Our 50th issue celebrates the Hobart Waterfront
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New Zealand Schooner Huia

MARITIME TIMES OF TASMANIA WELCOMES ORIGINAL ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION

Contributions may be historical or newsworthy and with themes reflecting the Museum’s mission to promote research into and interpretation of Tasmania’s maritime heritage. They may be short notes, or articles with text about 700–1200 words, accompanied by images if possible. Text may be edited and publication is at the discretion of the editor. Ideally contributions will be in a Word document, with embedded images and/or with separate 300dpi JPEG or TIFF files. We can accept legible handwritten articles, with loose photographs, which we will copy. Images should have a caption, be credited to the photographer or to the source, and have written permission to publish.

Please submit contributions to The Editor at the postal address above or email admin@maritimetas.org
Alternatively you can leave your contribution at the front desk of the Museum at the street address above. Please remember to include your contact details.
Deadline for the next edition is 18 May 2015.
Lately there has been much discussion about the new Brooke Street Pier. Some argue that it looks hideous while others, like its designer, agree that it reflects the old wharf sheds of the past. Much of the debate and concern of the last decade has been on the changing scene around Sullivans Cove. Some has been agreeable and acceptable; however, quite a few changes still are considered ugly and unsuitable to the cove after many years of objections. These vary from the Marine Board Building and the later addition of the IMAS structure.

When such outcries flare up I reflect on a number of aspects. There is in modern times concern about the aesthetics of our waterfront. It is, in itself, good to see community concern. However, the visitor’s view is what they see and accept, without knowledge of what the cove looked like in earlier days. Even the Marine Board is considered to be part of the vista, but you could possibly question if those funny fans on top of the building are out of place in the cove.

Past member Audrey Hudspeth, with Lindy Scripps, wrote Capital Port: A History of the Marine Board of Hobart. This standard reference book, as many of us know, portrays how Sullivans Cove changed from the time of the first settlement. This book shows plans over the years of these progressive changes. Audrey also gave a picture of life throughout the development to those of us working in the Library, and was a great source of information for visitors. Rex Cox, with many of his fascinating talks accompanied with photos and illustrations of those times, gives another picture of the cove’s history. He shows the changes of shipping from sail to power driven vessels. The evolving methods of loading and discharging of cargoes, of infrastructure, as well as the port’s changing trade, are recorded in his talks. His recent book shows the many types of ships that visited the river. Changes included the building of many piers as trade increased, and the disappearance of some, though they are remembered by a number of our members. An increase in the number of cruise ships visiting us during the summer and early autumn requires an ongoing need to improve facilities for them; and we should not forget the breath of fresh air that comes with our links with Antarctica, ashore and afloat as well as research at sea.

The cove is changing to meet the needs of today, but is sadly devoid of visiting yachts and cruise ships during much of the winter and early spring. Constitution Dock, famed for its association with the Sydney Hobart Race before the advent of the maxi yachts drew attention to the Kings Pier Marina area, looks neglected compared to Victoria Dock with its fishing boats. Ongoing plans by the Wooden Boat Guild to fill in the space in the dock on the Davey Street side are in place. Half a dozen vintage boats will complement the existing vessels which include May Queen and our Westward.

What is significant is the social change. From fulfilling an entirely commercial need, Sullivans Cove has evolved to a place where one can walk and be proud of this area of our city. The Australian Wooden Boat Festival is one of many events centred on this part of the waterfront. It is the largest wooden boat festival in the world and one we can be proud of. However nice a place is, many people will naturally want to know its history with some visual relics of the past. The Museum is also well situated for displaying both related artefacts and the history of Sullivans Cove.

In the future there will hopefully be an opportunity for us to extend this service to the public in other parts of the waterfront. We are hoping that, by the time this magazine is published, we will have a clearer understanding of when we might be able to open the Carnegie Gallery to the public. It has been a difficult time for us all, being unable to progress with forward planning for the advancement of the Museum. However we remain optimistic for the future.
from the brig

Milestones seem to come thick and fast these days — Welcome to the 50th edition of Maritime Times of Tasmania.

A newsletter containing information about the Maritime Museum and articles of interest to the Museum’s membership was suggested by member Bob Petrass soon after the Museum moved to its present home in the Carnegie Building. Maritime Times of Tasmania was preceded by a solitary edition of Nautical News, unnumbered and dated Winter 2002, but the name was changed when another publication, also with the name Nautical News, was discovered. With Bob as editor, the first edition of Maritime Times of Tasmania was dated Spring 2002, and ran to 16 pages and was not numbered; numbering commenced with the following edition, No. 2, Summer 2003.

Bob worked extremely hard on the magazine chasing down articles and pinning down advertisers, and it was thanks to his efforts that the magazine has grown over the years, both in size and circulation, with 500 copies of each edition now being distributed. As well as being valued by our members, the magazine has developed into an essential part of our communication with the wider community. Reflecting our core values and mission, the magazine is sent to other museums and heritage groups around Tasmania and on the mainland, as well as to members of local and State governments.

Looking through back copies of Maritime Times of Tasmania, it is interesting to reflect how aspects of our newsletter are familiar, but also how it has gradually changed over the years. The first edition contained a list of new members, most of whom are still members today. ‘From the Galley’ appeared from day one, but it was a little while before ‘Bob da Boozer’ put in his first appearance. We miss Bob, but no one, yet, has offered to fill his drinking shoes!

In this edition we reflect on the Museum’s physical home, the Hobart waterfront, with articles about the past: boatbuilding in Battery Point; and about the new: the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) building on Castray Esplanade. I have had many conversations at the Museum recently about changes in Sullivans Cove, and was lucky enough to be able to visit the archaeological site on Montpelier Retreat (soon to be covered by new development) where archaeologists are exploring the area around one of the oldest post-settlement sites, the Revd. Robert Knopwood’s cottage and garden. The children in the school group I was with found it deeply fascinating: the uncovered lanes and alleyways, seeing the way layers of history build up on one another, and the intriguing stories of the lives of earlier residents. Our Museum and our newsletter make important contributions to keeping those stories alive, and we continue to build the resources that today’s kids will use in the future to show the generations that follow how we lived.

So raise a glass to ‘Bob da Boozer’ for his initiative, and here's to the next 50 editions of the Maritime Times of Tasmania.
in remembrance

Ian Nicholson

Ian Nicholson passed away recently after a long illness. Ian had been a volunteer at the Maritime Museum for a number of years and will be sadly missed by all here who were fortunate to know him. He was a passionate dinghy sailor and we print below a eulogy given at Ian’s funeral by Stuart Harris, a fellow dinghy sailor and colleague at the Museum.

I first met Ian through sailing. We sailed against each other for some six years in the late 60s–early 70s in the Rainbow class. Our mothers were good friends at school together and that, as you can imagine, was a recipe for setting up a fierce rivalry in Rainbows. At the tea table after the day's race, the question always from my Mum was ‘How did you go against Ian today?’ My Mum's only concern was how I fared against Ian. I am sure Ian was similarly asked ‘How did you go against young Harris today?’

He was the owner of four Rainbows: *Pot O’ Gold*, purchased from Barry Shepherd; *Cowrie*, purchased from Jock Campbell; and *Kismet* and *Akaba* both built by himself to an extremely high standard. Ian represented Tasmania on numerous occasions and proudly wore his State blazer at a recent Rainbow reunion held at Sandy Bay Sailing Club. I am not sure how many State titles he won, but between Rainbows and Fireballs it must have been quite a few. He also held numerous Championship pennants from the Sandy Bay Sailing Club and the Derwent Sailing Squadron.

Ian won two Australian Championships: Melbourne 1969 with Andrew Jackson; and Perth 1970 with Ken Holmes (or Tim Holt). He just missed out in Adelaide in 1968 when a champion dragon helmsman, Hayden Soulsby, aged about 40, jumped back into the class just for that championship.

Ian was a most determined owner/skipper. He was a fierce rival on the water but also the fairest. Ian set a high standard to other Tasmanian team members in the way he conducted himself when representing his State. My father Bob, who was Team Manager, could always count on Ian setting the standard for the younger team members both on and off the water.

For most other Rainbow sailors, we could talk about funny or embarrassing moments. Ian was very private, and well behaved. Not that he didn't join in, it is just that he did everything properly, particularly in the way he conducted himself. After asking others who knew Ian, I found no-one could ‘lay a glove’ on him. He was usually last to the venue, last in the water, but first over the line. He was a top class helmsman who earned the respect of all who knew him.

In 1972, I left for New Guinea and Ian went into Fireballs. I saw little of Ian until four to five years ago when we worked together as volunteers at the Maritime Museum, where we renewed our friendship. Ian's illness cut short his starting interest in Radio Sailing at Risdon Brook dam. I am sure that he could have challenged the best there in a very short time if he had the opportunity.

Ian was a loyal volunteer member of the Maritime Museum. He will be sadly missed especially for the ‘Show and Tell’ sessions every second Monday with Gerald Latham and myself. He loved these sessions bringing in newspaper cuttings and the like and sharing memories of past times sailing in Rainbows and Fireballs. During his time at the Museum, he assisted with the maintenance of *May Queen* and spent many hours digitising photographs.

I, along with many others, will miss Ian. He was a great man.
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book reviews

MATTHEW FLINDERS: OPEN BOAT VOYAGES
by Russell Kenery

If you attended Russell Kenery’s lunchtime talk for the Maritime Museum in January 2015, or his talk at the Wooden Boat Festival, you’ll be familiar with the content of this booklet. He writes with a yachtsman’s understanding of small open boats, and he shares with the reader evocative details of the conditions which Matthew Flinders encountered.

Flinders’ circumnavigation of Van Diemen’s Land and ‘Terra Australis’, the discovery of Bass Strait and his detailed cartography are well-known, but little has been written about his adventures in small open boats. Four such voyages are described. The first (1795) was in an overladen Tom Thumb, a nine foot rowing boat with a spritsail. Kenery takes the reader on that voyage with Flinders, George Bass and a fourteen-year-old boy, into the ‘confused backwash of ocean swells’ when leaving the Heads of Port Jackson ‘with gunwales barely inches above the water’ and where great skill would have been needed ‘to prevent the stern ... from sliding under’. The second voyage was in the slightly larger, but again overladen, Tom Thumb II. Flinders, with the same two companions, sailed south from Sydney to Lake Illawarra on an eight-day journey during which they were caught in the strong East Australian Current, battled ‘ferocious seas below a wall of cliffs’ which prevented landing, encountered unfriendly locals, escaped and put out to sea, then were hit by a southerly buster. Despite these trials, and the lack of drinking water and the cramped conditions, they achieved what they had set out to do: to discover a large river, rumoured to be south of Botany Bay but not indicated on Captain Cook’s chart.

Two more open-boat adventures followed: a voyage of discovery around Port Phillip in a twenty-four footer (1802); and an emergency dash back to Sydney, with the ship’s captain and 12 other men in a twenty-nine foot six-oared cutter, after a shipwreck off the Queensland coast (1803). The ship’s crew included John Franklin, later governor of Tasmania. Navigating at night in the cutter meant checking the compass ‘by candlelight that more often than not blew out’ and finally a ‘dishevelled salt-caked Matthew Flinders ... skin raw from sun and wind’ arrived to seek help for 94 men left behind.

This booklet is a gem. It establishes essential facts, and presents Flinders as a talented, determined man whose extraordinary seamanship made him a master of small boats in challenging seas.

by Nicole Mays

Nicole Mays previously wrote For Many Years a Boat Builder: The Life and Life’s Work of Jacob Bayly Chandler, published in 2011. In the introduction to this second book, she quotes the late Captain Harry O’May as saying in 1957: ‘There were the Hobart yards of Samuel Gunn, Degraves, John Watson, John Ross, John McGregor, Purdon and Featherstone, John and Charlie Lucas and Percy Coverdale. It would all make interesting reading if the history of these and all the other yards could be written.’ Nicole has satisfied a large part of his wish and, in so doing, has filled an important gap in Hobart’s maritime history.

Some may wonder why the cut-off date is 1935, but that simply marks the end of the first century of shipyard activity at Battery Point. Following a section which provides the historical context, format is chronological, with sections detailing the lives and work of about 30 builders – from William Williamson establishing his yard in 1835 at the bottom of Finlay Street, near the Maritime Museum’s former home at Secheron House, to Percy Coverdale purchasing the former Lucas/Inches yard off Napoleon Street in 1918, and continuing work there well beyond the scope of this book.

I must admit to previously being rather confused about the locations of various yards on Battery Point but Nicole’s text, and a contemporary map, have charted the succession of owners very well indeed. There are also useful statistics, but for me the cream on the cake is a very comprehensive chronological listing of vessels built, from the larger steamers and sailing vessels engaged in the river and coastal trades to whaleboats, gigs, launches and even dinghies – over 700 of them altogether! One sobering thought is that many were subsequently wrecked. (I counted at least 140.)

Newspaper and other references in the book are fully listed to encourage further reading, and the MMT is amongst organisations whose assistance is acknowledged.

Both books are available at Rolph’s Nautical Gift and Book Shop at the Museum.
PERCE COVERDALE
Yachtsman and Battery Point boat builder

In People magazine, 23 December 1959, Perce at 80 was described as: ‘Tasmania’s oldest boat builder, a lean, wiry, weather beaten man forever clenching a pipe between his teeth.’ I remember Perce as a man of a very few words who in his inimical laconic style pronounced ‘most of today’s boats are built of plywood and glue and wouldn’t have passed muster in my young days.’ Despite this, I was able to keep my plywood Gwen 12 in his shed after Secheron, his last large boat, was finished and launched.

PERCE COVERDALE
Yachtsman and Battery Point boat builder
by Noel D Barrett

Percival George Coverdale was born on March 20, 1882 at Holbrook Place, Hobart, the son of Norrison John Coverdale, a clerk, and his wife Mary Elizabeth, and the eldest grandson of Dr John Coverdale MDCM of Richmond. He married Frances Minnie Rodgers on February 15, 1910 in the Anglican Church of John the Baptist. She was known as Ninie and he as Perce, Percy or Mate. Ninie died in 1959 and Perce on 30 March 1963. They had no children. Whilst known as a boat builder and yachtsman, Perce was a keen rower and competitive cyclist in his youth. Perce and his younger brother Fred, grew up in Battery Point. Both went to the state school in Macquarie Street. After leaving school, they were apprenticed to local boat builders. Perce started his apprenticeship when he was 15 at Robert Inches yard in Cromwell Street, Battery Point. He was paid five shillings a week, with annual increases of two shillings and sixpence a week, until he finished his apprenticeship. Then, according to Perce, it was ‘eight hours work, eight hours play and eight flaming bob a day’. In 1914, when Perce was 32, he took over Lucas’s yard.

In 1931, Perce built a radical yacht, based on an American R type 8 metre, and named her after his wife, Ninie. I got to know Ninie during the school holidays and weekends when my father’s yacht Kathleen (loa 32 ft) was on Coverdale’s slip for the 1957 winter. Ninie had quite a lively personality and was probably a ‘flapper’ in the 1930s. Like Perce, she contributed to the war effort during WW2. The Mercury lists many thank-you letters from Diggers who were serving overseas for the socks etc. knitted by ‘Mrs Francis Coverdale’. The Woman’s Weekly (19 January 1946) featured an article describing Ninie as aged 67, a bright, charming woman with dark hair turning a steely grey. The same article attributes Ninie’s talking Perce into naming the boat he was building Winston Churchill after her war time hero. Perce had intended to call it Southern Light. It was used during the war to maintain the Tasman Island light and others and, after the war, the couple lived aboard Winston Churchill for many years.

Vessels built or altered

Models
Perce made sailing models in much the way he made rowing skiffs. Clinker-planked with King Billy pine and held together with tiny nails and roves so small ‘they were lost in the creases of my hands’.

Fishing boats
Eveline May (1923) a new ketch to carry box timber for Mr A Sward of Simpson’s Bay. Length 44ft, beam 14ft, draft 4ft 8in, with a hardwood and Huon pine hull. The ketch was fitted with a 8hp standard engine (Mercury, 12 November 1923). The name was changed to Premier in 1938. It was in Hobart for the 2013 and 2015 Wooden Boat Festivals.

Storm Bay (1925) a 52ft fishing smack built for Mr G Bridge, was launched on 21 July and described as a ‘handsome addition to the Tasmanian fishing fleet, no expense having been spared in her construction’ (Mercury, 22 July 1925). Storm Bay returned to Hobart for the 2013 and 2015 Wooden Boat Festivals.

Olive May. Coverdale modified the stern for scallop fishing, and others he worked on were Rachael Irene, Amy Johnson, Rowena (60ft), and Volita (Norman, L. Pioneer Shipping of Tasmania, 1938).

Motor boats
Tanda (60ft) was designed by A Blore and built by P Coverdale. The boat had twin engines and was a prototype for others to be built in Hobart. The prototype returned to Sydney successfully under her own power (Mercury, 12 August 1927).

A 255 cc skiff type motorboat was built by Coverdale for the Australian Motor Yacht Club championships (Mercury, 18 March 1949).
Yachts

Derwent Class. The “D” class were sponsored by EH Webster as an affordable one design keel boat. The first boat, **Imp**, was built by P. Coverdale for Webster (**Mercury**, 8 December 1927). The second was **Gnome** for Walter Taylor and later **Pixie** for P Coole.

**Windward** – a 43ft staysail schooner for Mr. EH Webster. It was designed by Delamere of Burnham-on-Crouch (UK), planked with 1¾ inch Huon pine, painted green. It had a 10 foot beam, 6ft 2 inch draft, with 4 tons 16cwt of lead on the bottom. The schooner was launched by Mrs Coverdale on 18 December 1929. It was later changed to cutter rig and was in Hobart for the 2013 Wooden Boat Festival.

**Wanderer** – a 46ft schooner. It was moored in the Tamar after being built in the 1930s and competed in two or more Sydney to Hobart races.

**Ninie** – along the lines of an American R type 8 Metre yacht. Very different to the ‘one designers’ such as **Vanity** and **Pandora**, it was built in 1931 in nine weeks. **Ninie** made its maiden appearance at the Royal Hobart Regatta on 3 February 1931 with a radical loose footed mainsail. It was sold to the McKean brothers after **Chloe** was built in 1938. (**Sailing on**, 1980).

**Landfall** – a 44ft yawl for G.W. Rex and C. E. Davies built in 1934. **Landfall**, the 54th Sparkman and Stevens yacht, was the first built outside the USA. Perce described her stern as ‘duck-tailed’ i.e. up in the air.

**Chloe** – a ketch built in 1938. It won the 1939 Bruny Island race and was sold to WH Walton of Sydney (**Mercury**, 25 March 1939).

**Lewan** – a 30sq m yacht was built for N Campbell in 1938.

**Winston Churchill** – built in 1942, it competed in the Sydney to Hobart in 1945 and 1946. In the late 1950s, it was sold to Sir Arthur Warner and sailed by his son Graham.

**Matthew Flinders** – a large ketch built for Audie Palfreyman. It was built during the war and only completed at the end, when the last two planks were fitted, so she could not be expropriated by the Navy.

**White Cloud** – a 49ft ocean racing cutter built during WW2 for Mr Justice Hutchins and sold to AE Herbert. It took 2½ years to build, and Coverdale was assisted in the later stages by N Taylor. It was similar to the CE Philp designed **Southern Maid** and was later sold to a Sydney yachtsman (**Mercury**, 24 December 1948).

**Chloe II** – **After Winston Churchill was sold**, **Chloe** was Coverdale’s own boat. It was a clinker-planked boat, about 25ft long and painted black or dark blue.

**Yacht** – A Colin Archer style of yacht, possibly a William Atkin design, was built for John Westlau in 1954.

**Secheron** – built in 1958, this was Perce’s last big boat. I spent my school holidays and weekends helping him to fit the blue gum ribs (timbers) into the framed-up shell of **Secheron**, and to plank it in King Billy pine. He steamed the timbers in a steam box then bent each one, first the reverse bilge bend/curve from the keel then the gradual bend curve to the deck. This was done with a system of pulleys and steel straps. The hot steamed pre-bent timber was pushed up through the stringers. Perce would then climb up a ladder into the boat like a teenager and knock the timber into place. This would be followed by the next one for the other side of the boat. I also watched him cut the rebate in the transom with an adze to fit each plank of the hull. This was done standing under the transom swinging the adze over head. The planks fitted perfectly!

Many dinghies were made in King Billy and Huon pine at about £6 a foot, both before and after **Secheron** was launched. Coverdale dinghies were lighter than fibreglass ones!

The storyteller

Perce could tell good yarns. I can still picture him – sucking on an old pipe out the side of his mouth – telling how, in a fog, he dropped the anchor, went to sleep, and when he got up in the morning found he was in Constitution Dock. And coming up the river, finding a rock he had never seen before and landing on it to boil the billy, only to find it was a whale. As an apprentice, he saw a practical joke misfire. A plank over the water toilet on the slip yard was partly cut through underneath with a saw. The boss (Lucas I think) come down to use the toilet, the plank broke, and the boss ended up in the water – the wrong person! The cut was made for some one else.

When I helped Perce to build **Secheron**, the rowing dolly was heated on cold mornings with King Billy shavings and was too hot to hold. Now and again, when he was feeling well, he would clean up the timber shavings in the shed because, he said, they wouldn’t be needed to soften the fall if he dropped dead.

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**People**, 23 December 1959.
**Sailing On: A History of The Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania.** Centenary Book Committee, 1980.
The most recent expression of the development of scientific interest in the Antarctic is the University of Tasmania’s Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) building, which occupies a commanding site on Princes Wharf adjacent to the CSIRO.

Hobart’s association with Antarctica and Antarctic research goes back a long way. In the summer of 1839–40 the French naval officer, Jules Dumont d’Urville, sailed from Hobart in L’Astrolabe to explore what landmass might lie due south of Australia, naming the part of Antarctica he discovered ‘Terre Adélie’ in the name of the French Republic. In 1840–41 Erebus and Terror, under the command of James Clark Ross, headed out of Storm Bay in a search for the south magnetic pole. The pole remained undiscovered, but the ships sailed much farther south through the Ross Sea to claim ‘Victoria Land’ in the name of Queen Victoria. Carsten Borchgrevink, an Anglo-Norwegian explorer flying the British flag turned Southern Cross into the port of Hobart on his way south for final provisioning, prior to spending the winter of 1898–99 at Cape Adare in Victoria Land. Douglas Mawson’s epic expedition in SY Aurora in 1911, and Ernest Shackleton’s Endurance expedition of 1914–1917 both set out from Hobart. The relationship between the city and Antarctic activities expanded dramatically in the early 1980s when the Australian Antarctic Division relocated from Melbourne to Kingston, and since that time annual Antarctic expeditions have set out from Hobart.

Although Hobart was originally little more than a convenient southerly starting point for voyages south, today it is increasingly becoming the leading centre for Antarctic scientific research. The University of Tasmania’s earliest links with Antarctic research started in the late 1940s with the Physics Department’s studies of cosmic rays being expanded to Mawson Station, and later to Davis and Casey Stations. The University’s geologists, biologists, chemists and others started looking south for research purposes from the 1970s onwards, and now constitute a sizeable group. A clear focus on the Southern Ocean came when CSIRO’s Divisions of Fisheries and Oceanography moved from Sydney to Hobart over 30 years ago.

The most recent expression of the development of scientific interest in the Antarctic is the University’s Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) building, which occupies a commanding site on Princes Wharf adjacent to the CSIRO. Only part of IMAS is located on the wharf – aquaculture and related research is conducted in laboratories in Taroona and Launceston. The building houses joint research initiatives being pursued by CSIRO, the Australian Antarctic Division and the University through the Cooperative Research Centre for Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems, the Integrated Marine Observing System, and some smaller units.

The University’s idea to create an Institute came from a realization that more could be done to build upon the collaborative research already being conducted in Hobart, and that the path to the future lay in co-location of certain key groups. Funds to build the new building were granted by the Federal Government under the Education Infrastructure Fund, set up in the wake of the global financial crisis. The site on Princes Wharf was donated by the Tasmanian Government as an expression of its support of Hobart’s Antarctic research.

Following an open competition, the Melbourne architectural firm of John Wardle Associates was awarded the contract to design a 7100 sq m three-storey building to house a range of research groups. Their design philosophy was simple. The building had to relate strongly to the fact that Princes Wharf is part of a working port, and that wharf buildings resemble sheds. In earlier days the sheds fringing Salamanca were little more than shelters, with roofs, end gables and walls that finished well above the ground. Correspondingly the ground floor of the new building has extensive
glass on both its long sides. Of course, the new building is used for teaching, research laboratories and for offices but, as far as possible, sightlines right through the building have been preserved. The 8-metre gap between IMAS and the CSIRO building reinforces the identity of the building as a free-standing shed, as its predecessor on the site had been.

The design picks up the repetitive nature of wharf sheds. Extensive use of grey, grey-green, and green-bronze zinc panels gives the building’s sides and roof a timeless look, and more so now as they take on a mellow patina. The repetitive nature of the shed’s panels is starkly interrupted at the building’s western end overlooking the ‘Paddock’. Here the gable end of the ‘shed’ is torn out and replaced by a glass-encased projecting stairwell and glass panels from street level to the roof, inviting people to look in. A bright-red entrance ramp reflects a ship’s gangway, picking up the colour of RSV Aurora Australis that overwinters alongside the wharf. The building appears to be sitting on the wharf apron, but is actually anchored to the bedrock many metres below. It rests on its own concrete slab supported by hundreds of piles drilled down into the rock.

A particular feature of the building is that no-one ‘owns’ the north-facing glass wall, with its spectacular views out over the harbour. Long passageways run along each floor immediately inside the windows, with occasional resting places where inspiration can be sought from the views outside. It was agreed early on in the design process that the best space in the building would be used for a tea-room. You can see its open balcony on the top floor, projecting out over the ‘Paddock’. All users of the building are encouraged to use the communal tea-room rather than seek their caffeine fix elsewhere in . This is by no means to denigrate some of Hobart’s best coffee houses, but to provide an opportunity for the development of new ideas. All experienced scientists know that it is in the chance discussions over cups of coffee that puts wavering students back on track, and spawns new research insights.

All three floors have a similar structure. The north side is kept for offices and work-stations. The south side overlooking Castray Esplanade is designed for laboratories – the lack of direct sunshine on this side of the building makes temperature and humidity control easier here, and as the building contains a state-of-the-art ice laboratory temperature control is a significant challenge. The central strip running along each floor is equipped with a series of meeting rooms, where formal and informal discussions can take place. The ground floor has spaces where undergraduate students can set up their computers in between lectures and practical classes. Large voids cut through each floor direct sunlight into the centre of the building, giving the whole structure a calm and reflective atmosphere, and functioning in a similar way to the clerestory of the site’s previous building.

In the foyer stands a model of Nella Dan, a ship that served Australia’s Antarctic program so nobly from 1962 until 1987 when she fatally struck a rock in Buckles Bay, Macquarie Island. An ice drill reaches high into the building, letting visitors see how such things work, and exhibits relating to a range of marine and Antarctic research are periodically displayed in a public exhibition space. This is a wonderful building to look at and to work in. It graces the Cove floor, complementing the area’s maritime style of building and turning a disused site into a living, vibrant tribute to Hobart’s Antarctic past.
The 2015 MyState Australian Wooden Boat Festival enjoyed an exceptional run of perfect weather, which boosted visitor numbers beyond the record attendance of 200,000 people in 2013. ‘We haven't finished counting yet,’ said General Manager Paul Cullen ‘but everything is pointing towards an increase of about 10%, despite the non-appearance of James Craig and the bark Endeavour due to weather.’ These two feature ships departed laden with passengers and supplies, but almost immediately encountered heavy seas and punishing winds off the coast of New South Wales. Concerns for safety of passengers and crew and the threat of structural damage forced both vessels to turn around and retreat to Sydney. ‘I had dinner with the master, John Dikkenberg, aboard Endeavour and he described some pretty awful conditions,’ Cullen said, ‘so bad that they had to medevac one crew member off with a helicopter, which was a bit of an adventure in itself.’

With four days of perfect sunshine, temperatures climbing towards 30° C, the festival atmosphere spread across the whole of the Hobart waterfront. Festival-goers could see a stunning display of model boats, including a working model of Nelson’s Victory, exhibitions on the Tasmanian seafood industry and commercial fishing history, a Shipwright’s Village with timber delivered by a live bullock team, as well as hundreds of beautiful wooden boats afloat and ashore.

Volunteer numbers climbed to above 400 with a new initiative to get the Tasmanian Scouts involved. ‘Sometimes it seemed like every other person in Hobart was working on the festival in some connection and the pride and happiness on their faces was wonderful. Our international visitors were simply blown away with the size and spectacle of the thing,’ said Cullen.

A particular success and another new initiative was the International Wooden Boat Symposium, a series of free lectures at the UTAS Dechaineaux Theatre in Hunter Street. A three-day program opened by Her Excellency the Governor of Tasmania saw a line-up of expert speakers from overseas and interstate present on rigging, notable restorations; modern boat building techniques and materials. ‘This was a major coup,’ Cullen said. ‘The theatre had standing room only for several sessions, with famous names in the industry like Meade Gougeon, Brion Toss and Taylor Allen on the program. It is something we’ll definitely be looking to expand in the future.’

Challenges ahead? ‘We struggle with the number of available floating berths on the waterfront, which has actually decreased since the event started 21 years ago. This makes it very difficult to accommodate every boat owner who wants to come, and disappointments are inevitable. The event grows more costly to produce with every cycle and we battle to keep up with it on a fixed funding level. We’re not sitting on our hands, but it is tough to find the funds that keep the festival free and open to the public - something we are determined to do.’

Now without question the largest wooden boat festival in the Southern Hemisphere, the MyState Australian Wooden Boat Festival is attracting more international attention every week. It is one more unique feature that puts the Hobart waterfront and Tasmania as a whole on the world stage.
Rowing in Constitution Dock. Photo: John Wadsley

SY Preana, a restored century-old steam yacht. www.preana.org Photo: John Wadsley

Ferry models on display at Elizabeth Street Pier. Photo: John Wadsley

Shipwright’s Village, Hunter Street. Photo: John Wadsley

Maritime activity ashore! Photo: John Wadsley
RSV AURORA AUSTRALIS

by Anna Lucas

RSV Aurora Australis berthed at Hobart

Photo: A. Lucas

It's a highly recognizable feature of the Hobart docks with its bright orange-red paintwork – a ship sometimes dwarfed by the huge cruise liners. We see the little ship come into port and we see it sail down the Derwent towards the open sea. We know it goes south, taking Australian Antarctic Division personnel, scientists, medical staff, tradesmen, journalists, photographers and others. We can take a virtual tour at http://www.antarctica.gov.au/about-antarctica/antarctic-images/antarctic-quicktime-vrs/aurora-australis or view it when Open Days are scheduled. Such a glimpse is very interesting, but visitors are necessarily restricted, and the buzz of activity is not there. Personnel have disembarked, equipment has gone for servicing, and laboratories have been cleared. The ship is being prepared for the next trip. What is its brief? Where does it go? What happens onboard? What equipment does it carry? What supplies are transported to Antarctica and what comes back? How are scientific samples, especially ice cores, handled? There were lots of questions to ask, and Captain Murray Doyle, master of the research supply vessel RSV Aurora Australis, supplied answers.

Physical specifications and features

Aurora Australis, which sails under the P&O flag, was named after the atmospheric light displays in southern skies. It was built in Newcastle, NSW, and launched in 1989. Its length is 94.9 metres, its beam 20.3 metres, and its gross tonnage 6574. It regularly copes with the wind and waves of the Southern Ocean, where wind can reach 150 km/hour and waves can be 10 metres high. Its cruising speed is 13 knots with a maximum of 16. It can break through ice up to 1.23 metres thick. To force a passage, the ship's ice-strengthened rounded hull can mount the sea ice, its weight, especially when fully-loaded, can crush and crack that ice, the knife edge of the hull can cut through ice slabs, then the broken ice is dispersed; but it has on occasion met its match and has been icebound for several days before making its way clear.

The ship has a heliport and hangar space for up to four helicopters (AS350 B3 Squirrels); it carries a jet barge to transport 20 foot containers from ship to shore, and all-terrain vessels, LARCs. Holds have a capacity greater than 3800 cubic metres; the deck provides additional container space with cranes. Sonar equipment, echo sounders, etc. determine depth, assess the ocean's floor, log other bathymetric data, and detect the presence of marine animals. Trawl nets with winches facilitate biological sampling for marine studies, and onboard laboratories are available for scientific work.

One of the many interesting scientific projects for which Aurora Australis provides specialised support is the extraction and relocation of ice cores from Antarctica to the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) on the Hobart waterfront. A refrigerated container carried two tonnes of ice core sections, which had been drilled 500 km inland from Casey station. These sections will be analysed for particles, atmospheric gases and chemicals trapped in snow and compacted in the ice, providing information about the climate over the past 2000 years (Australian Antarctic Magazine 2014. No 26, pp 2–3).

Satellite communications ensure that personnel are in touch with home base or with global contacts. Accommodation is provided for 24 crew and 116 passengers. Web cams share the ship's location with the world.
Ship's Operations

Antarctic conditions allow only a short window of access to its shoreline during the southern summer. At other times, the sea ice freezes significantly extending its range and consequently increasing the overall distance from open water to the bases. As a supply vessel, *Aurora Australis* calls at the Australian Antarctic bases of Mawson, Casey and Davis, as well as Macquarie Island. As a research vessel, purpose-built for oceanographic work, marine science and meteorological observations, it engages in these operations while at sea.

It has detoured to go to the rescue of icebound ships, notably in December 2013, when in a joint operation with the Chinese research vessel *Xuě Lóng* and the French icebreaker *L’Astrolabe*, passengers from the trapped *Akademik Shokalskiy* were transferred to *Aurora Australis* and brought to Hobart, after completion of essential supply operations at Casey station.

When not supplying Antarctic bases, *Aurora Australis* has been chartered for other work.

In 2001, the vessel spent the off season in the Philippines as an accommodation vessel for the Malampaya Gas Platform Project.

In 2002, it provided support for divers clearing a blockage in the Tasmanian Gas Pipeline in Bass Strait.

In 2003 and 2004, under charter to Australian Customs, it engaged in fishery patrols to protect fishers around Heard Island and in the Southern Ocean. In 2004, under charter to engineering firm Clough, it provided support for the Yolla Gas Field project in Bass Strait.

In 2006, the vessel was chartered to Coogee Resources as accommodation support for the shutdown and refurbishment of the Floating Production Platform *Challis Venture*. The vessel sailed to Darwin to load materials and personnel to take to *Challis Venture* positioned in the Timor Sea. After transferring the materials by crane, *Aurora Australis* stood by as accommodation support for the workforce.

Life on board

There's a cafeteria restaurant, a gym and sauna, recreation space, library, music and video theatre, lecture theatre and conference rooms. There's also a two-bed hospital and an operating theatre.

Passengers who travelled south on the ship recalled the excitement of disembarking in Antarctica. They had to jump from a ladder hanging over the side of the ship into a zodiac, which was moving up and down with the swell. They had to jump backwards and trust others to tell them when the timing was right. They also remembered fabulous food and an abundance of it, including a bottomless cookie jar. Yes, the ship rolled around, people were seasick and everything that was not secured moved around alarmingly, but they mostly remembered the friendliness, and the team spirit. There were lectures to attend, and chores to be done, like helping in the galley peeling potatoes.

Retirement

The robust little red ship has made many trips to Antarctica since 1989, but after more than 25 years of hard work, *Aurora Australis* is facing retirement. Tenders for the building and supply of a replacement vessel were opened recently, but one of the two short-listed bidders, P&O Maritime, has withdrawn from the process, leaving DMS Maritime as the possible supplier. A decision will be made by the Federal Government later in 2015. It is proposed that the new ship will have about 30% increased cargo capacity, and greater icebreaking capability – about 1.65m thickness compared to 1.23m. It will be based in Hobart, ready for operation in 2019.

More information about *Aurora Australis* is at the Australian Antarctic Division's website http://www.antarctica.gov.au/living-and-working/travel-and-logistics/ships/aurora-australis and a fascinating four-minute video of the aurora australis lights, taken from RSV *Aurora Australis*, is at https://vimeo.com/112980222 (It's compelling viewing, even with the soundtrack muted.)

As this edition goes to press, there is news of *Aurora Australis* returning to Davis station for a medical emergency. An expeditioner was successfully transferred to the ship by helicopter and will return to Hobart.
This sailing dinghy was built in 1939 by WP Skipper Batt for his daughter Ray, who sailed it until 2007, the year she turned 90. For nearly 40 years the 3.3m dinghy was used for fishing and sailing, and as a yacht tender.
POLAR PATHWAYS – Hobart waterfront and beyond

What’s the story behind those bronze statues of seals, penguins, husky dogs and Bernacchi the Antarctic explorer on the Hobart waterfront?

Walking tours around Sullivans Cove, Salamanca, and the CBD will provide answers to lots of questions about our city’s long association with Antarctic exploration. Learn more about Roald Amundsen, Douglas Mawson, Louis Bernacchi, Ernest Shackleton’s Ross Sea Party, and other explorers who had connections with Hobart. Most tours range from an hour to a half day, with longer driving tours to Bruny Island and other Antarctic-related destinations. Guided tours are available for larger groups and an informative one-hour slide-show presentation can be arranged, but self-guided tours are also well-informed with the Polar Pathways booklet, available from bookshops and information centres throughout Hobart. The 60-page booklet is packed with information, full-colour maps, and photographs.

A proposed fun alternative to Polar Pathways walking tours will be the use of electric bikes from Hunter Street to get to points of interest.

For tour bookings contact Antarctic scientist, Dr Lorne Kriwoken, at L.K.Kriwoken@utas.edu.au or phone 0407 829 804.

new members

We welcome new members:

JOHN BRODRIBB  BARRY CHAMPION  JOHN PATTERSON  TIM KINGSTON
NOEL BRODRIBB  STEWART EDWARDS  JEANNIE WHITE

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Also catering for the quick quality business lunch and corporate presentations in our own private room.

The “House of Anvers” is a real chocolate taste sensation. It is located on the Bass Highway between Devonport and Latrobe and is open 7am - 7pm, 7 days a week. Phone: (03) 6426 2958 for bookings
There's a seaplane moored at Kings Pier on the Hobart waterfront. Maybe you've seen it taxiing down the River Derwent before take-off. In fact there are two DeHavilland DHC-2 Beavers, six-seater Canadian-built aircraft. Scenic flights around Hobart and longer flights to locations around Tasmania are offered. One is an amphibious craft and, being able to operate on land and water, offers transfers to Hobart airport. The operator is award-winning Tasmanian Air Adventures, a member of the Tourism Industry of Tasmania, and supporter of the Save the Devil campaign. They are licensed to operate within the National Parks and Wilderness Heritage Area of Tasmania and are keenly aware of environmental issues. Highly qualified and experienced pilots present a commentary, via a noise-cancelling communications system with individual head-sets, pointing out places of interest for passengers.

Hobart's seaplane history dates to the 1920s and Tasmanian Air Adventures has been a part of that history since 2011 You can see the city from an aerial perspective or visit remote locations within the state. The seaplanes have comfortable seats and are heated, and there's easy access at Kings Pier.

Their website gives more details. tasmanianairadventures.com.au

There's an office in Hunter Street. Phone 1300 359 822

Visitors have discovered the seaplanes. Locals too can take the opportunities that the seaplanes offer. They are a wonderful feature of our waterfront.
A Waterfront Business

Some time ago the Museum was given a ledger book from the Robertson family. Since then museum volunteer, Shirley King, has done some great work researching the book, the Robertson family and the Albion Foundry. The story that unfolds gives us an insight into port activities in the 1850s – a period when Hobart was a major centre for southern ocean whaling, had a thriving boat building industry, received its last convict ship and lost many men to the Gold Rush.

The book records the sale of a wide variety of ironmongery as well as repairs, much of it relating to ships and maritime services. The accounts, mostly made out to ships or individual names, include many well-known vessels and settlers such as Flying Childers, Aladdin, Free Trader, Nautilus, Dr Crowther, Captain Chamberlain, and also Easby and Robertson. The entries cover the period 1850 to 1856, followed by two years of farm accounts for the property, Jerusalem Park, at Colebrook. The dates, the farm accounts, and the customer account for Easby and Robertson suggest they belonged to James Robertson (1815 – 1897).

James was the youngest son of James Robertson (1777-1864) who with James Easby, established the Albion Foundry in Market Place (near the current City Hall). The younger James was an engineer and ship smith by trade who, with his brother William, had premises on the New Wharf (in front of Salamanca Place). He retired from active work as a blacksmith and engineer in 1856 to become a gentleman farmer at Jerusalem Park, a property which had belonged to his in-laws.

James Robertson (senior) was a blacksmith who migrated from Leith in 1832 with his extended family. They arrived on Minerva which brought ‘many useful mechanics & families’ to the young colony. (Nicholson, Shipping Arrivals and Departures, Tasmania 1803-1833). The family may have had shipping connections since the captain of Minerva was also a James Robertson of Leith.

Robertson (senior) soon established a blacksmith business in Wapping, near Old Wharf which was then the industrial hub of Hobart. By 1837 he was in partnership with James Easby, a millwright and, in 1838, they had removed to new premises in Old Market Place. This became known as the Albion Foundry.

Easby and Robertson may have taken over a foundry established about 1834 by Captain William Wilson. A newspaper reported that Captain Wilson’s new foundry at the back of Campbell Street was used to construct a more powerful engine for the paddle steamer, Governor Arthur. Wilson owned this vessel and the new engine, built between 1834 and 1835, was the first to be built in Tasmania. Both James Robertson (junior) and his older brother William claimed to have been involved in its construction. The families were also connected when Captain Wilson’s younger brother arrived in Hobart and joined the firm of Easby & Robertson to learn practical engineering.
Much of Easby & Robertson’s early business involved setting up steam mills around Tasmania, but they also built a screw propeller passage boat in 1846 to ply between the Old Wharf and Kangaroo Point and built a massive boiler for Mr Clebourne’s soap factory on Old Wharf. At the official launch ‘as many as 56 gentlemen’ stood on a platform in the pot – ‘including some of the oldest colonists and leading men’ (*Cornwall Chronicle*, 8 December 1849).

James Robertson (junior) was 17 when he arrived in Hobart and presumably learnt his trade from his father. He was described later as a blacksmith, engineer and ship smith who for many years had premises at New Wharf with his brother William. William (1807-1873) worked for the Royal Engineers for 20 years before leaving to go into his own business in about 1853. James was definitely at New Wharf in 1854 when he signed a petition using this address. So it seems likely the business recorded in the account book was located at New Wharf. (William Robertson was also a licensed victualler, ran a pub and along with other members of the family owned many rental properties, particularly in Wapping)

By 1850 the New Wharf had replaced the Old Wharf as the centre of Hobart’s maritime affairs. If James and William Robertson did indeed carry out retail and repair work from here they would have been ideally located to serve the ships, chandlers, rope and sail makers, boat builders and cooper who were among their clients. The lists of customers, products and repairs reflect some major historical themes of the period. The company served whaling vessels and sold harpoons to ships involved in Hobart’s major export industry. They lengthened the funnel on the steamer *Cheshire Witch* and sold ‘dog and bitch thimbles’ for sails at a time when steam was replacing sail. They supplied hardware to *Duchess of Northumberland*, one of the last convict ships to arrive in Hobart. And they sold bundles of picks and repaired and supplied ironmongery for the vessel *Goldseeker* during the mass exodus of Tasmanians to the Victorian goldfields.

One customer of particular interest to the Maritime Museum is *Petrel*, which was supplied with numerous items between 1850 and January 1853 when Hobart was its base. It seems very likely that this was the same vessel that sank at Hope Beach in May 1853 and was the source of the large sternpost now on display at the Maritime Museum.

Many other interesting snippets and links to our maritime history can be found in this simple account book which will be a wonderful resource for future researchers.

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**Membership Fees**

Categories of membership and annual fees effective each year 1 July to 30 June (including GST)

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Once only, or 4 years Quarterdeck membership.
Greetings again. Since the last edition, we have had all the fun of the Wooden Boat Festival. And what a spectacular event it was, helped by some magnificent weather.

*May Queen* and *Westward* were looking resplendent and on their best behaviour in Constitution Dock. Many visitors took up the offer of tours of the *May Queen*, watching Frank Brown’s rope making machine, and the book shop on board did quite well. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped prepare and man these vessels.

The Museum had five dinghies on display in PW1: the *Egeria* tender (built by Reg Fazackerley); the *Derwent Hunter* tender (possibly built by Percy Coverdale); *Toute Suite* (built by William Batt); *Periwinkle* (unknown builder); plus *Rhythm*, a Rainbow Class sailing dinghy. It was rather a military exercise to transport all these boats from the Cambridge facility and back again to fit in with the Festival’s tight schedule. Many thanks to those volunteers and staff who helped with the loading and unloading and assisting me to navigate in the TMAG truck (without incident by the way!!!). I am now considering a new career on the road with my trusty CB radio looking for a convoy.

The Museum also displayed the Old Hobart Waterfront exhibition in the front foyer to PW1, and thanks to Rona Hollingsworth for setting this up and to the many volunteers who manned the display over the four days of the Festival. It was certainly a high profile location and the Museum has already booked this spot for the next Festival in 2017! Visitation to the Museum over the four days of the Festival was outstanding with approximately 700 people coming through the doors.

There certainly is a lot of activity going on in the world of maritime heritage boats and wooden boatbuilding in Tasmania. It was great to see so many people from interstate and overseas completely enthralled by what Tasmania has to offer.

---

**No. 34 Poacher’s Noose**

This noose, also known as a Double Overhand Noose, can slide freely and be made to hold firm. It can be used to hold a thimble temporarily in a hard eye or can act as a clamp when gluing articles together.

1. Take the Working End around behind the Standing Part and then up.
2. Pass the Working End under the created loop and then under its own part.
3. Carry the Working End through the turn.
4. Work the knot down snug.
SALT AND PEPPER SQUID

The variety of cooked food available around Sullivans Cove today is exhaustive, if not exhausting.

Two recently opened restaurants offer Japanese food served by conveyor belt (a sushi train—and not the first Japanese restaurant in Sullivans Cove) and food inspired by South America. To these can be added a plethora of other eateries offering anything and everything the gourmand could desire, in addition to the ‘traditional’ Fish and Chips, which can be eaten in the plush surroundings of a first floor restaurant, with an elegant choice of wines, or straight from a bag, standing on the wharf with a bottle of beer and a crowd of anxious seagulls for company.

The availability of a variety of food stalls has become an integral part of the Wooden Boat Festival. Of course, to many visitors, the waterfront is no more than the home of the Taste of Tasmania festival. It’s hard today to imagine Sullivans Cove without food. Yet volunteers who grew up here tell me that in their childhood cooked food was practically unobtainable on the waterfront. One volunteer has a vague memory of cooked fish being offered from one of the fish punts, but it seems that the nearest fish and chips were in town on Elizabeth Street or Liverpool Street well away from the waterfront, while the choice of hot food was basic (rabbit and muttonbird from a rotisserie at Coles were mentioned) unless you could afford dinner at a hotel.

Fishing from the wharves was common, as proved by images in our collection, and one volunteer tells of swimming, as a boy, beneath the wharves and tugging on the lines in the water to fool the fishermen above that they had a catch!

This edition’s recipe comes from volunteer Mike Scott who tells me that he fished for squid in Sullivans Cove as a boy, but that they never ate their catch. Mike only developed a taste for calamari later in life. I’ve used this recipe a number of times, with squid Mike has brought me from White Beach. I’m not sure I’d eat squid fished from Sullivans Cove today, but this recipe has proved very popular served with home-cooked thick cut chips and green salad.

And your choice of wine, beer or both.

**INGREDIENTS:**

1 tablespoon Szechuan peppercorns
1 teaspoon chilli flakes
1 tablespoon sea salt flakes
4 tablespoon plain flour
4 tablespoon cornflour
400g squid, cleaned (see Very Important Note below).

**METHOD:**

Very Important Note: First cut squid into bite sized pieces (you don’t need to score it), and soak squid for two to three hours in a mixture of one peeled, mashed-up kiwi fruit and a similar volume of milk. (You may need to experiment here; if you soak it too long the squid will go mushy). Rinse before cooking.

Crush together the peppercorns, chilli flakes and sea salt with a pestle and mortar then mix with the flours. You can vary the amount of seasoning to taste.

Fill a large pan or wok 1/3 full with oil. Get smoking hot. Coat the squid pieces in the flour, shaking off the excess, and fry for 1-2 minutes or until golden. Garnish with the spring onion and red chilli.
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SHIPS OF HOBART HARBOUR
by Rex Cox and GW Cox

SPIRITED, SKILLED & DETERMINED.
The Boat and Ship Builders of Battery Point
by Nicole May
see Review on page 7

CAPITAL PORT:
A History of the Marine Board of Hobart
1858–1997
by Audrey Hudspeth & Lindy Scripps

A selection of the gifts and books available in Rolph’s Nautical Gift & Book Shop at the Maritime Museum. Call in and see the full range of clocks, barometers, mugs, globes, teatowels, ship’s models, etc.

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