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Quarterly Newsletter

The Australian Association for Maritime History

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Publisher of *The Great Circle*

www.aamh.asn.au

I come from a land down under
where women glow and men plunder...

Lines from a song by Men at Work, forever associated with *Australia II*

Message from the AAMH President

Members should receive the latest issue of *The Great Circle* (Vol 23 No 1) at about the same time that you get this newsletter. If you don't get your copy of *The Great Circle* it means that you haven't renewed your subscription to AAMH for 2001. We have sent out renewal forms and reminder notices and so this is the last opportunity to renew your membership before we (reluctantly) take you off the membership list. If you don't get your copy of *The Great Circle* and you think you have renewed your membership then please contact me (contact details below).

Members will be relieved to hear that AAMH is in the final stages of negotiation on the appointment of a new General Editor for *The Great Circle* - more news on that in the next newsletter. Unfortunately Ken McPherson could not continue as General Editor after he left Curtin University in late 2000 and I have stepped in temporarily in order to get the journal published during 2001. While making these changes the AAMH Executive has opted to make some changes to the way in which *The Great Circle* and its Editorial Board operates, including 5-year terms of appointment. We have also invited Associate Professor Malcolm Tull, a former President of AAMH, to join the Editorial Board and I am pleased to report that he has accepted.

I am pleased to announce that AAMH has a new website at: *http://www.aamh.asn.au* This website is a result of the great efforts of the AAMH secretary Nathan Richards and he is to be congratulated on the quality of the result. If AAMH members have material that they would like to contribute to the website or comments about it they should contact Nathan at: *Nathan.Richards@flinders.edu.au* or on 0402 041 509.

I encourage all AAMH members to consider visiting Fremantle from 11 to 14 December 2001 for the AAMH organised conference *Maritime History Beyond 2000: Visions of Sea and Shore*. For more details contact the conference organisers at *www.murdoch.edu.au/mh2001* **Mark Staniforth.**

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Vaughan Evans Memorial Lecture

Emeritus Professor Greg Dening has agreed to give the annual *Vaughan Evans Memorial Lecture* at Fremantle during the AAMH organised conference *Maritime History Beyond 2000: Visions of Sea and Shore*. Professor Dening from the Department of History at the University of Melbourne is the author of a number of highly regarded books including *Islands and Beaches* (1980), *Mr Bligh's Bad Language* (1992) and *The Death of William Gooch: A History's Anthropology* (1995). All those who will be attending the conference and our Western Australian members are urged to look out for more details about the time and date for what will be a stimulating lecture. For an insight into Professor Dening's philosophy towards writing history visit the website:
http://www.nla.gov.au/events/history/papers/Greg_Dening.html

Professor Greg Dening

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Annual General Meeting - 16 November

The next Annual General Meeting of the AAMH will be held . at 4pm on Thursday 16 November 2001 at the South Australian Maritime Museum in Lipson Street, Port Adelaide.

Members interested in standing for election to any position on the Executive Committee should contact the President for further information and nomination forms.

The AAMH website is at www.aamh.asn.au

Oz battleship book launched by member

One of our long-time members Bob Nicholls has added a new title to his list of nautical publications. *The Three-Headed Dog: Towards the First Battleship* is a story of how the Australian colony acquired the most advanced and powerful ship of its day. The 196 large-paged (A4 size) work describes in detail the forerunner of the long line of battleships whose supremacy in the world's navies was not to be eclipsed until the introduction of the aircraft carrier. It covers the circumstances in which an 1860s Victorian government acquired what became their pride and joy, then traces, with the help of some of the 145 illustrations, the new technology used in its construction. The book also contains a portfolio of large-scale drawings of the ship and gunnery system.

Bob has a website at *http://www.bobnichollsauthor.com/*which has order forms, and descriptions of his several other books written over the years. He has said *Three-Headed Dog* will be his last book. Hmmm! Hope not Bob.

Flying boat museum for WA

A corporate-sponsored three million dollar *National Catalina Memorial Museum* to honour allied aircrew who operated them during WW2 is to be established at Pelican Point on the foreshore of the Swan River at Crawley, near Perth. The site is adjacent to where many catalinas operated between 1942 and 1945. Qantas also operated flying boats from the site. Backing the project is the American Catalina Memorial Foundation, which has attracted the support of President George W. Bush. In October an old Catalina is being freighted to WA from the US in a joint effort by the US Navy and project patron, Oz golfer Greg Norman. One of Norman's golfing acquaintances is reportedly Commander in Chief of the US Pacific Fleet. Anset will store the Catalina in Perth until the museum is completed.

Bligh re-enactment now in cyberspace

In 1983 Capt (ret.) Ron Wm. Bligh-Ware (right) reenacted the 4,000 mile open-boat voyage of his famous ancestor, from Tofua (Tonga) to Koupang (Timor). He carried 1,000 commemorative "Bounty Mail" postal covers on the voyage. Send an email to *child of bounty@hotmail.com* and he will reply with a detailed response and images of his voyage, the postal covers, and how to get some. Yo, ho, ho, me hearties!

Solander stamps due in August

A joint-issue of two stamps and other philatelic bric-a-brac by Sweden and Australia will be released to commemorate Swedish ex-patriot botanist Daniel Solander (1733-1782). Taking leave from his job as Keeper of the Natural History Department at the British Museum, Solander embarked with Banks and Cook on *Endeavour* in 1768. He died of a stroke shortly after the expedition returned to England. Stamp stuff available from main post offices on 16 August.

Federation Naval Review - 6 Oct

A million NSW people are expected to line the foreshores of Sydney Harbour for the RAN's Centenary of Federation Naval Review, scheduled to start at 1.30pm on Saturday 6 October. Warships from the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Japan, The United States, France, India, Singapore, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, South Africa and Thailand will do their thing under the bridge. The head of the RAN, Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh will come from England to take the salute. The Duke will also inspect fishing industry operations at Ceduna, and visit the good folk at Port Lincoln. The Queen of Australia will open the *Big Rig Oil and Gas Museum* at Roma in Queensland.

Now if you are going to attend these events, take at least four rolls of film, and please don't forget to send in a copy of your best shot for the next newsletter please. The naval review promises to be one of the outstanding spectacular events of the century.

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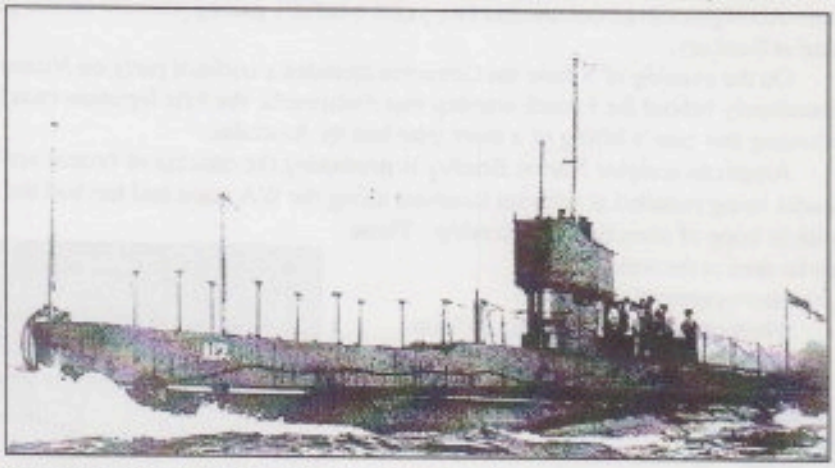
AE2 salvage hopes are still afloat

In mid April the Australian government announced that it would not sponsor the estimated A$30 million dollar salvage of the Australian submarine *AE2* sunk in the Sea of Marmara during the WW1 Gallipoli campaign. Parliamentary leader for the federal opposition Kim Beazley launched a book Stoker's Submarine on 19 April. Dublin born Lt Commander Dacre Stoker, was *AE2's* commanding officer. In reaction to the government's announcement Mr Beazley said:

> I understand that negotiations are still underway between the two governments about how to handle the future management of the wreck. The Opposition supports the effort the Commonwealth is making on this matter. Nonetheless, given it has been nearly three years since the discovery of the wreck, this has dragged on for probably too long. Today I make this commitment: should I win the next election, an incoming Labor Government will collaborate with the Government of Turkey and any interested Australian or Turkish private benefactors on a scheme to raise, restore and display the AE2. I have an open mind about the best location for the AE2's final resting place, and a Labor government will of course take expert advice on the archaeological, cultural, historical, financial and technical issues involved in restoring and displaying the boat. (Email KB-PW 18/5/2001).

The submarine is one of two E Class boats purchased by Australia from Britain prior to WW1. With a displacement of 725 tons, *AE2* was commissioned into the RAN at Portsmouth on February 28 1914. They had been ordered from Vickers Maxim at Barrow-in-Furness in December 1910.



Escorted by HMS *Eclipse*, *AE1* and *AE2* set out on March 2 1914 for Australia via Gibraltar, Suez, Colombo and Singapore. Escort duties were by HMS *Yarmouth* from Colombo and HMAS *Sydney* (1) from Singapore.

The 9,000 mile voyage was of unprecedented distance for submarines and there were numerous breakdowns and near disasters. Nevertheless they arrived at Darwin on 6 May, subsequently calling at Cairns and Morton Bay. Arrival in Sydney was on May 24. Disappointingly for the PR organisers of the time it was a day after the official welcoming ceremony.

An immediate overhaul took place and soon after, the outbreak of war saw the submarines dispatched with a flotilla to overthrow Germany's pacific colonies, including Rabaul in New Guinea. Surface ships comprised HMAS' *Australia*, *Sydney*, *Parramatta*, *Melbourne*, *Encounter*, *Warrego* and *Yarra*. AE1 disappeared with all hands on 14 September 1914 while patrolling St. Georges Strait between New Britain and New Ireland with HMAS *Parramatta*. The location of the wreck remains unidentified.

The Second Expeditionary Force including AE2 embarked from Sydney on the 19 December 1914, bound for Suez, and of course Gallipoli, near where AE2 now lies in 86 metres (282 feet) of water. PW.

Help requested

Lisa Burton is seeking contact with anyone who has researched *Solon*, which voyaged from Bemen to Sydney via Moreton Bay in 1858/59. PO Box 5205 Gladstone. 4680. lisa.burton@wilsonhtm.com.au

From the newsletter editor: David Jenkin's 1992 book *Battle Surface* mentions the sinking of the freighter *Parigi* off Fremantle in 1942 and other Japanese submarine attacks on shipping off Cape Leeuwin. (Page 144). Are any members able to provide me with information to confirm these events actually took place? The author has not responded. Paul Weaver. pweaver@starwon.com.au or 23 Waddell Rd. Palmyra. WA. 6157.

Sweden slings Singapore subs - Germany fitting up South Africa

May 22 saw the Republic of Singapore take delivery of the final of four second-hand but refitted Sj"ormen (Sea Serpent) class submarines. RSwN *Sj"hunden* was renamed RSS *Chieftain* at Kockums' Karlskronavarvet in Sweden.. The 1995 initiated deal codenamed The Riken Project also provided the Singapore navy with documentation, spares and training for four crews.

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Also in late May construction began on three conventional but updated 209 class submarines for the South African Navy at the Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft AG shipyard in Kiel, Germany. Delivery of the final boat is due in 2007. Thirteen other navies have purchased 61 examples of this class.

Baudin mania hits WA

On 2 June WA's governor Lt General John Sanderson participated in the unveiling of a memorial commemorating the landing of the Baudin expedition at Eagle Bay. On the same day French frigate FNS *Nivose* called briefly to Geographe Bay on a commemorative visit, then spent a week at Fremantle where it was opened for public inspection.

A touring exhibition of reproduction art and documents relating to the Baudin expedition is visiting WA coastal towns over a twelve month period. *Baudin, Voyage of Discovery to the Southern Lands* is a collaborative effort between Di Jones, a crayfish expert at the WA Museum and Jacqueline Bonnemains a natural history curator at Le Havre. In 2000 Bonnemains produced an expensive (420FF) illustrated volume *Nicolas Baudin Mon voyage aux Terres Australes*. A English version is yet to appear.

In mid-June at Margaret River, (located between Cape Leeuwin and Cape Naturaliste) a local repertory group performed a play *The Deadwater Chant*. Written by local Margot Edwards the production drew upon the story of the French sailor Vasse who was lost overboard in storm-driven surf while he and others were attempting a small-boat landing at Geographe Bay, near Busselton. Mythology has it that he survived the dunking and with the assistance of noble-Aborigines lived out another two years wistfully gazing seaward before perishing. The play also did a one night stand at Bunbury.

On the evening of 5 June the Governor attended a cocktail party on *Nivase* in celebration of Baudin. Berthed immediately behind the French warship was *Fukuyoshi*, the first Japanese tuna fishery vessel allowed into the harbour following this year's lifting of a three year ban by Australia.

American sculptor Naomi Bradley is promoting the concept of bronze sculptures of Flinders, Hamelin, Peron and Baudin being installed at relevant locations along the WA coast and has had the heads of the Frenchmen on display in Perth in hope of attracting sponsorship. These can be seen at the website www.thevoyagercollection.com

Through July the Lawrence Wilson Gallery at the University of WA ran an exhibition relating to these early navigators in association with a likewise little publicised "Cultural Encounters" conference about the early voyages of discovery from Europe to the India-Pacific region.

Also in July came news that another WA sculptor, Peter Gelencser of Cottesloe has produced nine casts of a bust of Baudin and was offering them to nine WA shires where the Frenchman is thought by some to have landed. Furthermore, in a tribute to Baudin's visitations on 5 July, French Ambassador Pierre Viaux unveiled a memorial plaque at the Fremantle Maritime museum. In the same week a book *Wonnerup: The Sacred Dune* favouring the notion that the French sailor Vasse survived in the company of friendly Aborigines was launched. The author, Alain Serieyx is a distant relative of Vasse and has drawn on family papers and public material for his inspiration.

Who's Baudin? - JA government fishery inspection vessel *Fukuoshi Maru* behind *Nivase*

Photo: P. Weaver

On 11 July *The Australian* (p.6) carried a story that not all were happy about the proposal to plonk busts of Baudin up and down the coast. Professor Leslie Marchant who has long delved into French maritime visits to Australia said that some of the proposed sites were never visited by Baudin. A Ms Pratt, executive director of an organisation calling itself *Terra Australia 2001* and funded by a Centenary of Federation grant and the French Government admitted Baudin had not personally visited some of the disputed sites, but said that some of his his crew had.

16 July saw a story in *The West Australian* (p. 13) about the "Cultural Encounters" conference. One of the speakers, Sydney University academic Margaret Sankey reported that zoologist Francois Peron, who was associated with the Baudin expedition, on his return to France had pushed for a French takeover of British colonial claims on Australia, and especially Port Jackson. He apparently felt two frigates and onshore support from oppressed Irishmen would be sufficient effort. PW.

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AAMH member awarded Queen's birthday honour

Congratulations to Captain James Goldrick, Director of the RAN's Seapower Centre in Canberra for being awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross for outstanding achievement in his career. The announcement came in the Queen's Birthday Honours List on June 11. Captain Goldrick is a long-time member of the AAMH.

Geraldton's *Batavia* exhibition revs up

At Geraldton on 1 June the WA Museum presented inscribed medallions to the eight member team which identified the location of *Batavia* wreck on the Abrolhos Islands group. The presentation was part of the ceremony to re-unveil the celebrated stone portico which was recovered from the 1629 wreck. Originally on display at Fremantle, the sandstone edifice was moved to Geraldton, which claims its geographical proximity to the wreck validates installation of the main displays. A new museum building was recently completed to house the exhibits. A fake portico has been constructed at the Fremantle exhibit for those who can't make it to "Sun City." At Geraldton a medallion was also presented for the 1998 discoverers of a French coin left on Dirk Hartog Island by the St Allouarn expedition.

HMAS *Sydney* - feds cough-up for Geraldton memorial project

In a "stop press" item in the last newsletter it was mentioned that the Howard government had yet to contribute to the memorial for the crew of HMAS *Sydney* which will be dedicated at Geraldton (WA) on 19 November this year. Well we are pleased to report that a couple of weeks later crusty federal Minister Wilson "iron bar" Tuckey released $200k of funds towards the project. (His nickname comes from the olden days when he was a crusty publican at Carnarvon and allegedly kept a suitable length of metal under the till as a deterrent to misbehaviour.) These days the folk at Carnarvon are fuming about the installation of the memorial at Geraldton. They believe that it should have been at their town. The project has not been without its own small-town dramas in "Sun City." Apparently local hoons have not regarded the memorial site with the same reverence as the organisers, and there have been reports of some disrespectful nocturnal antics. Furthermore there is a rumour that at least six former crew members of HSK *Kormoran* will attend the November dedication. This has apparently infuriated some local RSL members at an unofficial level. Members of other community service groups are also reported to be experiencing disquiet because of the hooha. Irrespective, the RAN will have HMAS *Sydney* IV in port for the 19 November event, and no doubt be providing a guard of honour. They will also be taking a selected group of civilian guests to sea for another memorial service and casting adrift of wreaths. Will the Germans be invited on board? We'll just have to wait and see.

Australia II zooms away

Thursday 14 June was a crisp but sunny day in Freo so your paparazzi minded editor tripped into town on his motorbike in the hope of snapping a couple of final shots of *Australia II* before it was whisked away to the land of the mad cow. Talk about good timing. Coinciding with my arrival at the Fishing Boat Harbour, the great white was just emerging on a jinker to be taken to the nearby industrial area of O'Connor and prepared for shipping.

Now one would have thought that because the state government has invested so many millions in the new building to house its star exhibit it might have insisted on a fairly cautious trip by the truckers, but following pretty closely on the motorbike I have to say I had my heart in my mouth as they bowled along the pretty rough and ready South Street at the full 60 kmh allowed by the speed limit. Of course the semi slowed occasionally for dogs, traffic lights and corners, nevertheless as it approached its final destination the yacht hooked into the power lines in Stockdale Rd bringing about a rather urgent shuddering stop. Click went the camera eh, eh. Having a paparazzi instinct I was sort of hoping the whole lot might tip over on its side. What a shot! However, no such luck on this occasion. (Only joking folks).

Nearly history - *Australia II* strikes a minor snag on the way to England
Photo: P. Weaver

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On 27 June Australia II was loaded onto a container ship *Courtship Action* bound for the action at Cowes in September. Accompanying the yacht was *Black Swan*, the original tender used during the sensational victory over the Americans at Newport in 1983. Once in the water in Blighty the yacht did a bit of scooting about and struck some rocks, damaging the famous winged keel. As predicted in our last newsletter, Alan Bond was present with the other rich and famous, and seems to have attracted greater media adoration than the yacht. At a special ceremony, Royal Perth Yacht Club provided him and each of the original '83 crew with a gold medal and life membership. PW.

Persian Gulf still occupies RAN

In early July HMAS *Anzac* with 164 crew was sent to the Persian Gulf for a three month deployment with a US Navy Task Force assigned to a Multinational Interception Force (MIF). The MIF resulted from UN Security Council Resolution 665 in August 1990. It role is to enforce sanctions on Iraq through maritime interception and boarding operations. This is the tenth time an RAN vessel has undertaken MIF operations since the end of the Gulf War.

Navy perseveres with floating "rust bucket"

According to *The Australian* newspaper, "It has taken 17 contractors and 250 staff, but the navy has finally turned the floating rust-bucket that was the US tank-landing ship. USS *Fairfax County*, into the Australian Defence Force's most high-tech command, control and intelligence (C31) vessel." (Aust. (IT supp.) 19/6/2001:36. The now renamed HMAS *Manoora* it is to be a key communications thingy for the navy which promises to be so complicated it is sure to confuse the enemy. The newspaper article carried a quote from Deputy Maritime Commander Max Hancock: "The crew of 230 have their hands on the spear and are ready to launch it when the Government says it's time." Whatever that means is a bit of a mystery. The ship purchase has been controversial. A few years back there were rumours that the ship was a basket case and that in the absence of army tanks, some pretty desperate attempts were allegedly made to adjust the trim by pouring large quantities of concrete into various parts of the hull. In the *Australian's* June article a navy spokesperson confirmed the original fitout of the ship had been completed under "difficult conditions as neither the navy nor its civilian contractors knew how the ship was put together."

RAN sailors have mighty big hearts

Few Australians might be able to pinpoint the Solomon Islands let alone the capital Honiara even though Australia has been deeply involved in the process of restoring peace between its tribal factions. The RAN has been at the coalface stationing a ship to provide logistical support to the process and a safe neutral meeting point for the various islander spokespersons. As is frequently the case with developing nations which resort to gunplay and violence in an attempt to establish internal stability, the country has become an economic basket case with chronic inadequacies in every area. Needless to say the medical services for islanders have suffered immeasurably, and a volunteer Australian medical team has been battling with the odds at the National Referral Hospital in Honiara. One of the RAN ships standing by this year was HMAS *Manoora*, (the same) and on being made aware of the problems in the hospital, the crew had a whip 'round amongst themselves raising a donation of $12,500.

AAMH is always pleased to publicise events

A feature of many organised events pertaining to the celebration of maritime history in Australia is the difficulty in hearing about them in time. So many interesting things happen all over Australia which are only learned of when it is too late. If your organisation or town is planning a maritime history event please let the editor know. Six months is not too far in advance. Three months is usually too little. Remember, when you receive your AAMH Newsletter in the mail box, the next edition is usually well under construction.

Special coin to commemorate RAN

Public awareness that this year marks the ninetieth anniversary of the RAN has not been strong, but to commemorate the occasion, the Royal Australian Mint will be issuing a special one dollar coin in early August. Price from post offices will be $2·15 to cover the cost of the cardboard display holder. The design features the RAN badge of an anchor surmounted by Saint Edward's crown.

Darwin - Alice Springs rail link commenced construction 17 July

"Well I think it's a fantastic day for the vision of an integrated, united Australia. This dream has been around for

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almost 100 years and I'm very proud that the Government I lead has made it possible in cooperation with the Governments of the Northern Territory and South Australia. It will be a great boon for our trade it will be a great boon for tourism and it also makes a valuable contribution to the integrated defence capacity of northern Australia. So it's a very worthwhile project and a great nation-building project of which all Australians should be very proud."

John Howard
Prime Minister of Australia

Whalers' tunnel under Fremantle's Roundhouse re-opened

Compared with the rest of Australia in 2001, Western Australia has a notorious imprisonment record, not only with the processing of criminals, but with the chain of detention centres set up to hold illegal immigrants arriving by boats on the NW coast. Therefore it seems fitting that the states oldest and arguably most revered building is a former prison located at Fremantle.

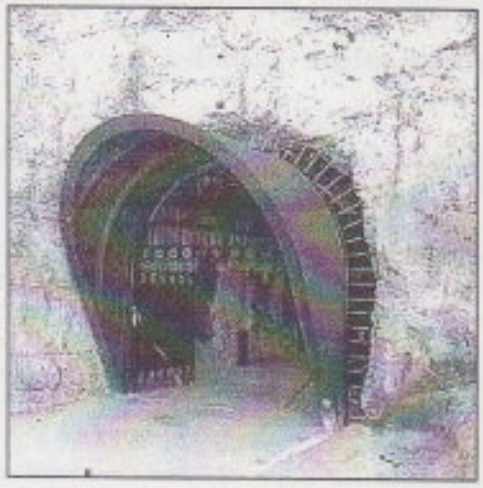
The Roundhouse

When Captain Stirling and his cohorts stepped ashore at the mouth of the Swan River in 1829, one of the first things they must have said was "What this joint needs is a good gaol." So they had the labourers knock up a 12 sided, 8 celled design by architect Henry Reveley, a friend of the poet Shelley, and whom had a track record of designing sturdy buildings in Cape Town.

Acknowledging Governor George Arthur in the prison colony of Van Diemen's Land, (Tasmania.) Stirling had named the limestone promontory on which it was built, Arthur's Head. The gaol was ready for business on 18 January 1831. A small fireplace, said to be identical to one in Arthur's cottage at Port Arthur, warmed the hands of the warders in winter, but would have been unbearable in summer. Prisoners just had to tough things out regardless of the season.

The Roundhouse soon filled up with miserable people. It was the scene of the colony's first execution of a European when 15 year old "Parkhurst boy" named John Gavin was hung in ghastly circumstances in April 1844.

Bay whaling operations started on the beach below the Roundhouse in the late 1830s and quickly attracted the interest of local Aborigines. Whatever favours were exchanged between cultures tends to be speculative, but a semi-permanent encampment existed adjacent to the whaling operations while they lasted. Nevertheless, the Roundhouse was to become a symbol of horror for Aborigines, because throughout the nineteenth century it was used to temporarily hold many tribesmen captured from the expanding pastoral frontiers and sentenced to long years of incarceration on Rottnest Island, which lies on the horizon off Fremantle.



Refurbished entrance to the Whalers' Tunnel
Photos: P. Weaver

Associated with the whaling was a tunnel cut by Aboriginal prisoners under the Roundhouse between the beach and the town, between August 1837 and February 1838. This was recently conserved and is open free to visitors. Entry to the Roundhouse above it is by donation of a coin, or free, depending on your generosity of mood. An unconserved kitchen/bakery is through the door under the main steps. PW.

TV docoland - donky-man hero to be revived

Your newsletter editor recalls that as an Australian child in the early 1950s, Armistice Day celebrating the end of WW1 on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month was as important as Anzac and Arbour Day on the school calendar. In preparation for the sombre occasion we children rehearsed a half a dozen hymns and nationalistic songs which included a hard-to-remember one with the giggle stimulating line, "girt by sea". On the great sacred day we would all assemble in the ~~parade~~ play ground and the prefects would lay wreaths built from tea-roses and fishbone fern against the flagpole. Invariably in the class-room lead-up to the proceedings someone would relate the story of Simpson and his donkey heroically rescuing critically wounded Australians from the slopes of Gallipoli.

Half a century later four of my own kids go to the same primary school but when I checked recently, only one

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daughter (9) knew the story. An older son thought it related to a donkey somewhere which had stumbled in the water when it had been carrying a load of sponges, and couldn't get up. Hmmm, close, but not close enough for a prize.

The lack of knowledge probably should not be surprising because the significance of Armistice Day seems to have pretty well faded away in modern multi-cultural Australia. Even most of the radio stations no longer observe a minute of silence at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. Time is money you know. All this leads to the fact that I recently learned something about John Simpson I didn't know. Firstly he was a Pom, and that his name had originally been Simpson-Fitzpatrick. He changed it after he jumped ship at Fremantle. As a seaman he had spent quite a bit of time working along the Australian coast before enlisting.

Seaman Simpson (right) dockside in Melbourne
Detail of picture in Cochrane (1992), p.25.

A British TV documentary team have been tracing his footsteps and visited the port in May this year. They said he joined the AIF at Fremantle anticipating a free trip to Europe, but wound up at Gallipoli instead. Bummer! According to the TV people, physically he packed a bit of beef and it was his large size which determined his role as an ambulance carrier. When the donkeys got shot he could take over. They claimed he rescued some 300 men from the blood soaked slopes using a variety of donkeys, not just one, before he too was killed by a sharpshooting Turk. The doco will first appear on Britain's ITV, and might get a screening in Oz, depending whether or not the ABC has a space between all those clapped out old British comedy reruns it specialises in.

In fact, there is much more to the Simpson story than is generally supposed. In particular the concerted effort which took place to embellish his reputation and virtually sanctify him in the eyes of the Australian public for propaganda purposes. That he was a bit of a red-ragger who despised the British class system has been deliberately obscured. There is an extraordinary 1992 book written by Peter Cochrane, *Simpson and the Donkey: The Making of a Legend* (MUP), which thoroughly examines how Simpson has been misrepresented by the media since his death, and by historians. Indeed some readers might find that it stimulates a rethink about how other persons and events in Australian military and naval history have been presented in recent times. PW.

Broome attack rekindled

Also in Fremantle, another company called Prospero is working up a documentary about the successful Japanese air attack on Broome on 3 March 1942. Some sixteen flying boats were destroyed on the water in Roebuck Bay. Amongst the 85 or so people killed were about 50 Dutch colonials, whom in anticipation of the Japanese advance had been airlifted from the Indonesian archipelago. A memorial dedicated to these people is attached to the war graves section at Karrakatta Cemetery in Perth. One Japanese pilot, Warrant Officer Osamu Kudo was killed when his Zero was shot down. Credited with this effort is former Royal Dutch Air Force Flight Lieutenant Gus Winckel, now a sprightly 89 year old living on the Queensland Gold Coast. He says he pulled a machine gun from his moored aircraft and managed to give the Zero "a good blast" as it flew straight at him. A Broome street is named in Mr Winckel's honour. (WA 21/6/01:33). A well known story associated with the air attack and sure to be included is that one of the destroyed Dutch flying boats (Dorniers) carried a shipment of diamonds which were recovered by locals and illegally dispersed. The documentary makers have interviewed a number of survivors. Their efforts will appear in a three-part series called *The Shipwreck Detectives* commissioned jointly by the ABC and *National Geographic Magazine*.

Having recently read Tom Frame's latest eye opener, *Mutiny!* Your NL editor wonders if the Dorniers which fled to Broome were the same ones which bombed mutineers on the Dutch warship *De Zeven Provincien* on 8 Feb 1933. The Dutch airmen killed 184 sailors on that occasion (p.134). PW.

Can you name all the world's Oceans?

A year 2000 decision by the International Hydrographic Organization delimited a fifth world ocean from the southern portions of the *Atlantic Ocean*, *Indian Ocean*, and *Pacific Ocean*. The new *Antarctic Ocean* extends from the coast of Antarctica north to 60 degrees south latitude which coincides with the Antarctic Treaty Limit. The *Indian Ocean* remains the third-largest of the world's five oceans after the *Pacific Ocean* and *Atlantic Ocean*, but is larger than the *Southern Ocean* and *Arctic Ocean* - see!

Free translation of foreign languages

Need to check some foreign text without learning the lingo. You might try typing it into the space at *http://babelfish.altavista.com/translate.dyn* and getting an instant computer translation.

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Flea market find - a Cold War view of Australia

In an endless pursuit of the trivial at the local flea market, you editor recently found for $1 a large format, 192 page Russian atlas published in Moscow at the height of the cold war in 1955. The detail of Australia in *ГЕОГРАФИЧЕСКИЙ АТЛАС* is comparable with popular Western atlases of the period. Surprisingly, in light of the reputation about Soviet secrecy, the numerous maps of the Soviet Union and China are far more detailed than is generally found of the same regions in popular western atlases of the time. No placenames have English translations in this relatively rare Russian volume.

Rumours of Oz whaling film

Word is out too that another company is working on a TV doco about the whaling history of WA., and have been filming various sites and artefacts scattered along the southern and western coasts. Reportedly the producers have had some problems finding reliable information. A significant but little known description of WA whaling sites is in an unpublished report done for the National Trust of Australia: McIlroy, J. (1987). *Whaling stations survey 1987: Sites south of Perth.* They used to have a single copy in their Perth library.

HMAS *Sydney* - 2001 search for Christmas Island grave

In early June the Royal Australian Navy sent a team of four people to Christmas Island to search for the grave of a sailor, widely believed by many people to have come from HMAS *Sydney*. The expedition was in response to a recommendation in the 1999 report of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry into the controversial circumstances surrounding the loss the Australian cruiser. Led by Lieutenant Commander Richard Chartier from Naval Headquarters, the team included Dr Denise Donlon, Mr Kevin Lourey and Mr Ted McGowan. Dr Donlon has been involved in numerous recoveries of wartime human remains. Mr Lourey spent 20 years on Christmas Island as a civil engineer including a period as Island Manager. Mr McGowan, a former Victorian Magistrate, believes the remains may be those of his brother, Tom, who was lost aboard *Sydney*. Mr McGowan has provided Navy with what it says was valuable assistance in preparing for this important task. Lt Commander Chartier also obtained further information from Mr John Doohan of the *End Secrecy on HMAS Sydney* group. While the team have undoubtedly been enthusiastic in their search, it is possible to discern from the press release below, that there is still a degree of skepticism in Canberra.

PACC 209/01
Wednesday, June 20 2001

NAVY HAS GRAVE IN ITS SITES

The Royal Australian Navy believes the team it sent to Christmas Island may have found the site of the grave of the Unknown Sailor.

The body of a sailor was recovered on Christmas Island on February 6 1942 and was subsequently buried in an unmarked grave. A Parliamentary Inquiry deemed it as "highly probable" that the sailor was from the ill-fated cruiser HMAS *Sydney*, lost with all hands after a desperate fight with the German raider *Kormoran*.

During the week June 8 to 14 the four-person team, led by Lieutenant Commander Richard Chartier from Navy Headquarters in Canberra, narrowed the search field to an area of about 12 square meters and believes they may have identified a possible location of the unmarked grave within that area.

According to Lieutenant Commander Chartier the old European Cemetery had changed significantly since the sailor was buried there.

"Most of the site was overgrown with scrub and a large amount of debris has been deposited over the area," he said. "The regrowth and the steep slope combined to make the search quite difficult."

The weather was also a factor that required consideration by the team. "Torrential rain made the surface of the cemetery muddy, slippery and quite hazardous. Our First Aid Kit was put to good use as team members received minor cuts and abrasions during the search," Lieutenant Commander Chartier said.

Despite the conditions, by Wednesday the team had cleared away the scrub, found the perimeters of the old residence garden, and marked out a path that led past the gravesite.

"Mr Kevin Lourey, a crucial member of the team, who spent 20 years on Christmas as a civil engineer from 1949, was then able to identify a grave-sized area that he believes is where the grave is located. An area of about 12 square

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meters has been set aside for an eventual excavation." Lieutenant Commander Chartier said.

"We have sketched the area and requested that a detailed survey be conducted. However, all markings will be removed to reduce the likelihood of disturbance to the site to our return later in the year to attempt an exhumation of the remains."

The team returned to the mainland on Friday June 15 and is hopeful that it has located the unmarked grave. Nevertheless, as explained in the Parliamentary Inquiry's Report on the Loss of HMAS *Sydney*, it must be stressed that even if remains are found, they may not reveal the identity of the Unknown Sailor.

Should any remains be found, a decision will be made in due course regarding their future reinternment.

Before departing Lieutenant Commander Chartier was full of praise for the support and interest extended his party on Christmas Island. "The cooperation we received was marvellous," he said. "People made us feel most welcome and the assistance they provided made our job so much easier."

Famous Australian fishing-reel designer dies

It is probably not too much of an exaggeration to suggest that most Australians who haul in a fish from the beach have the legendary Jack Alvey to help them. Like his father and his grandfather before him, Kenneth. John Jack Alvey devoted his life to making the fisherman's task that little bit easier.

Alvey designed and built what many champions regard as the finest fishing reels in the world. Anglers throughout the Pacific, New Zealand, Europe, the UK, South Africa and North America use an Alvey reel, which was manufactured at the family's factory at Carole Park in Brisbane's western suburbs.

Jack Alvey with a sidecast reel
Photo courtesy Des Houghton at *The Courier-Mail*

Alvey was especially proud of the side-cast reels he and his father spent their lifetimes improving. While the rest of the world was struggling with a forward rotating spinning reel that worked like an eggbeater, Alveys perfected the side-cast reel. It was a simpler, more durable version designed to work every time. Moreover, it fed a line so sensitive to the touch that a fisherman. could feel every nibble. Tailor, and especially whiting, Jack Alvey's favourite. meal, did not stand a chance.

The Jack Alvey Special, a versatile fibreglass rod that bears his name, will be a lasting legacy to the popular angler who turned a. good idea into a multi-million dollar business.

Alvey's grandfather Charles Alvey; a glazier, painter and sometime inventor began the business in 1920. In that year he migrated from Birmingham and settled his family on a stretch of swampy; unwanted riverbank land at St Lucia, next to the University of Queensland. There, Charles carved from wood the first Alvey reels, and sold them to stores in the city. The business blossomed.

His son Ken returned to the St Lucia business after a stint as a service station proprietor at Wyandra, south of Charleville in outback Queensland. Jack Alvey was born in Charleville on 4 November 1923. When his father returned to Brisbane, Jack attended West End State School. crossing his beloved river each day by ferry.

Later; he attended Industrial High in. the city and won an apprenticeship with Mars Engineering as a fitter and turner. In his spare time he repaired and rode motorcycles, but fishing and boating remained his first love.

At 16, he designed and. built his own boat. Hoisting a skull and crossbones insignia, he would delight in challenging the local sailing club regattas by tacking across the river and beating them to the finish line. Alvey left Mars and joined the family business in an age when the reels were fashioned from red cedar and silky oak.

During the war, the factory's production was almost entirely turned over to the war effort with the reel makers turning out parts for Balfour guns and other military equipment.

By the '60s, the reels were made from Bakelite as well as wood, and then the family moved into compression moulding and fibreglass. By then, Alvey Reels employed 60 workers and the reel was the choice of champions such as the legendary Len "Seagull Eyes" Thompson, "Gentleman" Hank Newman and Keith Peel.

Alvey was a foundation member of the Oceanic Fishing Club and a life member of the Australian Anglers Association. Up until the time of his death, after a four year struggle with prostate cancer, Alvey remained a generous supporter of amateur fishing clubs throughout the country, donating trophies and prizes.

He helped establish *Junior Angler's Day* and supported the *Take a Kid* fishing promotion. He was honoured with the *Order of Australia* in 1999 for services to recreational fishing. His expertise was by no means restricted to the business. He was a class fisherman, and in 1959 at Sydney won a gold medal and a world casting record with a

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mammoth throw that exceeded 700ft (213m).

The infamous 1974 Brisbane floods almost sank the company. With the factory destroyed, the business was relocated to Carole Park and wooden reels were relegated to history. Alvey searched the globe for new methods and new ideas. On his retirement, he handed control of the company two his two sons; Bruce, as managing director, and Glenn as general manager.

Jack used his superannuation payout to invest in new Japanese-designed injection-moulding equipment. The company makes its own brass mouldings and screws and carries out its own matt finishing, welding, electroplating and other metal work.

In good years, they churn out more than 100,000 reels. Today there are at least 50 different types, from dinky hand-held versions for children through to 45cm diameter whoppers that are bolted on to game-fishing vessels. They also makes customised specials with corporate logos.

Jack Alvey's favourite fishing spots were Tweed Heads, Fingal Head, Hastings Point and Blackrock in NSW, and more recently at Teewah Beach north of Noosa. He died in Brisbane on 21 June age 77. He is survived by his two sons and three daughters, Lyn Black, Marilyn Burton and Janice Lawson. His two wives died before him.

Des Houghton

(Des Houghton is an editor with Brisbane's *The Courier-Mail*.)

Admiral Sir Anthony Synnot

Admiral Sir Anthony Synnot, a former Chief of the Navy and Chief of the Defence Force Staff, died on July 4, aged 79. He had a long and distinguished military career including service in World War II, commands of destroyers and aircraft carriers and later senior appointments in the Australian Defence Force. He was Chief of Naval Staff from 1976 to 1979 and then Chief of the Defence Force Staff until 1982. Born at Corowa, NSW, and educated in Geelong, he joined the Royal Australian Navy in early 1939. After the war he was involved in the early stages of the Malayan Emergency. Promotion to Rear Admiral in 1970 saw the first of a series of key senior appointments in the Australian Defence Force. After his retirement , Sir Anthony served as Chairman of the Council of the Australian War Memorial.

HMAS *Sydney* - curator's statement about claims in media

The WA Maritime Museum has been keeping abreast of developments in respect of HMAS *Sydney* and HSK *Kormoran* since the advent of the 1976 Commonwealth Historic Shipwrecks Act. We have conducted seminars, urged Government to act, provided advice to bereaved family, conducted inspections of sites believed to be that ship (some with the RAN), and have constantly provided assistance to scholars, scientists and others seeking to research or come to terms with, the HMAS *Sydney* mystery. Recent examples in book form are the late Lt John Ross' (RAN), work *Lucky Ross* and Wes Olson's well-received *Bitter Victory*. The latter work has served to elucidate many of the 'mysteries' in respect of HMAS *Sydney*, leaving few outstanding. The most notable is the answer to the question 'where is it'. Satisfactory attention to this 'unfinished business' of WW2 and the location of HMAS *Sydney* and HSK *Kormoran*, as a necessary first step in that process, are matters of national concern and moral obligation.

The June 2001 Lindsay Knight/ Warren Whittaker report in the recent press is one of many received since 1976. It and all the other reports, formal and informal, are given every attention in the context of the imperative for Government to try to locate the HMAS *Sydney* and to provide some finality for those who have lost relatives on the vessel. Most have now been satisfactorily attended to and few remain 'on the books' requiring further action.

Further, in respect of the need to locate HMAS *Sydney*, or at least to make a thorough attempt to do so, the RAN is co-ordinating a Seminar on 16 November this year as a direct result of the recent Parliamentary Inquiry into the loss of HMAS *Sydney*. It is designed to seek answers to the question whether the ship can be found. We are pleased to have been requested to assist the Navy in this important development and in many respects this initiative is similar to that conducted by this Museum in the wake of the successes at Bismarck and Titanic on the 50th anniversary of the loss of HMAS *Sydney* in November 1991.

In regard to recent press statements that the wreck(s) have been found, I have recommended that the June 2001 Whittaker/Knight report should not receive a high priority. I have based this advice on a report received in 1991 which indicates that the Whittaker/Knight group first located the general area of the positions recently given for HMAS *Sydney* and HSK *Kormoran* over a decade ago. The report, penned by Mr Whittaker on 4 September 1989, was forwarded to us by a third party and it indicates that the 'find' was effected by a technique known as 'map dowsing' (similar to 'divining' over a map or chart). Three locations were recorded at the time, one for *Kormoran*, one for one *Sydney* and the other for a Japanese vessel. The Whittaker/Knight group then flew to these locations and deployed a device they termed a 'Subtle Energy Generator' which, according to Mr Whittaker, was tuned for various materials and at one site 'gave a response to Japanese bronze propellers, gun metal, Japanese swords and human bones'. This and the lack of coal on the site, led the group to concluded that a Japanese submarine had been found.

These claims were not considered sufficient grounds for action.

The Whittaker/Knight press release of June 2001 gives positions for *Sydney* and *Kormoran* not far from those of

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1989, and it carries in the press release other details which indicate that the two reports (1989 & 2001) are of a similar nature and ethos, though the submarine was not mentioned, and the technology utilised in the 'confirmation' stages of the latest process is an apparent advance on that used in 1989—the Knight Direct location System (KLDS).

On that basis, I could not support any demand or request that Government act in the in-water examination of the June 2001 claims, though I will seek to have the matter aired at the November 2001 Seminar.

It is all a matter of considerable concern, especially in regards to the effect that these widely-publicised claims have had on those relatives who have long-since waited in expectation of a finalisation of this sad matter.

Dr M. McCarthy
Curator of Maritime Archaeology
WA Maritime Museum

HMAS *Sydney* - Navy organising wreck-location seminar at Fremantle in November

Following on from the recommendation of the 1997 Parliamentary Inquiry into the loss of HMAS *Sydney* (II), the RAN has agreed to sponsor a seminar dealing with the location of the wreck. The HMAS *Sydney* Foundation Trust and the Western Australian Maritime Museum have agreed to assist the RAN in this endeavour. The aim of the seminar is to provide the Chief of Navy with conclusions sufficient to allow him to make an evaluation on the appropriateness of a wreck search.

Preliminary discussions between the RAN, the Trust and the Museum have resulted in the following decisions: The seminar will be held in Fremantle on 16 November 2001. The format will include the formation of four workshops. Each workshop will have a Chairperson responsible for the organisation of work and for the preparation of a written report. Other workshop participants may be invited by the chair and/or the sponsoring organisations. There will be areas of overlap between the workshops and that contact between them should be freely sought. It is understood that much work in these areas has already been carried out.

Submissions from individuals will be accepted by the organisers and forwarded to the Chair of the appropriate workshops. The aim of the workshops is to explore and review the available data and consolidate the findings. It is the workshop reports, rather than individual submissions, that will be presented at the November seminar. The following people have been invited to chair the workshops:

- Oral - Ms Glenys McDonald
- Archival - Mr Wes Olson
- Oceanographic - Dr John Bye
- Technical - Mr Jeremy Green

The seminar will be free and open to the public. Those wishing to participate will be required to submit a registration form. Places will be offered on a first come, first served basis up to the capacity of the venue. The seminar will be advertised in newspapers. It is not expected to be effected if a federal election is called.

Dr David M. Stevens Director of Naval Historical Studies

(Dr Stevens is the RAN's contact officer for the seminar. His address is, Naval Historical Directorate, CP4-1-003, Campbell, ACT 2601. Email, David.Stevens3@defence.gov.au)

"Memory of the World Register" - Mabo and Cook papers

UNESCO International Advisory Committee for the Memory of the World is recommending to the Director General of UNESCO that the Mabo papers be inscribed on the Memory of the World register.

The Mabo papers in this context comprise two related 'fonds' (to use archival jargon) namely the personal papers of Edward Koiki Mabo (MS 8822) and the Mabo Litigation Records (MS 9518) which are the papers and working files assembled for preparation of the case by barristers including Greg McIntyre and Bryan Keon-Cohen and the late Ron Castan.

Also accepted for listing is the manuscript journal kept by Captain James Cook on board *Endeavour* in 1768-1771, which is also held by the National Library. The Mabo and Cook manuscripts are the first documents from Australian collections to be listed.

Established in 1992, the register identifies materials in the collections of libraries and archives which are considered to be documents of unique and irreplaceable world significance. It includes material which is considered to have had a major influence on the history of the world; or which transcends the boundaries of national culture; reflects a period of momentous change in world affairs; is about a person who, or a place which has made a crucial contribution to major developments in world history or culture; or has outstanding cultural, social and spiritual value which transcends a national culture.

It currently lists 48 collections drawn from 26 different countries. Many of the items are very old, including from Russia, a gospel manuscript dating from 1092; from Uzbekistan the earliest extant written version of the *Koran*

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dating from 651 and from Korea, the *Buljo jikji simche yo jeol*, the world's oldest surviving book printed from moveable type in 1377. (A Gutenberg Bible, the earliest European printed book, was selected for listing by the Advisory Committee at its biennial meeting last week.) More recent collections on the Memory of the World register include Chopin and Mozart music manuscripts, papers of Hans Christian Anderson and Linnaeus, records of the French occupation of Mauritius, the surviving Warsaw Ghetto archives, the *Treaty of Waitangi* and the 1893 New Zealand women's suffrage petition.

HMAS *Sydney* - incredible claim about wreck sites sends ripples

One of the more unusual claims on the whereabouts of the wrecks of HMAS *Sydney* and HSK *Kormoran* was reported through most WA media outlets during 27-29 June.

Albury NSW men Lindsay Knight and Warren Whitaker claimed to have identified the location of *Sydney* at a depth of 4.5km 150 km SW of Geraldton. The also said *Kormoran* is 700m deep about 25km west of the Abrolhos Islands group. The men claim to have invented an aircraft born "black box" type device which can detect "resonance patterns" of all manner of items under the ocean at great depths. They say it is so sensitive it can detect bronze propellors, swords and human bones. In the past there have been claims of being able to discern the composition of metals with this mystery device so as to remotely identify national origin of a ship, and to even differentiate between species of timber and other organic materials such as ivory when they lie kilometres deep.

Similar claims about the positions of these ships appeared in an unpublished report in 1989, but in different locations. Knight said in newspaper reports that the current positions are revised and result from aerial surveys in 1998 and 2001. While the efforts of the duo were widely reported, the general reaction amongst other researchers was cool. This is partly because of the refusal to allow close scrutiny of their methodology and equipment, which to those with a technical background, appears to defy the laws of physics. There is also another view that if there is any substance eventually proven in the claims for the positions, the information may have had an official origin such as from secret US submarine charts. Associated with the claims is an attempt to persuade deep-sea explorer Robert Ballard to visit the region.

The March 2001 recovery of a bell and clamshell believed from HM Ship *Roebuck*

In brief, the sequence of events leading to the location of relics that are considered an indisputable pointer to the location of William Dampier's ship was thus:

On the morning of 15 March, 2001, the day after arrival at Ascension Island, the Museum team proceeded in the RAF fishing/diving boat *Ascension Frigate* skippered by our liaison officer Flt Lt Richard Burke RAF to the position recorded by Wm. Dampier on 24 February 1701 (Julian Calendar), while his ship was in a sinking state. Winds were offshore, seas were slight, on a low swell.

Journals and the other accounts of the loss of the ship were read to those onboard while *Ascension Frigate* was stationed as close as possible to positions given by Dampier in 1701. While there pondering the situation and with an offshore (predominantly easterly) wind, a small 'willy-willy' (circular localised wind gust) was seen on shore heralding the temporary change of wind direction that is customary around midday. This had been predicted by our guide Richard Burke, as a regular, but short-lived phenomenon. On this occasion it translated into a rare sustained sea-breeze as per the events that befell Dampier 300 years ago. With these fortuitous events the team were able to deduce with an element of surety Dampier's next course of action in the minutes that would have elapsed as he recognised the opportunity and ordered his men to the windlass and aloft. Then with time running out as the anchor was raised and the sails were unfurled and filled, there was just enough of the breeze remaining to allow him to run into 7 fathoms where the breeze then died. He then sent an anchor ashore in order to warp the ship in close where it struck in three and a half fathoms. Thus we were able to settle on the probable initial grounding site of HM Ship *Roebuck*.

In deliberations as to the next course of action at the ensuing evening team meeting, evidence gleaned at the wrecks of two other ships the VOC ship *Zuytdorp* (1712) and the French exploration Frigate *L'Uranie*(1820) was reviewed. *Zuytdorp*, a much larger vessel than *Roebuck* and one drawing c.4-5 metres, eventually came to rest in 2-3 metres of extremely rough water on the Western Australian coast. *Uranie*, a wreck that the team inspected in 3-4 metres of much less turbulent water at the Falkland Islands the previous week was also larger than *Roebuck*. These two examples indicated that Dampier's wreck most likely lay in much less than the 21 feet of water (3 and a half fathoms) described by Dampier in 1701 and the object of past sea-based searches in 1979 and 1985.

As a result Western Australian Museum search was to be focussed in the shallows inshore of that depth, close by shore and right in the breakers and, if unsuccessful it was intended to commence a series of water-driven probes, followed by magnetrometry on the beach.

The first stages of the search was a visual search conducted from land through the waves utilising a common, very simple, but quite accurate 'transit' survey method. This entailed two divers swimming out from the beach along a line marked onshore with temporary 'navigation leads' similar to those used by vessels to navigate in and out of narrow

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channels. One was to go below and search the seabed, the other to maintain station. At the completion of that line the divers were to move down to the next line 5 metres south and then swim back to the shore.

The next morning, on March 16, the team then proceeded to the head of the Clarence Bay (north) by land to commence the search. The first two sets of 'leads' were erected and two divers (Geoff Kimpton and John Lashmar) commenced work. While they were occupied in this manner the others (Les Moss, John Williams and Hugh Edwards) were engaged erecting the next pair of 'leads' for the divers to use as their navigational guide. Carmelo Amalfi Science writer for *The West Australian* was busy preparing stories for emailing back home. A search of the beach and of the rocks in the wave line was also conducted.

Again fortuitously, the beach was found to be heavily eroded and very steep just inshore of high water mark, with rocks, formerly covered with sand at the northern end completely exposed. Many heavily-concreted iron fastenings were seen amongst the rocks at the north end of the bay. Though clearly of ancient origin given their form, these were interspersed with such large quantities of modern concreted, iron and steel detritus, that it precluded any definitive conclusions being made, for the area was clearly a natural wreckage trap.

In searching along the first 8 transit lines (0-45m) in a moderate swell and smooth seas from the shore to depths offshore of around 7-8 metres deep (the practical limit of the visibility) and no more than 200 metres from the beach, Kimpton and Lashmar saw numerous concreted objects and debris, though it soon became apparent from an examination of the recently exposed beach that its entire northern end was littered above and below water with steel drums (appearing as iron hoops), jetty fittings, wreckage and rubbish.

After just under an hour of searching with Kimpton along the transit lines set on the beach, Lashmar descended and while swimming along the bottom he located a bronze bell on the 9th transit line, lying uncovered but affixed to a cleft in rocks c. 90m from shore on a rock/sand seabed c. 4m deep. Indications were that it had only recently been exposed—with a distinct line on its surface indicating the high point of the latest sand movement around it.

A short time later a heavily-concreted longboat grapnel was found concreted to a rock on an exposed rocky seabed. Then a large clam was found exposed in a cleft in the reef on the seabed. It lay in the swell in shallower water c. 100 metres south of the bell to the south and c. 8 metres from shore. The grapnel lay closer to the bell in slightly deeper water than the clam.

The location of the bell in such a diverse wreckage field was inconclusive, though it was a clear pointer to the loss of a significant early vessel in the bay.

The clamshell being recorded in position
Photograph: John Lashmar

The location of the concreted grapnel near the shore and in such a configuration as to indicate that it's rope was once tangled and that it was irretrievable when abandoned, was considered highly significant. The Captain's Log of HMS *Hastings* for 5 April 1701 reads:

> Satterday 5.. Wind and Weath[er] Do [ditto]. In y afternoon came on board seven Of y Roebuck men at 10 at night got on board y Roebuck anchor being her small bower and fourtenn fath[om] of cable In giting of which o[ur] Longboat Lost her Grapnel

The clamshell was not indigenous. It was considered to have been brought to the island by human hand, most likely from the Indo-Pacific region. When Dampier's accounts of his collecting shells while on the Australian coast

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were considered, the possibility that it was part of his collection became evident. In his account of events at Shark Bay which was published subsequent to his return to England after the loss of his ship he wrote: "The Shore was lined thick with many sorts of very strange and beautiful Shells... I brought away a great many of them; but lost all except a very few, and those not of the best." W. 87).

On balance, the bell, the clam, the grapnel, the concreted ironwork and other debris were sufficient as an assemblage to conclude that the team had possibly located the wreck-site of HM Ship *Roebuck*. The finds and these conclusions were reported that afternoon to the Administrator HH Geoffrey Fairhurst, and the video record was shown to him, to Ms Wendy Fairhurst the Museum Curator and other museum officials.

In describing the extent to which rocks were visible on the beach and underwater, we were advised that the sand movement on the beach was unprecedented in HH Fairhurst's memory. This was subsequently confirmed in discussions with Mr Jimmy Young, a St Helenan, who after 40 years in residence since 1960, is the longest-serving resident on Ascension Island. He indicated that he had never seen the beach so eroded and that at one time it was possible to walk in almost a direct line form the Turtle Farm at the south end of the beach to the area now occupied by the barbecue hut at the north end. Therefore this confirmed the understanding that the artefacts were only recently uncovered. As one possible cause of the unprecedented erosion, Mr Young advised of the removal of vast quantities of sand for construction work during the Falklands conflict, an activity which only ceased through concerns for its effect on the turtle population which regularly laid their eggs there.

Find of a lifetime - the bell wedged in between the rocks

Photograph: John Lashmar

Mr Young also dived with the 1985 RAF expedition and also those previous, including one in 1979. He indicated that they all tended to concentrate their searches in the deeper waters around the island, being prevented by the swell and their tow-search methods from venturing in too close. Later, he showed the team ceramics that have since been identified as most likely Chinese dating to the mid to late 17th Century at most. This fitted with Dampier's visit to Batavia in 1701 after he repaired his ship there following abortive attempt to examine the east coast of Australia, well over half a century before Cook.

From experience with similar situations, such as that at the remains of the *Zuytdorp* where objects such as cannons have been severely abraded, and in some cases totally destroyed by similar forces, the Administrator was advised that as the clam and bell were without a protective layer of concretion, they were in danger from both natural forces and unauthorised human interference.

Subsequently, and after due consideration of the many issues involved, including the possibility that the objects be left in situ, as Receiver of Wreck and as the representative of the British Government, Mr Fairhurst, the Administrator immediately notified the Admiralty of his decision by 'fax' and next morning requested that the Museum team remove the 'at risk' materials in association with the Ascension Island Dive Club.

In agreeing with the Administrator's assessment, and in have earlier obtained a commitment to the conservation

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of any 'at risk' objects that may require attention, it was decided to proceed and recover the materials on the following day, despite having made a prior commitment to the British Admiralty to conduct only a non-disturbance search and survey unless otherwise directed.

By the morning of 17 March, conditions had deteriorated somewhat overnight, the swell was moderate to heavy and the visibility in the northern corner of the bay was less than 2 metres. Again luck was with the team, for the bell may not have been seen had these conditions prevailed on the previous day.

With the entire museum team and the Ascension Island Dive Club in attendance, including Jimmy Young and Richard Burke, the excavation commenced. The bell, which measured 340mm wide by 300mm high was recorded with still and video cameras and it was then excavated by chipping away the stones and shell that secured it to a cleft in the rocks on the seabed. It was then placed on a sand bottom nearby and its contents were extracted, secured and recovered. These shells, stones and concretion products from the interior were retained for further study and analysis. A 'Broad Arrow' — mark of British Admiralty since the 1300s (Cuacliffe. Pers. Com. 06.01) was visible on the underside of the bell. The clam was excavated and recorded in a similar fashion.

The materials were placed in an onsite conservation facility at the island and after a suitable period of viewing for the local residents, were sent to conservator Charles Barker in *Mary Rose* Laboratories at Portsmouth where they are being further conserved in readiness for exhibition.

Representations have been made for the bell and clam at least to Australia for exhibition in all those places touched by William Dampier and in major capitals. The Museum's full report is near completion, and work is to commence shortly on our website display.

Mike "Mac" McCarthy
Dampier - de Freycinet
Project Leader
WA Maritime Museum

HMAS *Diamantina* at Risk?

HMAS *Diamantina*, the only surviving WWII River Class frigate, is the proud exhibit of the Queensland Maritime Museum, but is it at risk of rusting away? The frigate, having served in New Guinea and the Solomon islands during WWII, lies in the 120 year old not-so-dry dock on the south bank of the Brisbane River. From a casual observation, the caisson of the dry dock appeared rusted through, and has been for some time. It doesn't seem too healthy a situation.

HMAS *Diamantina*
In Lind, L. (1982) *Historic Naval Events of Australia Day-By-Day.*

Below decks, *Diamantina* provides an extensive high quality range of exhibits about life on board – and also a clutter of related, and unrelated exhibits. For example, photographs of the *Diamantina* during war service and afterwards, but also of American war ships. I also found a shield for a pre first world war Empire schoolboy rifle shooting competition, but no label to explain why it was on board.

Tied up nearby is the S.S. *Forceful*, a 288 gross ton triple expansion steam tug built by Alexander Stephen and Sons of Scotland and launched in 1925. The tug, while showing the signs of hard work over a long career that ended in 1970, continues to fascinate the enthusiasts who maintain it for sightseeing cruises down the river into Moreton Bay.

A new feature, somewhat unattractive but potentially useful, is the unfinished (in May) pedestrian bridge reaching south from Queensland University of Technology and skimming over the roof of the Museum workshops to the Southbank precinct. With a clearance of around 6 inches, the bridge would seem to severely restrict future development and detract from the visual appeal of the outdoor exhibit area.

Indoors, the display of models of the first fleet and artefacts from ships that have steamed Queensland waters is well worth the visit on its own. Even more remarkable, is that the Museum relies almost entirely on volunteers and donations. Well situated on the entertainment and tourist side of Brisbane River, the Museum is a must-see for visitors. **Peter Ridgway.**

Eds. note: According to Lind (1982) on 29 February 1980 HMAS *Diamantina* was the last WW2 warship decommissioned from the RAN. It had entered service on 27 April 1945, having been launched at Walker's Yard in Queensland a year earlier. During July 1945 it fired on Japanese positions at Sohano Island. On 13 September 1945 it was the platform for the Japanese surrender at Nauru, and similarly at Ocean Island on 1 October 1945. On 17 Aug

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2001 the federal government announced it was gifting HMAS *Brisbane* to Qld. The federal government views the ship as significant and worth of preservation as a floating exhibit, but the Qld govt wants to sink it ASP as a dive wreck.

Fremantle conference filling fast

There has been a good response from historians around the globe for our conference *Maritime History Beyond 2000: Visions of Sea and Shore* which will run at the Fremantle Maritime Museum 11-14 December 2001. Of course with the level of the Australian dollar as it is there has never been a better time for visits from overseas. It is not too late to register. Details are at www.murdoch.edu.au/mh2001 and Associate Professor Malcolm Tull at Murdoch University can be contacted at the special email address mh2001@murdoch.edu.au

Keynote speakers are the renowned Australian historian Professor Geoffrey Bolton and Dr Gelina Harlaftis from Greece. Historians from the UK, Germany, Greece, Japan, Canada, China, Denmark and Australia have signalled they will attend. Maritime transport communities in East Java - child labour in the Philippines fishing industry - the Iranaun "Vikings" of east Asia - environment and history - women in maritime communities - ship's boys in the 18th century British navy - Australian water police - shipping lanes in the Baltic - a new theory for Victoria's "Mahogany Ship" - hydrography and the Hudson's Bay Company - the impact of North Sea oil on Denmark - modern German naval policy - fishing with explosives in Sabah, and the storm over the representation of Captain Cook in the National Maritime Museum's Trade and Empire gallery are just a few of the subjects mentioned to provide a taste of what to expect. There are plenty more. Wow! This might be our best conference ever.

Gallipoli - Old soldiers never die ...

They just fade away. And so it was with 106 year old Percy Goring, who was recognised as the last British Gallipoli veteran when he passed away at a retirement village in Bunbury, Western Australia on 27 July. Mr Goring and his wife migrated to WA in 1948 and settled at Darkan, which is in the inland wheatbelt. In retirement he spent his last days on the coast at Bunbury where he was a well known figure and an "honorary Anzac" in the Returned Services League. Depending on which press report you take, he spent four or nine months alongside Australian troops on the slopes of the Turkish battlefield. Later he was in Palestine. During WW2 he was a major in the Home Guard, or "Dads' Army." The picture of Mr Goring is from a *Sunday Times* article, 29 July 2001. *The Australian* of 30 July also carried an obituary, as did *The West Australian* 3 August. Still surviving is Australia's last Gallipoli veteran, 102 year old Alec Campbell of New Town, Tasmania. Runner-up was Roy Longmore who died in Melbourne in June aged 107.

AAMH website on line

Our Secretary Nathan Richards has worked up a pretty good looking official website for the AAMH at *www.aamh.asn.au* It is a work in progress so you can expect changes as it is gradually fine tuned. Please visit it often. Good one Nathan.

Another site to visit is *www.murdoch.edu.au/mh2001* which is the information site for the AAMH sponsored conference at Fremantle in November.

Not giving a paper? Then write something for the AAMH newsletter

Not everyone feels up to preparing an academic paper for presentation at a conference, but the AAMH Newsletter provides the opportunity for every member to have something published about their area of interest in maritime history, or some observation of a local event. You do not have to be an expert writer. It is probably fair to say that every history paper that has ever been written has benefited from perusal by someone else before going into print. And so it is with the newsletter. If something is a bit rough around the edges, or there are typos, then your stalwart editor Paul will do his best to knock 'em into shape. Other than that there are no restrictions. Always remember that you do not need a university qualification to write something for the AAMH Newsletter. If you have a photo, so much the better. If you want something returned then include a stamped self-addressed envelope. Contributions and pictures can also be sent by email. (Best and quickest way now). Pictures can be received in most formats but PICT and JPEG at 75dpi are pretty useful. The email address is ***pweaver@starwon.com.au*** Snail mail address is at the end of this newsletter. If you are a bit shy of others reading your communications then material can be sent by email using the PGP (*Pretty Good Privacy*) system. Check out *http://www.pgpi.org/products/pgp/versions/freeware/* if you would like the free software for any type of computer. After installation, follow the directions to obtain my public encryption key, or email me for a copy.

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Christmas Island exhumation - at last

On August 24 a team of six ADF personnel flew to Christmas Island for an attempt to exhume and identify the remains of an unidentified sailor buried there early 1942. The expedition followed a June 2001 visit to the island by another team which believed it had located the grave in the old European cemetery. An area of about 12 meters sq. was marked for excavation. The Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government, Senator Ian Macdonald subsequently issued an exhumation order. The August team comprised Dr Denise Donlon (Squadron Leader, RAAF Reserves), an anthropologist and archaeologist from Sydney University who was a member of the previous expedition, forensic dentists Lieutenant Commander Matt Blenkin, RAN, Dr Russell Lain (Lieutenant, RAN Reserves), and forensic pathologists Dr Jo Duflou (Wing Commander, RAAF Reserves) and Dr Alan Cala (Captain, Army Reserves). Duflou and Cala are with the NSW Institute of Forensic Medicine. Lt Cdr Richard Chartier, from Navy HQ Canberra was the team leader of both expeditions. An ADF press release said accepted archaeological methods would be used in the exhumation. The team would attempt to establish the cause of death on human remains uncovered and subject them to DNA testing. A decision on later reinternment would depend on the outcome. A civilian Ted McGowan, who has believed he was related to the unknown sailor made an arrangement with a commercial TV network to fly him to Christmas Island for the exhumation. The scientific results are expected by November.

PM blames opposition for influx of middle-east asylum seekers

One might have thought that the zealousness of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and the ongoing sanctions and the war-polluted environment in despot-ruled Iraq which makes that country one of the most unhealthy to raise children would be primary reasons why people from the "middle-east" are seeking recognition from Australia as refugees.

An official transcription of a John Howard (after two terms of office) interview said on 17 August: "If the Labor Party and the Democrats had passed some legislation over the last few years to make it less encouraging and beckoning for people to come to Australia, that may have had some impact."

Italian aircraft carrier revving up

Work has started on an Italian aircraft carrier at the Fincantieri dockyard at Riva Trigoso (Genoa). Delivery is expected in 2007. It will be able to accommodate up to 1,290 people and feed them with a giant state-of-the-art pasta making machine. To be named *Andrea Doria* after one of Italy's most revered admirals (b1466-d1650), the carrier will be able to land 400 assault troops driving souped-up Fiat Bambinos. The ship will have a standard displacement of about 22,000 tonnes.

Digitisation of newsletters complete - almost

The newsletter editor needs a photocopy of issue 13 to complete the PDF digitisation of all issues of the *AAMH Quarterly Newsletter* for archival storage on CD. Can someone assist with a clear photocopy of number 13 please. Contact me by email first, just in case there are hundreds of replies. Probably wont be, because number 13 seems pretty elusive.

The *Quarterly Newsletter - The Australian Association for Maritime History* is a lively forum for news, comment and opinion on matters involving maritime history. Views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Australian Association for Maritime History. Contributions are always welcome. Sometimes editing is applied for reasons pertaining to clarity or length. The editor is **Dr. Paul R. Weaver**, 23 Waddell Road, Palmyra, Western Australia 6157. Email *pweaver@starwon.com.au* Each year the publication will go to the printers towards the end of February, May, August and mid-November. Material for inclusion should be sent direct to the editor well prior to these times.

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