intelligence arrangements. If this is not the case then someone needs to ask why.

Much of the Navy angle regarding *Sydney* was put by Tom Frame in his 1993 book *HMAS Sydney: Loss and Controversy*, and for a while this was thought to be the definitive work, however in an admirable academic tradition it has conspicuously served to stimulate probing by other researchers to a level of activity perhaps unprecedented in Australian maritime history. One of the most impressive papers read at the conference was by Glenys McDonald of Geraldton. Over several years of conducting oral history interviews in the rural Port



Duyfken Daze

Construction of a replica version of the Dutch vessel Duyfken has begun in a shed (where the lawn was), between the Fremantle Maritime Museum and the several adjacent fish and chip shops. Tourists will be able to munch away on the greasies as they gaze in awe at huge blocks of imported Baltic oak being carved into shape by local shipwrights. No original plans exist for Duyfken and so the modern design has been something of a hybridised interpretation of various images from the past. Over the past few years the journal of the Western Australian based Maritime Heritage Association has carried various drawings and articles which discuss these matters. In the September 1995 issue the process was described by one researcher as "morphometric analysis of the iconography," which some might translate as working off old pictures. The memorable phrase was revived again at the 1997 Vlamingh colloquium, so make a note of it for impressing students and friends. Maritime artist Peter de Witt (1928-1988) must have also done some morphometric analysis long ago when he researched the Duyfken design and one of his original drawings of the vessel is reproduced for interest. An article on de Witt, an Englishman by birth, but long time resident of WA appeared in AAMH Newsletter 64.



Duyfken by Western Australian maritime artist Peter de Witt (1928-1988)

The Duyfken project is an interesting one, and while the ship has no direct historical relevance to Fremantle, it is believed to have been the first known European vessel to encounter the Australian coastline, at Cape York, Queensland in 1606. Project completion is expected to take at least two years, and those who wish to become a "Friend of the Duyfken" with associated mailouts, invitations etc can send A\$50 to 47 Cliff St. Fremantle, 6160.

Feature articles on maritime history requested

The editor intends to publish in the newsletter a list of **newspaper feature articles** which relate to any aspect of Australian maritime history. Please notify him of articles from your region when they appear. (Title of article, author, newspaper name, page numbers and date. A copy of the article would be appreciated.

Original Vlamingh era documents on display at Fremantle

In January 1997 an exhibition of rare documents charts and books associated with the Vlamingh years and the wreck of the *Batavia* opened at the Fremantle Maritime Museum. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the collection, and it is unfortunate that none of the speakers at the colloquium addressed its content in detail. The *Algemeen Rijksarchief Den Haag* museum loaned the bulk of the material, with additional contributions from other collections. Accession numbers accompanying the main exhibits were noted by your editor for possible benefit of future researchers:

M/S journal of *Weseltje* kept by skipper Laurens Zeeman. This appears to be about 20 or so pages and from the numerous vertical lines resembles an accountant's ledger forced into service.

Rijksarchief Acc. ARA VOC 5064.

M/S journal of *Nijptangh* kept by skipper Gerrit Coolaart. The page at which this thin document was opened showed some water colour paintings of a landfall. Rijksarchief Acc. ARA VOC 5062.

M/S journal of *Nijptangh* kept by surgeon Theodor Heilmans. Another thin document. Rijksarchief Acc. ARA VOC 5062.

Munster (Muster) book of *Geelvink*, *Nijptangh* and *Weseltje*. It was unclear from the sparse information accompanying the display if this document covered all three ships, or related only to one. Rijksarchief Acc. ARA VOC 12650.

The rewritten M/S journal of Pelsaert after the first went down with the wreck of the *Batavia*. This is the principal descriptive source of the notorious events which followed the stranding. Rijksarchief Acc. ARA VOC 1098.

M/S 2 volume Journal of *Gelderland* kept by Wolfert Harmensz on a voyage to the Mollucas 1601-02. This is relevant to Australia because there is a pen drawing of six ships at a Mauritius anchorage, one of which is the *Duyfken*. The others are *Gelderland*, *Zeeland*, *Utrecht*, *Wachter*, and a small unidentified boat. These journals apparently also contain drawings of sailors and natural history subjects. Rijksarchief Acc. ARA VOC 12650.

Amongst the rare charts and maps was a 1630s one of the Indian Ocean by Jacob Aertsz Colom. This shows Australia as it was known prior to the Tasman discoveries. State Library NSW Acc. ZMB 3 400/1633?/1.

A 1660 map of the East Indies by Pieter Goos showing much of the west and central part of the continent almost complete. Australian Nat. Library. Acc. RM422.

Coastal maps and landforms by Samuel Volkerson painted from *Waeckende Boey* 1658. Rijksarchief Acc. ARA Vel 506 and 507.

M/S letter from Nicholas Witsen to Gijsbert Cuper apparently expressing disappointment at de Vlamingh's performance. He drank too much, was tardy in his examination of the coast and contrary to instructions did not stay more than three days in one place. These revelations suggest that de Vlamingh was not exactly enthusiastic about his visit to Western Australia and that he might have been bemused had he known what a fuss it would cause three hundred years hence. University of Amsterdam Acc. HSS BP 25C.

Maps and landforms of *Land van Eendracht*, by Pieters Jonk on Emeloort 1658. Rijksarchief Acc. ARA Vel 503 & 504. Map 504 is particularly interesting because

it contains the oldest European iconic representation of an Aboriginal presence, in the form of three huts.



WW2 cruisers remembered

On 9 February plaques dedicated to the memory WW2 cruisers HMAS *Canberra*, HMAS *Sydney* and HMAS *Shropshire* were unveiled in a ceremony at the Naval Memorial Park, Rockingham. (WA). The Park is located in Rockingham Road, near the grain terminal.

Gregory region north of Geraldton she turned up many people who saw enormous flashes and explosions beyond the horizon, from their rural homes. Another family said they had heard *Sydney* transmit on the AM broadcast band in a fringe reception area during an episode of "Dad and Dave." The government apparently pulled the plug on the Geraldton commercial station 6GE soon after. Some informants also related accounts of flotsam which washed up on the beach a few days later, and which was utilised by them or handed over to the authorities. Amongst this stuff was a life-boat, allegedly with bodies which were buried on the beach. It was said military personnel swarmed over the region at the time, recovering material, and put out the line to the locals that the incident they saw at sea was no more than a storm. No official record about the observations by Port Gregory people has been located by McDonald. She also proposes that an unidentified lifeboat at the Whiteman Park museum near Perth may be the one washed up near Port Gregory, a view which has some concurrence from other researchers. It seems likely that the location of the wrecks proper, especially of *Sydney* will soon be known to the public. Concerted efforts by several researchers including McDonald have shown the likely position to be much further south than previously supposed; no more than 40 nautical miles southwesterly of Steep Point in perhaps 400 metres of water or less. (See map).

Copies of papers read at the conference are lodged with the Western Australian Maritime Museum. The contact there is Dr Mike McCarthy. There will also be a set placed in the Battye Library, Perth. - Paul Weaver.

***Pacific Research* has plug pulled by federal government**

In what promises to be an incalculable loss for future researchers, the coalition government has withdrawn funding for the Pacific Research Centre, at the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at ANU. This spells the end for its respected journal *Pacific Research*, which during its nine years has provided the most substantive independent analysis of contemporary events involving conflict and other strategic matters influencing Australia's foreign affairs. Hundreds of working papers on a diverse range of subjects have been produced by as many authoritative writers. A large number have relevance for the maritime historian. A complete listing is available in the Nov. 1996 issue and they can be purchased at the bargain price of 10 for \$20. Details from the Publications officer, Pacific Research Centre, ANU, Canberra. 0200. Be quick because funding for the entire centre ceases on 30 June, 1997.

Endeavour news

The *Endeavour* replica was off West Africa in late February. Voyage to England is proceeding well. WA ABC radio station 6WF has a live hookup with the vessel every Wednesday evening at about 7.45 pm WST.

New Book on WA fishing history

A welcome contribution to the fishing history of Western Australia prior to 1939 has emerged from long time participant in the industry, Russell Cooper. The author consulted many families during his research and as a result numerous rare photographs of early fishing boats and fishermen dating back to the turn of the century are published for the first time. Amongst these is *Kia Ora*, which had been built for sealing on the south coast, but the venture failed and the vessel was taken to Geraldton and converted for fishing.

Cooper, R. (1996). *The way it was: Midwest fishermen and their boats from 1894*. 128 pages. Cost is \$19.95, plus postage and copies can be ordered from Rawlhouse Publishing, PO Box 145, West Perth, 6872. Ph. 09 3218951.

THE WAY IT WAS
Midwest Fishermen and their Boats
1894-1939



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