

# MARITIME TIMES

## TASMANIA

No 80 – Spring 2022

\$3.50

### MAIDEN VOYAGES

Tasmanian vessels

Harriet McGregor

Santa Monica I

Frederick

Nautilus

Harpley

Lourah

### MUSEUM NEWS

President's message

New Exhibition

+ our regular features

and TasPorts' news





### Maritime Museum Tasmania

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### Acknowledgements

#### Acknowledgement of Country

The Maritime Museum Tasmania acknowledges the Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples as the traditional owners and custodians of the waters and islands of Tasmania that inform our work. We acknowledge and pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and those emerging.

#### Our Patron

The Maritime Museum Tasmania is pleased to acknowledge the support of its Patron: The Governor of Tasmania, Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC.

#### Our Supporters

The Maritime Museum Tasmania gratefully acknowledges the support of the City of Hobart, Murdoch Clarke lawyers, TasPorts, Arts Tasmania and Nanni Diesel Australia.

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The Committee also includes Alderman Jeff Briscoe representing Hobart City Council.

### Maritime Times Tasmania

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Front Cover: Model of *Harriet McGregor* by Michael Stoddart. Photo Michael Stoddart. Story pp. 10–13

'Between the wars, British naval architect Harold Underhill took an interest in *Harriet McGregor* and collected as much data as he could about the dimensions and sail plan from Lloyds. He took its lines from a half-hull model in Hobart, and completed a modellers' plan just as the London blitz started. By good fortune *Harriet's* plans survived, though a great deal of his other work was lost. My model is built from Underhill's plan.' (['The art of making model ships', Maritime Times Tasmania MTT 59 Winter 2017](#) pp. 18–19.)



### Maritime Times Tasmania welcomes original historical or newsworthy articles for publication

Contributions, reflecting the Museum's mission to promote research into and the interpretation of, Tasmania's maritime heritage, can be short notes, or articles with text about 700–1200 words, accompanied by images if possible. Text will be edited to comply with the magazine's style and publication is at the discretion of the editor.

Ideally, your contributions will be in a Word document, with embedded images or, preferably, with separate 300 dpi JPEG or TIFF files. We can accept legible handwritten articles, with loose photographs, which we will copy.

Images must have a caption, be credited to the photographer or to the source, and have written permission to publish.

Please email your contributions, with attachments, to [admin@maritimetas.org](mailto:admin@maritimetas.org) or post to The Editor, 'Maritime Times Tasmania', Maritime Museum, GPO Box 1118, Hobart, TAS 7001. Alternatively, you can leave your contribution, with contact details, at the front desk of the Museum at the street address above. Please add to your calendar:

DEADLINE for the Summer (Dec. 2022) issue is **Wednesday 16 Nov.**



## from the president's log

by Chris Tassell

THE MUSEUM'S NEW EXHIBITION 'Ice in the Rigging' opened in late August as part of this year's Australian Antarctic Festival. Developed by the Museum the exhibition focuses on those ships which sailed south to search for and explore the Antarctic continent over the past two centuries. It draws upon the Museum's rich collections and includes significant historical material, ships models, photographs and artworks. Included in the exhibition are a number of important new acquisitions including the Herbert Ponting photograph of 'Terra Nova in Ice in 1910' purchased this year with funds provided from the Museum's annual appeal.

This exhibition underscores Hobart's long history as Australia's principal Antarctic port from the early explorers such as Dumont d'Urville (1839) and James Clark Ross (1840), through Amundsen's announcement to the world of his success in reaching the South Pole in 1912 to the work of the Australian Antarctic Division today. Hobart's continued place as Australia's Antarctic port is not one that can be taken for granted. The Maritime Museum strongly encourages all levels of governments to further increase their support for TasPorts and its plan to improve Hobart's port facilities to support future Antarctic programs.

While the 'Ice in the Rigging' exhibition includes some of the recent donations there have been many more. For this reason, a recent acquisitions display has been revived in the Museum. It is intended that a range of recent donations will be presented simply and frequently. In addition to the recent donations, the Museum has also been supported through a number of grant initiatives. These include the Federal Government's Chart Program which has funded the purchase of new security equipment and the Hobart City Council's Local Business for a Better Community grant program which has allowed the purchase of a new set of standard gallery frames. These frames will enable an accelerated program

of small, changing exhibitions to be presented in the main Museum stairwell. Beginning early next year with an exhibition focused on regattas, the program will draw upon the Museum's remarkable photographic collection.

Through the support of Nanni Diesel Australia and the Australian National Maritime Museum's Maritime Museums of Australia Project Support Scheme the Museum has been able to replace *Westward's* recently failed engine and gear box. In recent times this engine and gear box, itself a replacement installed in the 1970s, had become increasingly unreliable so limiting the use of *Westward*, Tasmania's only two-time Sydney–Hobart winner. Installation of the new engine has also enabled a number of other major maintenance tasks to be undertaken by The Westward Project Team which will enable *Westward* to lead an active life once again. The generous support of both Nanni Diesel Australia and the Australian National Maritime Museum for enabling this major project is deeply appreciated by the Museum. (Story p. 9)

The legislative environment in which the Museum operates continues to change and become more demanding even for community-based volunteer organisations such as the Maritime Museum. As a consequence of these demands and changes in our core administrative volunteers, the Museum has had to consider how to use our limited staffing resources most effectively. Earlier this year the decision was made to appoint a Finance Officer and I would like to welcome Sally Dexter to this position.

It is clear that, despite COVID, interstate travel has now resumed to a level certainly matching that of pre-COVID times. To meet the demands of the increasing number of visitors to the Museum as well as an active and expanding project program the Museum continues to welcome new members and volunteers. If you think you can help do not hesitate to contact the Museum; we look forward to hearing from you. □



May Queen and Westward (right) in Constitution Dock  
Photo: Barry Champion, 2022

Welcome to *Maritime Times* issue 80!

The Maritime Museum has experienced record visitor numbers since reopening and we are looking forward to this trend continuing through the coming summer season with lots of activity at the Museum.

The 'Ice in the Rigging' exhibition's theme continues with a small display on Antarctic dinosaurs installed on the top landing. This space also displays 'recent acquisitions' including artwork and a collection of significant first editions donated by Bob Warneke, which span the era from the first settlement voyage to NSW through to Shackleton's Antarctic expeditions.

Ted Mitchener's book *Ice in the Rigging* is an impressive record of Antarctic ships. Copies are now being sold at the Maritime Museum for less than half price—a great bargain.

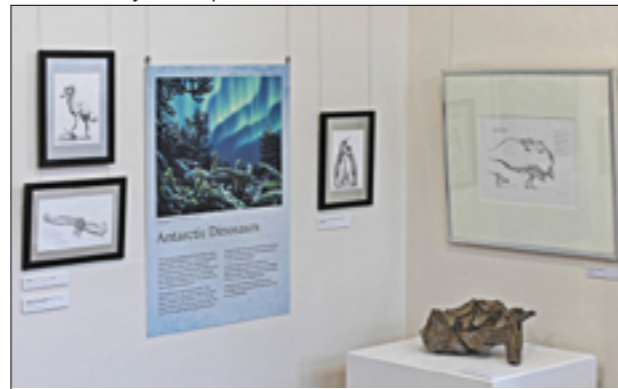
Elsewhere in this issue we report the exciting news of *Westward's* re-engining as well as stories of the maiden voyages of 19th C. ships including *Harriet McGregor*, coastal trader *Lourah*, the barque *Nautilus*, the pirated ship *Frederick*, Tamar-built *Harpley*, and the 2022 Incat Catamaran *Santa Monica I*. These, plus our regular columns and a smattering of other stories, should get you in the mood for the Australian Wooden Boat Festival in February 2023. Thank you to all our contributors who provide the content that makes our magazine so well received and a publication of which we can all be proud.

Included with this issue are the notice of the Museum's forthcoming Annual General Meeting and the Nomination papers. Being part of the Maritime Museum Tasmania is probably the most fun a maritime enthusiast can have without getting wet feet, so encourage friends, relatives, strangers to join and perhaps even volunteer.



Norwegian whale catcher *Globe VIII* was one of the Antarctic fleet in the 1940s

below: Part of the Antarctic dinosaur display  
Photos: Barry Champion



## in our shop

**ICE IN THE RIGGING**  
Ships of the Antarctic  
1699–1937  
by EA (Ted) Mitchener

A comprehensive illustrated record of Antarctic ships, several of which are featured in the Museum's exhibition. xxii; 354 pages  
Hardcover with dust jacket.



**\$35**

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Individual	\$35	Family \$45
Concessions / Interstate / Overseas	\$25	
Perennial	\$1000	(once only)



Diorama of Mawson Base in Antarctica with a model of supply ship RSV *Aurora Australis*

AUSTRALIAN MARINERS have pushed south in search of seals and whales from the early days of European settlement.

—Captain Hassleborough from Sydney discovered Macquarie Island in 1810 when prospecting for seal hunting sites.

—Captain Furneaux in *Adventure* was the first mariner to use Tasmania when forced to rest in the Bruny Island bay that now bears his ship's name after he became separated from Captain Cook's *Resolution* on their journey to circumnavigate Antarctica.

Over the following decades an increasing number of ships put into Hobart on Antarctic voyages.

—French explorer Dumont d'Urville's ships *Zélée* and *L'Astrolabe* arrived in 1839.

—British ships *Erebus* and *Terror* captained by Sir James Clark Ross, put into Hobart to establish a magnetic observatory on the banks of the Derwent where Government House now stands. Ross presented his friend Sir John Franklin, Lt Governor of Van Diemen's Land, with a pair of beautiful ceremonial pistols, on display in this exhibition. *Erebus* and *Terror* sailed further south than any ships before them, discovering the active Antarctic volcano they named Mt Erebus.

Hobart played its part in the race to the South Pole. —*Morning* and *Terra Nova*, support ships for Captain Robert Falcon Scott's ill-fated expedition, set out from Hobart.

—Captain Roald Amundsen returned to Hobart in 1912 after winning the race, to send news of his success to the Norwegian King from Hobart's GPO. Residents of Taroona were reportedly kept awake at night by the barking of Amundsen's dogs aboard *Fram*, anchored at a sufficient distance from shore to deter his crew from getting to land and spilling the beans on the expedition's success before he had informed his King. The dogs were later left ashore in Hobart, to be taken south aboard SY *Aurora* and used by Douglas Mawson in his famous 1911-1913 expedition to Commonwealth Bay.

The decade 1920-1930 saw Hobart host annual Norwegian whaling expeditions to the Ross Sea in pursuit of blue whales. —*Sir James Clark Ross* and later *NT Nielsen-Alonso*, huge factory ships with their fleets of whale catchers in tow, appeared in Hobart in November each year to make their final preparations before heading south. Crowds of Hobart's citizens lined Queen's Wharf to see them off, and welcomed them back again the following March. On display is a model of a whale catcher from the era, which nicely displays the ghastly harpoon gun on the bow, loaded with a time-delay grenade at its tip. The era of industrialised whaling saw the decline in numbers of blue whales to near extinction, from which they might just now—a century later—be starting to recover.

Ice in the Rigging  
Antarctic Exhibition

August to end of Nov 2022

Since 1949, and the creation of the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition (ANARE), Hobart's role as a gateway city to Antarctica has developed.

—*Wyatt Earp*, *Nella Dan* and other ships prior to 1989, operated out of Melbourne, but with the acquisition of the 'Orange Roughy', *Aurora Australis*, Hobart became the home port for Australia's Antarctic operations. Models of these ships, and some fine paintings of them, are displayed in the exhibition.

ON DISPLAY FOR THE FIRST TIME is a rare photograph of *Terra Nova* by Herbert Ponting, the photographer on Scott's expedition to the South Pole. It was acquired with funds from our appeal to MMT members. Support for the exhibition came from the Offshore and Specialist Ships Association, the Australian Antarctic Division and others. A beautiful model of Australia's newest Antarctic research vessel, RSV *Nuyina*, accompanied by an incredible video record of its first season in service, rounds off our 'Ice in the Rigging' exhibition.

There's also a support exhibition with details of Antarctic dinosaurs. Come and enjoy these informative displays at the Maritime Museum.

— *Michael Stoddart*

## recent acquisitions

MANY OF THE ARTEFACTS in the Maritime Museum's collection come from benefactors keen to help preserve our maritime history. At times we are surprised by donors offering unforeseen objects that reveal stories of long-ago maritime episodes linked to Tasmania.

One such surprise came when retired Englishman, Frederick Fisher, called the Museum from Shanklin on the Isle of Wight offering to donate a letter and photographs relating to the 686-ton barque *Corinth* that sailed from Launceston for London in February 1893 with three passengers and a cargo of wool, sheepskins, livestock, and other Tasmanian products.



from the top: second page of the letter written by First Mate Collins

Mrs Collins and children

First Mate Collins

The barque *Corinth*

## PHOTOS and LETTER FROM THE BARQUE CORINTH

The barque cleared Tamar Heads on 11 February and rounded New Zealand six days later. On 19 February, when about 300 miles south-east of Bluff, the cargo spontaneously combusted, setting fire to *Corinth*. The crew and passengers took to the lifeboats and watched as the barque burnt. The letter written in April 1893 by First Mate Collins describes the situation he found himself in:

'I had the small boat with 8 hands, the Captain had the lifeboat and 10 hands, we hung on to the "Corinth" all night, till 3 AM when the fire came right to the stern of the ship and burnt the rope I had made fast to the vessel in one hour from that time we left her, the masts were burned down, as we watched her burning we could see all the animals harrowing getting burnt, we were all sorry to leave her, we left the ship with what clothes we stood in...'

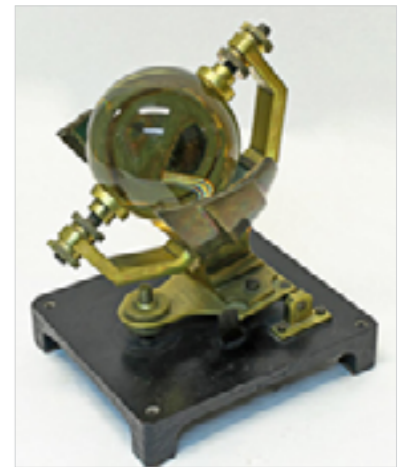
The letter describes the time in the boats until on the sixth night they saw a steamer and managed to attract the ship with their 'blue lights' (the lights were the precursor of modern pyrotechnic flares). It was the steamer *Fifeshire* bound for London with a cargo of frozen New Zealand mutton. The *Corinth* crew and passengers were taken on board and all survived. They were well looked after until they reached England but Collins had lost everything and finished his letter on a sad note:

'We arrived home on 11th April. From the time we left the "Corinth" at sea all our pay is stopped, only paid for the 5 months while we were on the ship and no recompense at all in any way for all we had lost. I found out when I got home that we had lost our youngest child, so with that and the "Corinth" you can imagine that Mrs Collins has not had a very pleasant time.'

The letter was passed down to Frederick Fisher by his mother, Mary Eva Fisher (née Archer), who came from the property Landfall near Launceston before moving to England. First Mate Collins had written the letter to Mary's grandfather Frank Hills who owned a neighbouring farm Allan Vale. Collins met Hills when he consigned wool and stock aboard *Corinth*.

The poignant letter and photographs have circled the world and are now conserved in the Maritime Museum Tasmania's collection.

## HELIO PHARIOGRAPH



A very different artefact is a helio phariograph (sunshine recorder) made by well-known London instrument manufacturers Negretti and Zambra in 1899. The donor acquired the device in Buenos Aires, Argentina more than 40 years ago. It was used as an aid to weather forecasting and designed specifically for the direction of the sun in the Southern Hemisphere.

## SHIPS' BELLS



Photos: Barry Champion



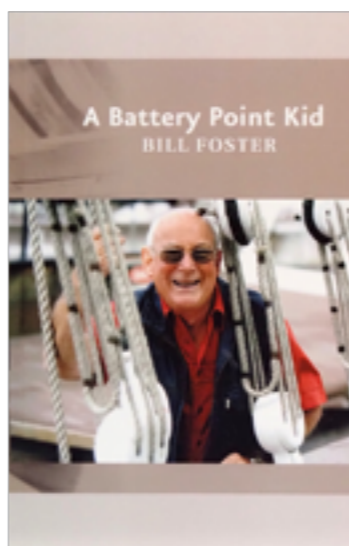
above left: The ANARE Club donated the historic ship's bell from HMA LST 3501 (HMAS *Labaun*), the tank landing ship used by ANARE from 1947 until 1951 to establish their stations on Heard and Macquarie Islands. The somewhat unsuitable vessel initiated the post-World War 2 work in the region.

right: ANARE Club also donated a second bell, the first casting of the bell for RSV *Nuyina*. which is known as the 'tribute bell' and is engraved with the names of the 15 vessels used by ANARE during their Antarctic tenure. This bell celebrates the 75th anniversary of their Antarctic work (now undertaken by the Australian Antarctic Division).

continued on next page >>>

### SHIPWRIGHT TOOLS

MMT Life Member Bill Foster OAM has offered to donate his pit saw, adze and other shipwright's tools. The collection will add to the story of one of Tasmania's eminent shipwrights who worked on building *Westward*, sailed in the winning 1948 crew, and project managed the restoration of the ketch *May Queen* among his many achievements. The donations were accompanied by a copy of Bill's recently published autobiography, *A Battery Point Kid*.



Another donation includes the late Tommy Williams' indenture papers and shipwright's toolbox made when apprenticed to Purdon and Featherstone in 1918. The Museum also acquired photographs and newspaper clippings relating to his life and work. These artefacts supplement 28 of Tommy's shipwright tools donated in 2010.

left: Tommy Williams aboard *Alma Doepel*.

### HMS ADVENTURE MODEL

A model of the barque *HMS Adventure* that accompanied James Cook on his second expedition to the Pacific has been donated by Richard Furneaux. Richard, who shares an ancestor with Commander Tobias Furneaux of *HMS Adventure*, commissioned Ian Summers, of St Marys Cranks and Tinkerers, to build the model. Initially it will be on loan to the Furneaux Restaurant in St Helens before returning to the Maritime Museum.

The Maritime Museum received many artefacts including naval uniforms, books and programs, sea chests and other objects. The foregoing is a selection of the acquisitions in the last three months.

—Colin Denny



Photo: Mark Hosking

## Westward gets a new engine

AFTER MANY YEARS OF STERLING SERVICE the engine and gearbox installed in *Westward* in the 1970s is being replaced, thanks to Nanni Diesel Australia and the Australian National Maritime Museum's (ANMM) Maritime Museum of Australia Project Support Scheme (MMAPSS).

For a while now the gearbox in *Westward* has caused some anxiety, particularly when manoeuvring on and off the vessel's regular berth in Constitution Dock. It developed a habit of dropping out of gear as well as stalling the engine when moving between forward and reverse. For some time the crew soldiered on, with a member positioned in the cock-pit to hit the ignition at the crucial moments, and the crew developed their skills at drifting onto the berth without power.

But things eventually came to a head with the motor 'conking out' in a cloud of black smoke on a trip out on the river, requiring a tow home. An assessment of the situation was undertaken, with a professional opinion that the motor was best thought of as a future mooring. A fair bit of head-scratching and teeth-sucking as to how best to proceed ensued.

Luckily, *Westward* already had a relationship with the ANMM MMAPSS program as the vessel's management plan was developed with funding from the scheme, so an application to the current grant round seemed a sensible way forward. But, even if the project received the highest grant available, then there would still be a significant shortfall that the Maritime Museum would need to fund.

Enter Peter Collins at Nanni Diesel Australia, thanks to an introduction by Steve Hall of Tas Diesel and Marine in Prince of Wales Bay. Peter called the Museum one Friday afternoon after hearing of the situation, expressing his desire, as a yachting enthusiast with Sydney-Hobart experience and with a passion for both sailing history and wooden boats, to help find a sustainable solution that ensures *Westward's* continued sailing well into the future.

So with ducks lining up, an application to MMAPSS was submitted and accepted and a new powerpack was soon winging its way south from Sydney.

As with all such projects, other problems become apparent once the work started and, on removal of the old engine, it was found that the fuel tanks were heavily corroded and required replacement. But work is progressing and it is hoped that a re-powered *Westward* will participate fully in next year's Australian Wooden Boat Festival.



*Westward's* new NANNI diesel engine



The empty engine bay after the old engine was removed



Cleaning the bilge

Photos: John Wedd

Note: The Ford engine that was removed dates to the 1970s and was itself a replacement engine. It won't end up as a mooring though. Installed by *Westward's* previous owner, Stan Field, during his extend voyaging with his family around the Pacific and south east Asia, the motor is an important part of the vessel's story and is being accessioned into the Maritime Museum's collection. □



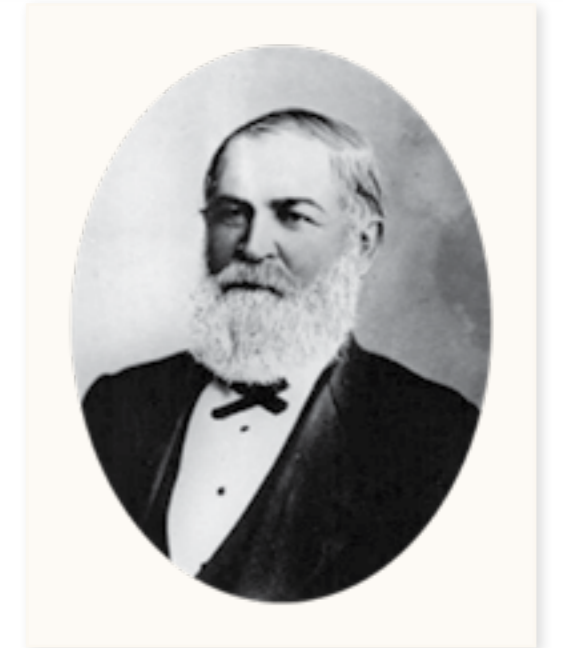
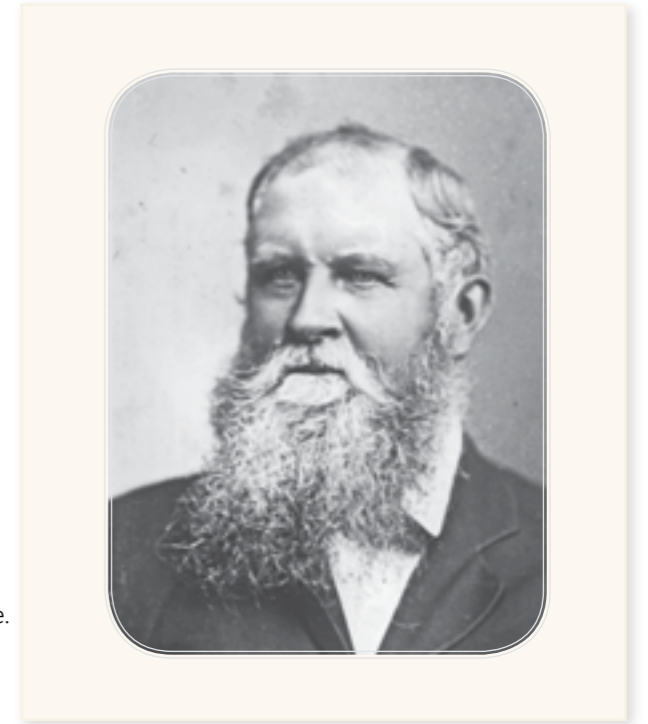


facing page: *Harriet McGregor*  
A pastel drawing of the barque by Walter Knoop  
MMT Collection P\_2006-001  
Photo: Barry Champion

right: John McGregor  
He supervised the building of *Harriet McGregor*.  
Image from a glass lantern slide in the MMT Collection, GSL 285

centre: Alexander McGregor  
Owner of *Harriet McGregor* and after whose wife the ship was named.  
MMT Collection, GSL 283

bottom: Captain Richard Copping and his wife  
Captain Copping was master of *Harriet McGregor* on its maiden voyage.  
MMT Collection, P\_GSL089



## Harriet McGregor — Hobart to London — 1871

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE CAME to watch the launch on Saturday, 22 October 1870 in Hobart. There would have been a bigger crowd but heavy rain earlier that day and the muddy Domain discouraged many people. The new vessel with its 'beautifully proportioned hull and fine lines' was named *Harriet McGregor* after owner Alexander McGregor's wife. Mrs McGregor performed the traditional ceremony and cheers arose as her namesake glided, with bunting flapping, a short distance into the River Derwent, where it was then anchored. It flew the blue and white McGregor house flag, the British ensign astern and the Union Jack at the bowsprit.<sup>1</sup>

Its construction of blue gum timber over an iron frame had been supervised by John McGregor, younger brother of Alexander, at their Domain shipyard where it had spent 15 months on the stocks. With an overall length of 134.2 feet, a beam of 27.6 feet, and depth of 15.9 feet, the 331 grt ship was to be rigged as a barque and its maiden voyage, under the command of Captain Richard Copping, was to London where it would be assessed by Lloyds.<sup>2</sup>

Richard Copping (1821–1892) was born in Hobart, went to sea as a boy, served on coastal traders and whalers, and on ships trading between Australia and New Zealand, and later London. His commands included *Pet*, *Derwent*, *Isabella* and *Bella Mary*. In 1856, at Rochford in Essex, England, he married (Susannah) Elizabeth Mann. 'I was fortunate enough' he later wrote in his 'Reminiscences' to secure the good grace of a young Essex Lady and got spliced, and never had occasion to regret the step taken, although it is over twenty years'. His wife often accompanied him on voyages, including the maiden voyage of *Harriet McGregor*. His property in Tasmania was named Rochford Hall.<sup>3</sup>

In 1871, his new ship was berthed at the west end of New Wharf and loaded with cargo which included whale oil, wool, bark, palings and leather. It cleared customs and left Hobart for a direct run to London on Wednesday, 8 February.<sup>4</sup> Copping reported that *Harriet McGregor* sailed well on its first passage and had reached Dungeness (Kent, England) by 18 May. The voyage had not been without incident and he noted that a ship's apprentice had been lost

overboard 'in a heavy gale of wind' on 18 March near the Rio de la Plata (off the Atlantic coast of Argentina). Lucan Dundas Featherstone, youngest son of Mr John Featherstone of Hobart, was 16 years old when he drowned at sea.<sup>5</sup> His death notice in the *Mercury* stated that this occurred on 23 March 1871 off Cape Horn, which is more than 1000 nautical miles south of Rio de la Plata but was perhaps a better-known geographical feature.

The run from Dungeness to London was not without drama as Captain Copping wrote in his 'Reminiscences':

'After being nearly three weeks in the chops of the [English] Channel, we took a pilot about one mile to the SW of Dungeness. It had been a strong southerly breeze all day but it now died away to a calm; the tide was running to the eastward and the ship was drifting fast on the Point.

I said to the Pilot, 'Had you not better let go the anchor?' >>>

He says, 'She will drive past I think'.

I was heaving the lead, and I found the ship was drifting nearly right on. I told the mate to stand by both anchors; we were now right alongside the beach, when I told the mate to let go and the chain ran out to about 70 fathoms and the stones were rolling right under her keel. The anchor was scarcely down before there was two or three boats alongside.

The Pilot said, 'For God's sake, don't let those men take charge of your ship'.

I said, 'I am damned sorry that you had charge of her. If you had not she would not have been here'.

These men began to give orders to get a stream anchor out and hawser and [were] making use of the most fearful oaths, so I said, 'Here, here, not so fast, when I want your assistance I will tell you.' At this they went on ten times worse, so I told them to go over the side but they now would not go off the quarter deck, so I said, 'I will give you five minutes to go or I will make some of you go.' I went down the cabin and in a few minutes came up again without any shoes and my right hand in the breast of my waistcoat. I said, 'Now off some of you go and that quick.' They thought I had a pistol—there was not one in the ship—and so went on the maindeck.

I said, 'Go over into your boats.' They cursed and swore saying, 'You will soon want us and then perhaps it will be too late for you.' I said, 'I will look after myself.'

The Pilot now came to me, and told me there was a tug steamer laying just round the Point. My wife and the carpenter had been using the flash light for some time for her, when one of the boatmen asked what I would give them to go for the steamer. I said, 'One Pound.' They wanted ten, so presently they said they would go, but they had seen the steamer coming, for in a minute she was coming round. I thought now you will stick it on. In a few minutes the Captain was on deck and came aft.

'You are in a nasty place here,' he said, 'laying right along the beach. When the tide slacks she will swing on.'

I said, 'The wind might come off you know. What will you tow me off for, that is the question.' He was very particular about my cargo; at last he said £250. I said, 'Surely you are joking.' He at last got down by degrees to one hundred. I said, 'No, I will give you fifty pounds, and no more.'

'Well,' he said, 'I shall go,' and went on board and steamed off. He said, 'You had better think of it.'

'I have thought of it.'

'Well,' he said, 'will you give sixty.'

I said, 'I will give fifty-five.'

He said, 'Very well,' and went ahead and got the hawser. There were four or five brigs and schooners laying ahead of us and he had to go between, he wanted me to let slip my anchor and chain and kept singing out: 'I will let you go.'

I said, 'Take no notice of him, tell him the chain is nearly up.' At last we got the anchor and towed off clear; it was a narrow chance for the poor little *Harriet McGregor*. If I had not been so determined we should have had a fine bill of costs, for we had a most valuable cargo in, consisting of 165 tons of sperm oil and some seven hundred bales of wool.

We arrived next day in London and in a few days discharged, went into dry dock and one of Lloyd's surveyors came, went all over the ship and spoke very highly of her saying that we would require scarcely anything to get a Eleven Years, but in another day or two there was quite a different version; there had, I am given to think, been some pressure to bear on the surveyor, for after telling me that she would not require stripping the copper off nor, in fact, scarcely anything, he said she must be stripped and caulked and some thousands of treenails drove into her, and everyone they drove made her so much worse, for they said she was not fastened according to their rules, when I actually see them bore half treenails out to put one in, so there was one treenail and a half one in one hole. [Note: Philp (1934) p. 6 states that the ship was copper fastened throughout.<sup>6</sup>]

They thought: 'Here is a stranger, we must knock something out of him.' I suppose Lloyd's and the shipyards row in together. This ship was put to £700 expense, whereas she should not have cost two. I had seen Tasmanian ships classed before in London, and I always felt certain that justice was not done them; wheels within wheels was and will be between companies' surveyors and shipwrights.

The people in London connected with the Tasmanian trade put every obstacle in our way they could to stop the ship from loading, but Mr McGregor could load her over and over again that they did not know. I had written to England to Brothers that I had always gone to before to take and act for the ship but when I got to Gravesend I received a letter from them declining to act for the

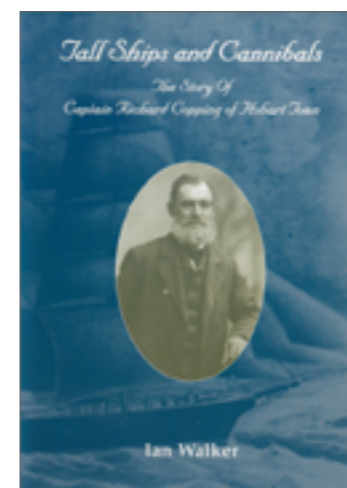
ship. After I had got a broker and entered my ship, I went to them and asked them the reason. They said there were two firms, their constituent and connected with the Tasmanian trade that objected to their taking the ship, thinking that Mr McGregor was going regularly in the trade. Such was not the case I believe, but when he found how bad they had used his ship, it put him on his mettle and determined to keep in the trade.

I made four voyages to London, two to Adelaide and one to Mauritius in less than four years in the *Harriet McGregor*, but she was a most unfortunate ship for me, for during my command I had cut part of my finger off, broke three ribs twice in one place and broke my left shoulder and poisoned my right hand by pulling on a new rope in the night, something pricked my hand like a pin and it has never got well since; it was something in the rope, made of flax and manilla.

In December 1874 I was appointed to a new ship Mr McGregor had bought for the London trade, called the *Lufra*, a beautiful model; it had been built for the China tea trade.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the problems that Copping described with Lloyds, his ship was classed as A1 for nine years, 'the highest term for vessels built of gumtree wood'.<sup>6</sup> One of the most famous Blue Gum Clippers, *Harriet McGregor* was Tasmanian-owned until 1895 and a favourite with Hobart residents. Owner Alex McGregor built a clerestory at 'Lenna' so that he could look out for its return. It was sold to Danish owners, renamed *Water Queen* and, on its first voyage after changing flags, was destroyed by fire in Rio de Janeiro harbour. □

*Maritime Times* thanks all who checked details and offered suggestions for this article.



## in our shop

TALL SHIPS AND  
CANNIBALS

The story of Captain Richard  
Copping of Hobart town

by Ian Walker (2005)

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Launch of the *Harriet McGregor*: *Tasmanian Times*, 24 October 1870, p. 2

<sup>2</sup> Dimensions ex Lloyds' Register

<sup>3</sup> Credland, AG (1998) 'Captain Richard Copping of Hobart Town.' *Great Circle*, Vol.10 (1), The Australian Association for Maritime History, pp. 22–32

<sup>4</sup> The departure was dated 9 February in Copping's 'Reminiscences', perhaps referring to passing Cape Pillar.

<sup>5</sup> *Mercury*, 7 July 1871, p. 1 (Deaths: Featherstone)

<sup>6</sup> Philp JE (1934). *The Harriet McGregor: a staunch ship's sea story*. Hobart: Davies Bros. *Mercury Press*

<sup>7</sup> Copping R. 'Reminiscences' In Walker, Ian (2005) *Tall ships and cannibals: the story of Captain Richard Copping of Hobart town*. Hobart: Navarine Publishing.

'Reminiscences' are also online (accessed 4 July 2022) at <http://www.users.on.net/~ahvem/Fisheries/Identities/RICHARD%20COPPING%201.html>

<sup>6</sup> *The Tasmanian* (Launceston) 4 Nov 1871, p. 5

## Further reading

Cox R and GW Cox (2014). *Ships of Hobart Harbour*. Hobart: Ron Withington

Lawson W and Shiplovers' Society of Tasmania (1949). *Blue gum clippers and whale ships of Tasmania*. Melb: Georgian House



'Harriet McGregor in Storm Bay'  
by  
Robert Carter OAM  
Australian Society of Marine Artists

A range of his paintings of sailing ships can be viewed on his website, with quality prints for sale, regular or large size.

Maritime paintings and prints

<https://robertcarter.com.au/>



Oil painting on canvas of the barque *Nautilus* (J L Wilkinson, Master). Signed lower right C F Gerrard 1883  
MMT Collection P\_1984-462

## Nautilus — Henry Hopkins and his barque — 1873

by Nicole Mays

The 243-ton barque *Nautilus* first berthed at Adelaide on 28 January 1873, its maiden voyage from Hobart taking just over a week. Its cargo comprised 16 000 feet of timber, 45 000 palings, 80 000 laths and 150 pairs of cart shafts.<sup>1</sup> The South Australian press, in describing the new vessel, also detailed its owner and his intentions.

Mr. Hopkins is a gentleman who desired to seek pleasure at sea and recreation in visiting the various ports of the world, and to do so had the idea carried out to build for himself a yacht which would carry about 300 tons, and then start from Hobart Town on his round-the-world cruise. In order to partly defray expenses, the vessel carries cargoes, but having resolved on seeing any particular port, a course thither is taken, and if any cargo offers it will be carried, and if not, she proceeds in ballast.<sup>2</sup>

The genesis of *Nautilus* was first reported in the *Mercury* on 1 May 1871 when it was announced that Henry Hopkins intended to undertake a round-the-world voyage for the sake of his health. With a sense of grandeur and a pocketbook to support such a

venture, Hobart Town's most esteemed citizen was proposing to build a ship near-equivalent to one of the finest vessels ever constructed in Tasmania. The article further stated:

Mr. Hopkins will proceed with his new ship on a two years' cruise, visiting Fiji, the chief islands of the Pacific, then round Cape Horn, along the South American coast, through the West Indian islands to some of the chief North American ports, then to England, and thence back to Hobart Town.

Just over two weeks later, the *Mercury* reported that James Mackay, shipbuilder of Battery Point, was making preparations to begin construction of the vessel intended to be a schooner yacht of about 250 tons register.<sup>3</sup> Shortly thereafter, the keel for the vessel (112 feet in length, 16 inches deep and 12 inches in breadth) arrived in Hobart Town. The timber had been sourced from a tree located three miles from Port Cygnet with the large piece of wood noted to contain not a single knot or flaw.<sup>4</sup>

It was not the first time Henry Hopkins had embarked on a journey across the oceans. His entry

into the world had been made at sea in 'South Latitude 42 and East Longitude 140' on 6 September 1822, four days prior to the ship *Heroine* arriving in Hobart Town. He was the eldest of six children born to Henry Hopkins (Sr) and his wife Elizabeth (née Rout), who had married in London in 1817. Five years later they set sail for Van Diemen's Land, a fortuitous decision that would see the family reach the upper echelons of Hobart Town's society and provide them with a life favoured with funds but also steered by benevolence, philanthropy, religion and propriety.<sup>5</sup>

Henry Hopkins (Sr), soon established himself as a Hobart merchant in partnership with Robert Mather, selling a variety of clothing, boots, building materials, spectacles, telescopes, kitchen utensils, medicine, books, furniture and garden implements — goods that the pair had brought with them from England.<sup>6</sup> A savvy, sharp and thrifty businessman, he allowed payment for these items to be made in stock, wool or wheat.

While the partnership between Robert Mather and Henry Hopkins (Sr) only lasted a few months, both men went on to become prominent members of Van Diemen's Land's business, religious and political communities.<sup>7</sup> Backed by nearly two-decades spent working in England's wool industry as a wool-stapler, Henry Hopkins (Sr) soon saw opportunity as Hobart Town's first wool buyer. Significantly, he is credited with the export of Van Diemen's Land's entire yield in 1822: twelve bales of wool bought at 4d. a pound, and sold in London at 7d.<sup>8</sup> As the years progressed, Henry Hopkins (Sr) continued to operate as a merchant but also solidified his involvement in the wool trade, being a chief proponent of Van Diemen's Land's involvement in the international export market. He was also involved in the property market, both in Tasmania and Victoria, thereby increasing his commercial outreach, as well as his wealth and standing. By the time of his death in 1870, at the age of 83, Henry Hopkins (Sr) had amassed a large fortune which was only eclipsed by his devotion to his faith and Congregationalism.

As the oldest child, Henry Hopkins had spent some of his teenage years in England and, upon his return to Hobart, became progressively more and more involved in the family's business dealings.<sup>9</sup>

Meat safe from the barque *Nautilus*.  
Stained timber with louvre doors.  
On display Gallery 1  
MMT Collection A\_1984-214

By the time of his father's death in 1870, Henry Hopkins had earned a reputation similar to that of his father and mentor, particularly in terms of business, mercantile, judicial and political dealings. He had also become involved in Hobart Town's sailing community, including owning the pleasure yacht *Marie Louise* for a number of years.<sup>10</sup> In June of 1871 the craft was sold to make way for the large vessel he intended to circumnavigate the globe on board. Approaching 50 years of age, however, Henry Hopkins was suffering from ill health. Still, he remained steadfast to the vessel's construction but also saw opportunity for its use as a business enterprise. Instead of being used for a personal pleasure trip around the world, Henry Hopkins summarised that the craft be adapted as a commercial whaling vessel. In announcing this fact, the *Mercury* of 27 February 1872 reported:

She measures 112 feet keel, 26 feet beam, 14 feet depth of hold. She has her rails on and the deck is half completed; her planking is also in a forward state, the lining of the hold is also nearly finished. The frame work and knees are of blue gum, the planking of Kauri pine and blue gum, and the decks of Kauri pine. The masts are also being prepared. [Note: loa 191.4 (Lloyds' Register)]

Two months later, the vessel was surveyed by Captain McLeod, agent for Lloyds, who had arrived in Hobart from Melbourne specifically to classify it.<sup>11</sup> He recommended that *Nautilus*, now described as a barque, be fitted with 32 iron knees to comply with Lloyds' regulations for classification. These were duly installed.<sup>12</sup> This adjustment was also





consistent with further revised plans for the vessel. Henry Hopkins now intended for it to be involved in international trade rather than whaling.

Nearing midday on 25 July 1872, *Nautilus*, designed and built by James Mackay, was launched from Battery Point as the wife of Henry Hopkins, Catherine, dashed the customary bottle of champagne against the bow.<sup>13</sup> Though intended to be a private ceremony, about 400 people crowded the slips and nearby higher ground to witness the event. The *Mercury* reported that the barque was to be placed in the China trade under the command of Captain D Cowen. Taking another four months to be fitted out, rigged and coppered, the 243-ton *Nautilus* left Hobart on its maiden voyage on 18 January 1873.<sup>14</sup> The substantial vessel was loaded with timber for Adelaide, with its next destination likely to be Guam. However, not relinquishing his dream of a global voyage, Henry Hopkins and his wife were both on board when it set sail for South Australia on its maiden voyage.<sup>15</sup>

After cargo was discharged, Henry Hopkins made another spontaneous decision. Instead of next heading for Guam or China as had been proposed, he loaded *Nautilus* with 2292 bags of wheat and set sail for London.<sup>16</sup> He sensed further financial opportunity there and had a yearning to once more visit his motherland. The vessel cleared out of Adelaide on 24 February 1873.<sup>17</sup>

After a voyage via Cape Town, *Nautilus* reached London on 28 June.<sup>18</sup> The journey was not without casualty; unfortunately, John Cox, a 23-year-old able seaman from Launceston, was lost overboard a few days out from Adelaide after falling while taking in the main topsail during a mountainous sea.<sup>19</sup> Later, there was some cause for celebration, however, when the committee of Lloyds awarded the Maltese Cross to Henry Hopkins for the superior build of his vessel.<sup>20</sup>

After spending nearly two months in port, *Nautilus* departed London on 17 September with Henry Hopkins and his wife on board.<sup>21</sup> It then made a splendid run to Hobart of just over 90 days, calling in only at Madeira for water and provisions,<sup>22</sup> and arrived back in Hobart on 24 December 1874. Its cargo was a veritable assortment of goods most of which was intended for subsequent sale, including sherry, chocolate, confectionary, sugar, spices, sardines and herring, salt, medicine, boots, books, drapery, clothing and sewing machines.<sup>23</sup> Also on board was a pure Alderney cow, six Lincoln sheep and several Dorking fowls; Henry Hopkins intending to expand his farming stock.<sup>24</sup>

While his barque went on to have a fruitful career in intercolonial and international trade under various owners over several decades, Henry did not sail on board *Nautilus* after his return to Hobart. He died of stomach cancer at his home in Elizabeth Street, Hobart, on 29 June 1875 aged 52.<sup>25</sup> He was survived by his wife Catherine (née Towner). The couple did not have any children.

The barque *Nautilus* was sold following Henry Hopkins' death. It was ultimately destroyed by fire at Noumea in August 1891.<sup>26</sup>

The Maritime Museum Tasmania has several images, documents and artefacts related to *Nautilus*, including the meat safe (p.15), a model and proposed plans drawn up for Henry Hopkins (originally for a three-masted schooner but later altered to a barque). □

#### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> *Evening Journal*, 29 January 1873
- <sup>2</sup> *Express and Telegraph*, 30 January 1873
- <sup>3</sup> *Mercury*, 18 May 1871
- <sup>4</sup> *Mercury*, 27 May 1871
- <sup>5</sup> *Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser*, 14 September 1822; Tasmanian Archives, RGD32/1/1 no 1333
- <sup>6</sup> *Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser*, 21 September 1822
- <sup>7</sup> *Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser*, 28 December 1822
- <sup>8</sup> <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hopkins-henry-2197>; *Tasmanian Times*, 29 September 1870
- <sup>9</sup> *Mercury*, 1 July 1875
- <sup>10</sup> *Mercury*, 24 June 1871
- <sup>11</sup> *Mercury*, 13 April 1872
- <sup>12</sup> *Mercury*, 20 April 1872, 13 July 1872
- <sup>13</sup> *Mercury*, 26 July 1872
- <sup>14</sup> *Mercury*, 20 January 1873
- <sup>15</sup> *Mercury*, 3 December 1872; *South Australian Advertiser*, 29 January 1873
- <sup>16</sup> *South Australian Advertiser*, 20 February 1873
- <sup>17</sup> *South Australian Register*, 25 February 1873
- <sup>18</sup> Lloyd's List, 30 June 1873
- <sup>19</sup> *Tasmanian Tribune*, 8 July 1873
- <sup>20</sup> *Australian and New Zealand Gazette*, 4 October 1873
- <sup>21</sup> *Australian and New Zealand Gazette*, 4 October 1873
- <sup>22</sup> *Australian and New Zealand Gazette*, 4 October 1873
- <sup>23</sup> *Mercury*, 25 December 1873
- <sup>24</sup> *Weekly Examiner*, 3 January 1874
- <sup>25</sup> *Mercury*, 1 July 1875; Tasmanian Archives, RGD35/1/8 no. 2840
- <sup>26</sup> *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 22 August 1891



Incat's Island Transit - *Santa Monica I* during trials on the River Derwent

## *Santa Monica I* — Hobart to South Korea — 2022

A maiden voyage can be defined as the first voyage of a ship after its acceptance by the owners from the builders. Traditionally, most vessels were handed over to owners at their eventual home port, hence we tend to think of the maiden voyage as being the first commercial trip. Here we describe the delivery trip.

THE 76-METRE WAVE-PIERCING CATAMARAN *Santa Monica I*, built in Hobart by Incat Tasmania, was sea-trialled on the River Derwent and waters outside Hobart in March 2022 with owner's representatives on board. The vessel was then officially handed over at the Incat Derwent Park shipyard in April to her new owner/operator South Korean company SeaWorld Express Ferry.

The ship, resplendent in white, blue and red livery departed Incat's shipyard on 4 April 2022, bunkering overnight and departing Hobart the next day on its maiden voyage: the delivery to South Korea. The eleven Korean crew on board were accompanied by two Incat technicians, engineer Tony Dewhirst and electronics engineer Nick Hobbs. The Korean crew had arrived in Hobart a month earlier for familiarisation, training and sea trials, but the high speed aluminium craft is vastly different from more conventional older vessels many of them had previously crewed.

*Santa Monica's* state-of-the-art electronics system monitors all aspects of ship operation sending messages to the wheelhouse from every location and system on board. Having an engineer and electronics/electrical technician from the shipyard on that long delivery voyage was more for crew training and familiarisation; Nick and Tony were not actually required to be part of the crew rosters.

Travelling up the east coast of Australia, to Papua New Guinea, all was going very well. After 2244 nautical miles (nm) they arrived in Port Moresby on 9 April, bunkering then departing the next day. For the next 2266 nm leg to the Philippines they also made great time.

*Santa Monica I* had achieved a fast 49.7 knots on sea trials but with a full fuel load on board the early part of each sector of the 6278 nautical mile trip was at much slower speeds, only picking up pace as excess fuel was exhausted.

>>>



Because of COVID restrictions at ports along the way, the Korean owners had opted to install temporary fuel storage units on the vehicle deck to minimise fuel stops. *Santa Monica I* left Hobart port with 293 222 litres on board.

The fast transit came to a halt at the Philippines fuel stop when the pre-ordered bunkering was not ready and, given COVID restrictions, the ship was instructed to remain offshore with crew on board for several days until the fuel could be loaded. *Santa Monica I* finally arrived in Korea on 21 April 2022.



While the sailing ships built in Tasmania's early boatbuilding era would all have had crew cabins on board, fast ferries operating short day trips don't require them. *Santa Monica I*, with capacity for 621 passengers and crew plus 79 vehicles might be luxurious with a range of seating, including recliners in business class, but it was not designed for overnight berthing. The crew mess did have one shower for the 13 people on board and of course being designed for hundreds of passengers there was no shortage of toilet facilities. The well-equipped food preparation galley and servery area fitted out with freezers, refrigerators and serveries for hot and cold food service and plenty of dining areas were perfect for the long trip. Crew set up their private sleeping areas around the ship, between seat rows, with some using small tents for additional privacy. The DNV High Speed Craft rules to which the ship is built require passenger area lighting to be turned on at all times the ship is in operation — an excellent



1. *Santa Monica I* berthed at Incat's shipyard in Hobart
2. The wheelhouse with navigation and control panels and monitors
3. Seating and tables in the aft section
4. Servery area and seating in the mid-ships area
5. Servery open for drinks, and for hot and cold meals



rule for passenger safety but certainly not conducive to getting a good night's sleep. Incat engineer Tony Dewhirst managed extra light blackout by putting his tent's floor layer on top of the lightweight roof fabric. Others just used eye-masks for sleeping.

Fresh water was not an issue; however they supplemented supplies with condensate water from the air conditioning system for some washing tasks.

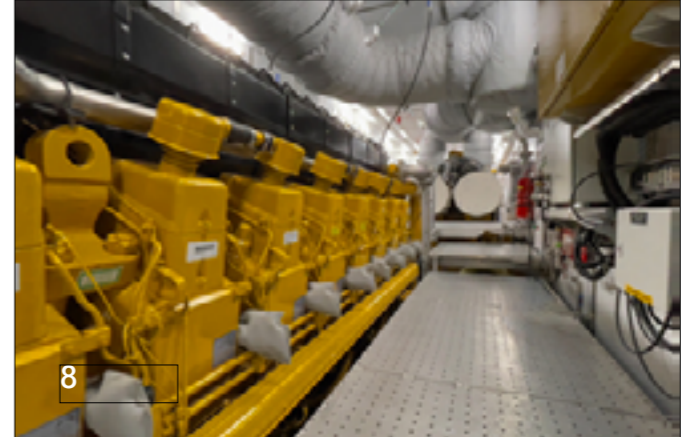
With immigration and COVID checks completed the ship berthed at its home port of Jindo on the South Korea peninsula. Nick and Tony headed back to Tasmania confident their Korean colleagues would take great care of their new hi-tech ship.

Although a ceremony at the Hobart shipyard in April had officially named the ship there were local ceremonies at SeaWorld's headquarters in Mokpo prior to *Santa Monica I* starting service. The first 90-minute crossing from Jindo Ferry Terminal across to Jeju Island in May, carrying a full load of tourists and VIPs, gained interest from local travel writers.

Jeju Island, about 1/30th the size of Tasmania, has a slightly higher population and very different geography but, like Tasmania, benefits significantly from leisure travellers. It is well known for its beach resorts and volcanic landscape of craters and cavelike lava tubes. *Santa Monica I* car ferry completes two return trips to the island each day so if you get a chance to visit South Korea do take a trip on a very popular Tasmanian export. □

6. One-man tent among the recliner seating in the forward business lounge
7. Incat ship's vehicle deck loaded with fuel storage tanks for the delivery voyage
8. Starboard engine room

Images supplied by Incat Tasmania



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## Australian Wooden Boat Festival

10–13 February 2023

Hobart Waterfront

The Australian Wooden Boat Festival is back with a jam-packed program for 2023.

The theme for this coming event is 'Australia: boat builders and designers'.

The festival will be celebrating the craft of Australian men and women from bygone eras right through to today's modern construction methods.

AUSTRALIAN  
WOODEN  
BOAT FESTIVAL  
10-13 FEBRUARY 2023

TALL SHIPS EXPECTED TO MAKE THE JOURNEY SOUTH for the AWBF 2023 include *Soren Larsen*, *One and All* and *James Craig*, joining local historic vessels like *Windeward Bound*, *Lady Nelson*, *Julie Burgess* and *Rhona H*. Sailings will be available on most tall ships for the opening Parade of Sail event, held on Friday 10 February. Some vessels will sail throughout the weekend and tickets will be available on the AWBF website. Tall ships will also host open boat tours throughout the weekend.

Over 300 wooden vessels from around the country have now registered to participate in the AWBF, both ashore and afloat. Boats will be notified of their berth in Spring, ready for antifouling and varnishing in Summer. The open boat scheme will be encouraged once again, giving people the chance to explore the interiors of the beautiful vessels and admire the intricate detail and commitment that goes into them.

The opening Parade of Sail, one of the most popular events, will feature over 400 wooden boats and spectator vessels sailing up the river toward Sullivans Cove. Other on-water activities will include scheduled events: the Derwent World Championships, where the Derwent Class boats battle it out for the trophy, the Ketch Review, a Forster Cup Rally recreation and the closing event, Admiral's Sail on Monday 13 February.

Traditional festival programs will return, including the Blundstone Shipwright's Village and the Australian National Maritime Museum's Wooden Boat Symposium. New additions to the program will include the Blundstone Noisy Boatyard and the Australian National Maritime Museum's Boat Builders of Australia display. The Blundstone Noisy Boatyard comes off the back of the Maritime Trail 2022 success, with short courses to be held before and during the AWBF, giving punters the opportunity to make their own nautical item with the skilled craftspeople of the AWBF community.

A new display inside City Hall will highlight various dinghies from around the country, allowing them to be fully rigged and configured — conquering the issue of not being able to display these stunning dinghies appropriately outdoors on the hard.

The Maritime Marketplace will host over 80 exhibits, selling all types of maritime and nautical items and objects. Food and beverage stall holders will move in to showcase fresh Tassie produce, and the Scouts will ensure a clean, hygienic site as they come onboard once again to manage the waste.

All of this cannot be done without our wonderful festival volunteers. Registrations will be open at the end of August and we encourage anyone with an interest in boats to get involved, whether it be for one shift or the entire four festival days. It's a very rewarding job and 80% of our volunteers come back each festival. □



[australianwoodenboatfestival.com.au](http://australianwoodenboatfestival.com.au)



Concept image. External view of the new Spirit of Tasmania Quay terminal.

## Introducing Spirit of Tasmania Quay

On 23 October 2022, Spirit of Tasmania's Victorian port will move to Spirit of Tasmania Quay, a brand-new, state-of-the-art terminal in Geelong.

For more information about Spirit of Tasmania Quay, please visit <https://www.spiritoftasmania.com.au/geelong-terminal>



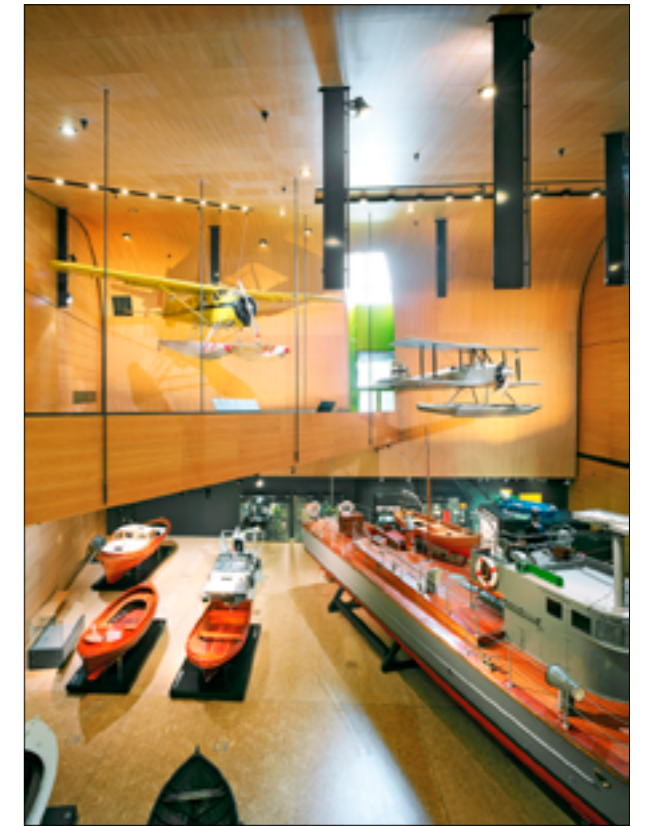
Concept image. The new precinct at Geelong. Images supplied by Spirit of Tasmania.

<https://www.spiritoftasmania.com.au/geelong-terminal>





Maritime Centre Vellamo  
Kotka, Finland



Maritime Centre Vellamo

Merikeskus Vellamo / Maritime Centre Vellamo  
Photo: ©Jussi Tiainen

 **PRIORITY**

2022

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**The Editor**  
'Maritime Times Tasmania'

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AUSTRALIA

*Come and visit our wonderful and informative maritime centre. Jenni*

Maritime Centre Vellamo, Kotka, Finland – Vellamo is a sea goddess in Finnish mythology

Clockwise from top left:  
North Star and Southern Cross exhibition Photo: Soile Tirilä  
Coast Guard Museum display Photo: Jussi Tiainen  
Lightship *Kemi* MCV  
Icebreaker *Tarmo* (1907) MCV  
Roof stage view Photo: Timo Vesterinen



<https://www.merikeskusvellamo.fi/en/maritime-centre-vellamo/>

## Lourah

### — a coastal trader's brief career — 1899

by Tony Fenton



The schooner *Lourah* on the Domain slip, 1899  
MMT Collection P\_OM\_L\_45a

Note: Although this photograph is recorded as having been taken before the launch, the fact that the masts are stepped, the rigging complete and the sails bent suggests that this was a subsequent slipping. It was not unusual to slip a new vessel, e.g. to paint below the waterline once the planking had 'taken up'.

facing page:

1. *Lourah* Island, formerly Mud Island, a name which possibly referred to the shoal waters beyond. Photos 1 & 2: Geoff Fenton

2. Seen on a beach in Hannant Inlet, this is believed to be one of *Lourah's* knees. (Thoughts, p. 27)

3. Sextant from wrecksite near *Lourah* Island, recovered with its case by Carl White; and

4. Sextant case from the wrecksite near *Lourah* Island.  
MMT Collection A\_2019-037

Note: A pdf attachment to MMT's eHive entry describes the recovery of these artefacts (3 & 4) from the wrecksite.  
<https://ehive.com> (Search: *Lourah*)

MAP: A detailed map of *Lourah* Island and its surrounds is at:  
<https://maps.thelist.tas.gov.au/listmap>  
(Search: *Lourah* Island)

AT ITS LAUNCH, TOASTS WERE MADE TO *LOURAH* for a long and prosperous career. But this was not to be.

Risby Brothers, a timber firm started in the mid-1840s by boat builders Thomas and Joseph Risby, began with one sawmill in Hobart. The business grew to become a large timber and trading enterprise, owning numerous vessels. From 1897 they established a sawmill and depot at Strahan to capitalise on the west coast region's voracious appetite for timber: props for the mines, sleepers for the miles of tramway, timber for houses, businesses, and ore dressing sheds. Some timber was sourced locally, but much had to be shipped in. To serve their new establishment, Risby Brothers commissioned Dalgleish & Taylor to build a new schooner.<sup>1</sup>

Providing transport to the west coast mining fields had been a struggle from the outset. When tin was discovered at Heemskirk in 1876, crews of sailing vessels would brave the notorious coast to reach Trial Harbour, the nearest (though not very satisfactory) anchorage to the tinfield. There, supplies would be landed and tin shipped using dinghies and punts through the surf. Once ashore, the transport task was even more difficult as heavy loads had to be hauled through mud and dense scrub.

Those early west-coasters faced great dangers, operating on a lee shore, with no engines, no weather forecasts, and inadequate charts. As the west coast grew in importance, steamship owners began offering regular services. The use of steam ameliorated some of the risks, but engines were low-powered for the size of vessel, so the dangers were still very real. As Strahan became the main port, improvements to the channel into Macquarie Harbour through the notorious Hells Gates were necessary.<sup>2</sup>

Concurrent with these navigation improvements was an effort to connect the west coast by railway to the rest of the island. This was a saga in itself. The rugged terrain meant that finding a feasible route would be difficult. But the challenge was exacerbated by various local interests vying to become the port for the riches of the west, a tussle dubbed by the press as the 'railway imbroglio'. Eventually a railway from Burnie southward to Zeehan was built, opening in December 1900.<sup>3</sup> Yet these modern means of transport did not immediately eclipse the traditional sail coasters. There was room for everybody, such as the magnitude of the transport task.

*Lourah* was built while construction of the Emu Bay Railway was in full swing. The 26-metre three-masted schooner took under six months to build. First and foremost a cargo vessel, it had twin 5- by 4-metre hatches, and a longitudinal partition in the hold strengthened the deck for carrying deck cargo.

To facilitate the discharge of cargo, it was fitted with a steam winch capable of lifting several tons.<sup>4</sup> The vessel was a pastiche of timber species. The hull was blue gum and stringybark, with Oregon and Huon pine topsides, capped off with a kauri deck.

A crowd gathered at the Domain Shipyards on 9 November 1899 to watch the launching. Young Jack Risby christened the new vessel *Lourah*—a south-eastern First Nations word meaning 'stingray'—as it slid down the ways. Once it was moored, the people adjourned for speeches and toasts.<sup>5</sup> Over the next few weeks, the masts were stepped and rigged and the vessel fitted out before its sea trials.

A month after the launch, *Lourah* made its first revenue voyage to Port Arthur to collect a shipment of timber. Then it was made ready to commence trading on its intended run, the Hobart to Strahan trade. Loaded with 45 000 super-feet of timber products and 16 tons of bagged coal, *Lourah* departed Hobart on 29 December under the command of Captain Christian Severen Charlson. Besides the four crew, 15-year-old Harry Risby (elder brother of Jack) embarked as a passenger. The ship's company saw the dawn of the new century at Recherche Bay, sheltering from gales.

On 2 January *Lourah* rounded South West Cape, but with light northeast to southeast winds, made slow progress. They were about 10 nautical miles past Port Davey the following evening when a strong northwesterly set in. Charlson decided to run for shelter in Port Davey. At 10pm as they entered, a vicious squall 'burst out of the harbour'. The schooner battled on amid 'loud peals of thunder, vivid lightning, and torrents of rain'.<sup>6</sup>

Then the fore-rigging gave out, leaving the vessel without headsails. *Lourah* became difficult to steer, so the crew attempted to beat out to sea and wait for daylight, but this proved impossible without the foresail. Meanwhile, the wind had strengthened even more. Now Charlson steered for Hannant Inlet, aided by flashes of lightning that punctuated the black night. On this course, he would have been running before the wind.

After this ordeal they managed to enter Hannant Inlet and cast two anchors near Mud Island. But Hannant Inlet is hardly an ideal anchorage in such weather. In the small hours of the morning, the anchors dragged and *Lourah* went aground on the southern end of the island. The crew took to the dinghy, but not before quick thinking Harry Risby grabbed a loaf of bread and a bag of oatmeal.

They reached shore without mishap. But now they were in a remote area with limited provisions and no way of knowing when help might arrive. They limited themselves to one meal of half-cooked porridge per



day. Fortunately the fishing boat *Glenloth* put into Port Davey on 7 January, four days after the wreck. Its crew were short of provisions themselves, but helped the hungry castaways as best they could. The weather remained unfavourable but on 12 January *Glenloth* dashed for Recherche Bay and landed the men there that evening. *Lourah's* crew spent the



night with locals, then left for Hobart aboard the ketch *Leillateah* next morning.<sup>7</sup>

Risby Brothers immediately dispatched their steamship *Moonah* to salvage what they could. Once anchor chains, spars and running gear were recovered, the wreck and cargo was auctioned for ten shillings and five pounds respectively. H Smith, the winning bidder, allowed Thomas Spalding—who was taking another load of timber to Strahan for Risby Brothers in the ketch *Gladys*—to take what he wished from the wreck, excluding the cargo. The cargo was by then strewn all over the beach and Spalding took only a sea-chest adorned with a drawing of a barque. No evidence of Smith's acting on his salvage rights has been found.<sup>8</sup>

An enquiry into the wreck found that the shackles and cliphooks of the headsails, throat halyard block of the foresail and tacks of the jibs all gave way. There was some disagreement as to whether these fittings were appropriately sized. The ground tackle was heavier than recommended by Lloyd's Register, according to part-owner Arthur Risby. The court cleared Charlson of any wrongdoing, and he retained his master's certificate.<sup>9</sup>

LOBBYING FOR A TELEPHONE TO BE ESTABLISHED at Port Davey for castaways and weatherbound vessels was re-ignited after *Lourah* was wrecked. With the rise of shipping to the west coast came long delays as vessels sheltered from poor weather. In an era before marine radio, people ashore had no way of knowing where a vessel might be or if it was safe. If a telephone connection to Port Davey was established, fears might be allayed. Arthur Risby raised the matter with the colonial Treasurer, who said that enquiries had been made. The government approached photographer John Watt Beattie, who was considered an authority on remote areas of Tasmania, on the subject. Beattie, who had been to Port Davey two years earlier aboard the yacht *Fancy*, did not favour the scheme but advised on a route from Recherche Bay terminating at either Schooner Cove or Bramble Cove. The subject of a telephone line to Port Davey came to the fore several more times over the ensuing decade, as three disastrous shipwrecks, *Acacia*, *Brier Holme* and *Alfild* all entailed heavy loss of life, some of which might have

been prevented had better communications been available. The story of Oscar Larsen, sole survivor of the *Brier Holme* wreck and castaway for three months in the southwest, especially caught the public's attention. Although some shipwreck relief measures were implemented, a telephone line was never built. The increasing availability of marine radio on larger ships reduced that need but left smaller vessels like *Lourah* without communication for some time yet.<sup>10</sup>

HANNANT INLET is a tranquil place in fine weather. Lourah Island, formerly known as Mud Island, helps to protect the waterway. One day in 1978 when abalone boat *Tasmanian Enterprise* was working on the south west coast, heavy swell prevented diving. The vessel anchored in Port Davey to allow the divers to work in sheltered waters. Following the day's work, two divers met at Lourah Island to look for the wreck. They were essentially treasure hunting, which was legal in sheltered waterways until 1995, when state legislation put an end to the practice. The first diver to look only found a few brass fastenings. The second diver, Carl White, at first saw nothing, but just as he was about to give up, saw a strange shaped object protruding from the gravelly bottom. As he began scraping the gravel away, the object appeared at first to be a porthole, but was revealed to in fact be a sextant still in its case. In 2019 White donated the sextant to the Maritime Museum Tasmania.<sup>11</sup>

*Lourah* rode the waves for less than two months, yet the story of the schooner encapsulates so many aspects of Tasmanian history. Its name is a nod to the traditional owners of the country on which it was built for a prominent timber firm. Intended to supply timber to the colony's most significant mining district, it would thus have supported two of Tasmania's major industries. It was built at a time of change, when steamships and railways were taking trade away from traditional sail coasters. The wreck raised the issue of maritime safety at the time, and modern interest in it exemplifies a growing appreciation of Tasmania's maritime heritage. □

#### Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Graeme Broxam, Warwick Risby and Ken Jones for answering my questions, and Janet and Geoff Fenton for proofreading.

facing page: Panorama of Port Davey. The vessel would have come in from behind the headland right of centre near the horizon. Lourah Island is on the left at the mouth of Hannant Inlet. Photo: Geoff Fenton

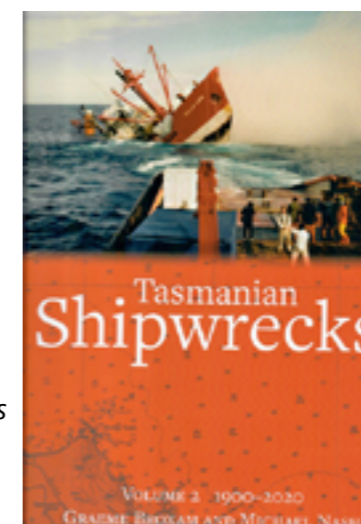
#### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Graeme-Evans, A (1995). *Against the odds: Risbys: Tasmanian timber pioneers 1826–1995*. Tasbook: Hobart, passim
- <sup>2</sup> Binks, CJ (1988). *Pioneers of Tasmania's West Coast*. Blubberhead Press, Hobart, pp. 97–111
- <sup>3</sup> Rae, L (1997). *The Emu Bay Railway*. L Rae, Sandy Bay, pp. 45–68
- <sup>4</sup> *Zeehan & Dundas Herald* 28 November 1899, p. 3
- <sup>5</sup> *Mercury* 10 November 1899, p. 2  
Also Plomley, NJB (1976). *A word-list of the Tasmanian Aboriginal languages*, Government Printer, Hobart, p. 451
- <sup>6</sup> *Mercury* 15 January 1900, p. 2
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* *Mercury* 15 January 1900, p. 2  
Also Broxam, G and M Nash (2013). *Tasmanian Shipwrecks Volume 2 1900–2012*, Navarine, Canberra, p. 2
- <sup>8</sup> *Mercury* 6 April 1900, p. 2
- <sup>9</sup> *Mercury* 2 February 1900, p. 2  
Also a facsimile of the report of the enquiry appears in Risby, W (2020). *Risby ancestors: From convict beginnings*. W Risby, Hobart, p. 169
- <sup>10</sup> Fenton, T (2017). *A history of Port Davey, volume 1: Fleeting Hopes*. Forty South, Hobart, pp. 227–261
- <sup>11</sup> White, C (2019). 'Narrative of sextant recovery from wreck site of the *Lourah* from diver and donor, Carl White.' Notes accompanying MMT object A\_2019-037 <https://ehive.com/collections/3906/objects/1023036/sextant-from-lourah> (accessed 3 August 2022)

### in our shop



A HISTORY OF PORT DAVEY  
*Volume 1: Fleeting Hopes*  
by Tony Fenton (2017)  
Forty South: Hobart  
xxii; 312 pages



## Thoughts on the wooden knee

(photo p. 25)

It definitely qualifies as a knee, complete with iron fastenings and some framing attached. There are four usual types of wooden knees used in boat construction: Hanging, Lodging, Bosom and Dagger.

The knee is small for a trading vessel of 86ft (using my memory of the 90ft 'Defender' as a typical example). The faying surfaces are not notched or angled. These facts lead me to believe it has most likely to have come from the deck structure, coach house or other superstructure as a lodging knee. A lodging knee is fastened in a horizontal plane to the sides of deck beams, half beams or hatch header framing.

The heaviest section of timber still fastened to this knee appears to have a shoulder cut into it where it intersects with the other more deteriorated timber piece in some kind of corner halving joint or perhaps as a tenon to fit into a notched housing ... as the half beams in the superstructure would have had to connect to the carlins and hatch headers.

Interestingly, that iron dump that sticks out from the end grain of the notched piece makes me think it may have been driven through a carlin or even a hatch coaming. Dumps driven into end grain of beams were to be avoided given their poor holding quality in long grain. It could sometimes be the cause of early timber deterioration.

There have been many wooden wrecks along the adjacent coast over the years ... water, wind and tides do amazing things, but I'd like to believe it is wreckage from *Lourah* ... have to find the other pieces of the puzzle to see if it fits!

—Ken Jones, shipwright

#### TASMANIAN SHIPWRECKS

*Volume 2: 1900–2020*  
by Graeme Broxam and Michael Nash (2021)  
Navarine: Hobart  
ix; 326 pages

*Frederick*: 120 ton brig built of blue gum, Huon pine and celery top pine

Constructed at the Macquarie Harbour Penal Settlement, 1833

Shipwright: Mr David Hoy; Crew: Ten convicts who had captured the ship on 13 January 1834

The penal settlement had closed in 1833 and only a few people remained to complete the ship which was then to sail to Port Arthur. Ten men saw an opportunity.

This is a first-hand account, by one of the ringleaders, of the Maiden Voyage: Macquarie Harbour, Van Diemen's Land, to the coast of Chile, south of Valdivia.

## Frederick — Macquarie Harbour to the coast of Chile — 1834



'On the 14th January 1834 ... we took our final farewell of Macquarie Harbour Heads with light hearts.

It was then that John Barker commenced his duty as Navigator, (which he learned at the Settlement from a prisoner named William Harry Phillips, once in the East India Company

Service). We divided ourselves into two watches, there being only four seamen on board, the other six were landsmen, which caused the duty to fall heavy on us four. We also found Mr. Hoy's remark too true — for no sooner had we got into sea way with the Brig than she leaked to an alarming degree. We got the pumps to work and they were kept going all the voyage — we dare not neglect them two hours at a time — the breeze freshened to a heavy gale by the next morning the 15th at 8 o'clock from N.W. — we were running 12 knots under a single reefed main top sail & fore sail in a heavy sea & for nine days and nights she required two of us at the helm.

On the 24th the gale broke and we carried a stiff top gallant quarterly breeze for four weeks with a heavy range of sea after us. A villain named Lyon let the main boom jibe on him & carried it away — Fare and myself fished it & made it firm as ever, but during the time we had this quarterly wind — after three weeks running our navigator found we were going too far southward & brought her nearer the wind. This gave the sea greater power on the Brig and alarmed Lyons that was at the helm, & coward-like persuaded the watch to square the yards & run the vessel before it for the whole watch (four hours), which made scores of miles difference to us — and also, endeavouring to deceive us he brought the Brig upon the wind again, but at 12 o'clock the next day when Barker took the Sun he found out

the mistake. When the rascals were taxed with this gross neglect of duty they told the truth, & we were going to give Lyons a short passage over the side — but all ended in peace and it was looked over with a caution not to do the like again at his peril or he should certainly die.

We still continued on our way with prosperous gales — we found our provisions getting very scant & obliged to issue a certain small portion every day. The only vessel we fell in with was a French Whaler running along the coast — the moment we seen her we got our arms and ammunition upon deck, for had she hoisted her Ensign we could not have answered her not having a flag or bit of bunting on board, and had they come alongside and made themselves inquisitive we were determined to run on board of them, capture them, or die in the attempt. For we knew if we were brought back Governor Arthur would hang us to a dead certainty. They however passed us, and in a few days after we sighted the main land of South America on the 27th February — after six weeks & one day of a passage, and proud we were of it as the Brig was getting the best of us in the leakage. We immediately got to work with the little strength we had remaining, got a purchase on the main & fore yard to hoist out our long boat of 7 tons — Shires, Leslie and Russen put another streak on her and decked her in case we should have to quit the Brig.

We got the long boat out with great difficulty and put what little things we had into her. As for provisions we had not more than 2 lbs (bread and meat) — we dropped the long boat astern & sloop rigged her. We had neglected pumping the vessel ever since we sighted land being employed at other things. We found the sooner we got out of her the better, and it was not until dark that night we could leave her, being fairly knocked up with over exertion and little to eat. However we took our leave of her, hove her to as she was approaching the shore which we calculated about 40 miles off — and I never left my parents with more regret nor was my feelings

The brig *Frederick* departs from Sarah Island, Macquarie Harbour, Van Diemen's Land in 1834  
A detailed etching by Geoffrey Chapman Ingleton (1908–1998); created ca 1952

Image kindly supplied with permission to publish by Antique Print Map Room [www.antiqueprintmaproom.com](http://www.antiqueprintmaproom.com)

facing page: Sailing toward Hells Gates at Macquarie Harbour  
Source: Mitchell Library, NSW



harrowed up to such a pitch as when I took a last farewell of the smart little *Frederick*.

The Brig stood to Seaward, and in the state she was in, water logged & so much dead weight for ballast — she soon went down. All things being ready, up sail and ran in for land, & when we thought we had run long enough we hauled our wind & stretched along the land. When daylight appeared we could see the shore close aboard of us covered with a rich verdure.'

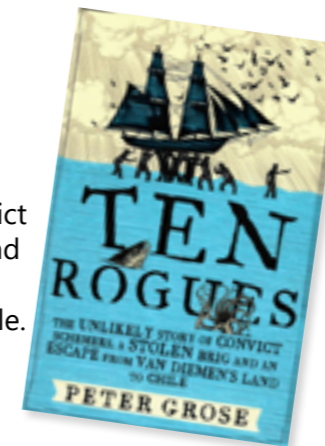
Extract from *The Travails of Jimmy Porter* from the original manuscript by James Porter

The aftermath:  
Supreme Court — Criminal Sitings  
re the theft of *Frederick*  
—Porter and others  
—David Hoy's testimony  
*Colonial Times* 2 May 1837, p. 5

### in our shop

TEN ROGUES  
by Peter Grose (2020)

The unlikely story of convict schemers, a stolen brig and an escape from Van Diemen's Land to Chile.  
Allen & Unwin:  
Crows Nest, NSW



Our thanks to Kiah Davey at Round Earth Company, Strahan, for images and information.  
[www.roundearth.com.au](http://www.roundearth.com.au)



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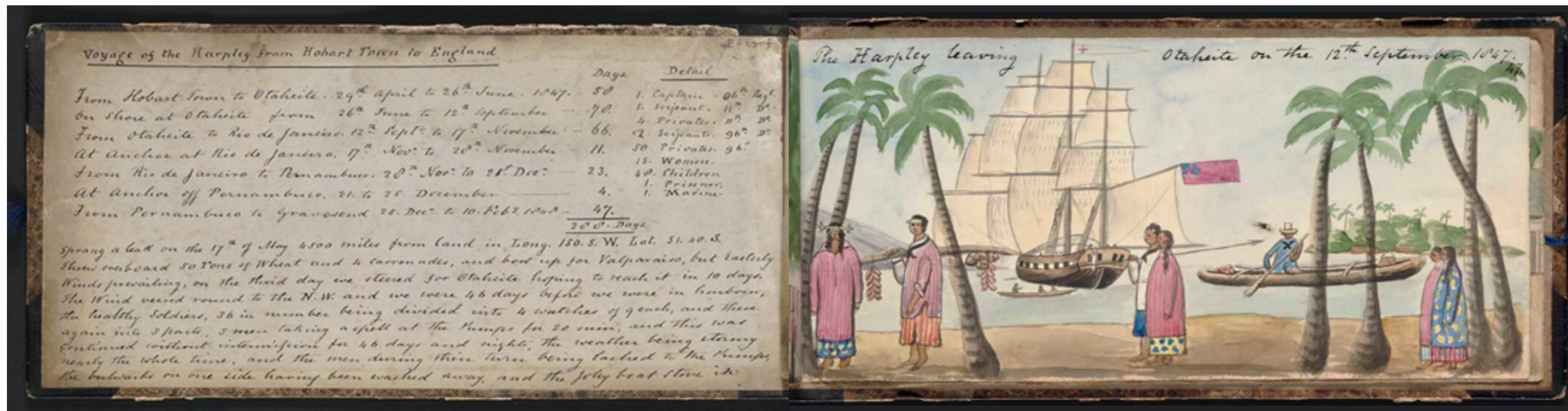
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Summary of *Harpley's* voyage from Hobart Town to England. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ, Reference E-113-f-inside front cover

'The *Harpley* leaving Otaheite on the 12th September 1847.' Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ. Reference E-113-f-47 Watercolour, pencil and ink on a page of sketchbook, 127 x 275 cm, by an unknown artist aboard the vessel.

## Harpley — from the Tamar to London via Tahiti — 1847

## 'a fine specimen of naval architecture'

A DRAMATIC DETOUR ON ITS MAIDEN VOYAGE was something to write about as the limited available records from those aboard *Harpley* show.

Built using 'swamp gum' (*Eucalyptus regnans*) on the Tamar River by William Patterson, *Harpley* was launched on 2 February 1847 by owner James Raven's wife. With 547 grt, its overall length (loa) was 122.4 ft, beam 26.3 ft and depth 18.6 ft.<sup>1</sup> Its two decks and three masts might have been NZ kauri pine, which was favoured by Patterson. Local papers noted the fine craftsmanship, the cabin fittings, etc. of the three-masted vessel which would initially be fully-rigged as a ship (later modified to a barque). Raven, a shipowner and merchant in Launceston, had arranged an excursion to Spring Bay aboard the steam-boat *Gipsy* to watch the event. More than two hundred people took up the offer but, amid their cheers and those of many more on land, *Harpley* grounded not far from the shore.<sup>2</sup> Once that setback was overcome and preparations made, *Harpley* sailed for Hobart on 6 April.<sup>3</sup>

Raven had been fortunate to tender successfully for the transport of military personnel who were to be invalided from Hobart Town to London.<sup>4</sup> He did not know just how fortunate that would be until later in the voyage. Cargo including wheat and wool was loaded in Launceston and additional cargo of wool and whale oil in Hobart.

Another ship of a similar size, *Tasman*, was built of bluegum with huon pine decks by John Gray in the shipyard of Louis Nathan, T Brown and Peter Degraives for owner Henry Degraives, son of Peter. Also destined for the London run, it was launched at Hobart on 12 March 1847.<sup>5</sup> It claimed 562 grt, with a length of 119.4 ft, beam 27.3 ft and depth 20.0 ft.<sup>6</sup> The two vessels inevitably drew comparisons, particularly for the timber used in their construction and this is discussed at length in 'The controversial ship, *Harpley*' and other papers by Don Chambers, who disputes claims made against *Harpley* and perpetuated in several publications, e.g. allegations in Will Lawson's book *Blue Gum Clippers*.<sup>7</sup>

*Harpley* left Hobart, under the command of Thomas Buckland, on 29 April 1847. James Raven and his wife Mary were on board, as well as 50 soldiers, 26 women, 40 children and the crew. The proposed course was to round Cape Horn and continue to London.

As noted in the summary in the sketchbook (above), on 17 May (Long. 150.5 W; Lat. 51.4 S) and 4500 miles from land, the ship was struck by a gale and sprang a leak. Not confident of rounding the Horn in a ship with severe storm damage, Captain Buckland set a course for the port of Valparaiso in Chile, but the ship was beset by easterly winds and another gale, so he chose to steer north to the

island of Tahiti (then Otaheite). The 36 able soldiers worked the pumps on continual shifts, four watches of nine men, for days throughout the storms 'lashed to the pumps, the bulwarks on one side having been washed away.'<sup>8</sup> Part of the cargo was thrown overboard but the workers were supplied with extra provisions and drink.

Raven wrote in his journal, which was sent to his father-in-law, Mr Swan:

'... an immense sea struck the vessel, and washed clean over her; she, soon after, sprung a leak, and although the pumps were kept at work for nearly forty days she at one time had two feet of water upon her cabin floor; and had it not been for the great exertions of the military on board, she must have inevitably gone down; a large quantity of her cargo was thrown overboard, and we should think the greater part must be destroyed: the ship and freight have been insured for about £14,000 ...'<sup>9</sup>

Another account, an extract of a letter published in the *Launceston Examiner*, stated:

After we had made a northerly course for two days we had a gale — such a gale! All the other gales and squalls, etc. were insignificant by comparison with this one; it laid our blessed ship

on her beam ends, washed me out of my cot (at about 3 o'clock in the morning), and frightened almost every one to a fearful extent ... I rushed out of my cabin, in which my boxes and clothes were floating about four feet from the deck, found the cuddy full of water, women weeping and screaming, and men in great bodily fear, and went upon deck, where I saw a picture I shall not forget in a hurry.

The ship was lying right down on her larboard side, all her quarter-deck (on that side) under water, and also a great part of the poop, and a mountainous sea washing right over her. The soldiers, unable to stand or work the pump, were holding on as they best might to anything within their reach. Captain Buckland told the carpenter to fetch his axe to cut away the masts, but by the time all was ready the wind lulled a moment, and the ship righted a little. The sight was magnificent; sea and sky seemed all one mass; and it blew so hard that you could not look to windward nor stand for an instant without holding on .... We were skudding under two close reefed topsails and fore-topmast-staysail when this occurred. Afterwards we lay to for a couple of days under a storm trysail, when the wind was abating, we made sail, and about five weeks afterwards — having experienced nothing but



foul winds—we arrived at Tahiti. We never had (for more than six weeks) one day's fair wind; or even one day's wind sufficient to enable us to lay our course; and what is more, the wind was not only generally blowing in our teeth, but mostly blowing so hard that it was impossible to carry sail. Even after we got within the tropics, when we confidently hoped to meet with a south-east trade, which would have been fair for us, we still had foul wind (though not gales), and storms of rain accompanied by a great deal of thunder and lightning, which lasted for nearly a week.

Nay, misfortune pursued us so far that, although we saw Tahiti at daylight on Wednesday morning, and were close to it (within ten miles) at night, yet we were unable, in consequence of calm and light baffling winds, to get in until Saturday, and in all probability should have been outside the harbour till this very minute had it not been for the brickish conduct of the French and Englishmen-of-war lying here, who manfully and without any provocation whatever, sent 8 boats (4 French and 4 English) pulling from 12 to 18 oars each, who towed us into the harbour in gallant style, to our great joy and immense satisfaction. And here we are; amongst cocoanuts, plantains, bananas, oranges, limes, pineapples, arrowroot, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Yankeemen, Danishmen and le Kanague [locals].<sup>10</sup>

The crew of HMB *Grampus*, a ship-of-war, assisted *Harpley's* crew to repair and re-caulk the ship. *Harpley* left Tahiti on 12 September sailing to Rio de Janeiro, where it remained for three days before leaving for Pernambuco (a stay of four days), also in Brazil. The stops might have been for restocking supplies and for further repairs. The ship arrived at Gravesend, England on 10 February 1848.

Its timbers were not condemned by Lloyds, as alleged, and after re-sheathing, it was awarded an A1 rating for nine years, and kept it.<sup>11</sup>

'A fine specimen of naval architecture' commented the *Plymouth Advertiser*.<sup>12</sup>

On its return voyage, *Harpley* brought the English lacemakers of Calais to settle in South Australia.<sup>13</sup> Raven sold *Harpley* in 1852 and it continued to trade until 1862. It was wrecked at Realejo but the exact location differs in publications, reminding us that 'facts' are not always accurate and that inaccuracies are perpetuated. Several sources, including Rollicker Chandler, a descendant of immigrants who travelled on *Harpley*, claim that it was wrecked at Realejo, Teneriffe, in the Atlantic Ocean, off western Africa.

In contrast, Don Chambers, a descendant of *Harpley's* builder, claimed in his paper 'The Controversial Ship *Harpley*', citing *Lloyd's List*, 12 June 1862, p. 4, that it was wrecked entering Realejo harbour (once Nicaragua's principal port on the Pacific coast and more than 7000 km from Teneriffe), on 12 May 1862 after rounding Cape Horn and while bound for San Francisco. So, where does the wreck of *Harpley* lie? □

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Parsons, R (1980). *Tasmanian ships registered 1826-1850: full details of every ship enrolled by the Registrar of British ships at the ports of Hobart Town and Launceston*. Magill, SA: RH Parsons; also

Lander, R (1994). *A history of the Lander family, 1811-1994*. Sydney: Richard Lander. Extract available at: <https://bound-for-south-australia.collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/1847Harpley-maiden%20voyage.htm>

<sup>2</sup> 'Launch of the *Harpley*' *Launceston Examiner* 3 Feb. 1847, p. 4

<sup>3</sup> *Colonial Times* 13 April 1847, p.2 (sailed for Hobart)

<sup>4</sup> 'Misc. Shipping.' *Cornwall Chronicle* 3 April 1847, p. 265

<sup>5</sup> 'Launch of the *Tasman*.' *Hobart Town Advertiser* 16 March 1847, p. 2

<sup>6</sup> '*Tasman*, barque.' Research Notes at MMT and Parsons, R, (1980) as (1) above.

<sup>7</sup> Chambers, D (2009). 'The Controversial Ship *Harpley*: Seaworthiness, Timber and Tasmanian Shipbuilders.' *The Great Circle* Vol 31 (1), pp. 3-28

<sup>8</sup> Author unknown. 'Summary of *Harpley's* voyage from Hobart Town to England.' Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ, Reference E-113-f-inside front cover (see illustration on p. 30)

<sup>9</sup> Raven, J. Extract from his onboard journal received by his father-in-law, Mr Swan. *Colonial Times* (Hobart) 10 Sept. 1847, p. 3

<sup>10</sup> Passenger's letter from Tahiti, dated 2 July. Extract in *Launceston Examiner*, 11 September 1847, p. 6

<sup>11</sup> Chambers, D (2009), as (7) above

<sup>12</sup> *Argus* (Melbourne) 9 January 1850, citing *Plymouth Advertiser* 20 September 1849.

<sup>13</sup> Chandler, R. (1996). *The migrant ship Harpley, 1847-1862* Beaumaris, Vic: R. Chandler

With thanks to everyone who contributed information to this article about *Harpley*. □

#### Around the world

ON THE THEME OF MAIDEN VOYAGES, I was reminded of my first ocean voyage in 1969. Back then, my dad Rex was Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer with the Hydro-Electric Commission. He joined the 'Hydro' in 1934 and, apart from his wartime service with the RAAF as a radar officer, worked his entire career with them through the 'glory days' of big dams, power stations and transmission lines.

For senior staff with long service, the role of Resident Electrical Engineer based in London was a pre-retirement perk. Because most of the Hydro's equipment came from the UK and Europe then, this was an important role in coordinating myriad contracts. So, in February 1969, Dad, mum Elspeth and seven-year-old John, set sail from Sydney on TSS *Fairstar*, a passenger liner with Sitmar Line. It had been launched in 1955 at the Fairfield yard in Glasgow, originally as the troopship *Oxfordshire*, before its reincarnation as the one-class liner for 1868 passengers in 1964. For a young boy like me this was the trip of a lifetime, although it started badly. We had forgotten to bring my teddy bear!

Even though it was a one-class liner, they had separate dining rooms for adults and children, presumably to give the parents a break. I recall that every meal was served hot, even when passing through the humid tropics and they used powdered milk for the children's meals. Yuk! So, I would sneak up to the adult dining room to get a glass of proper milk. The ship had a large cinema, but the only film I can remember was *Dr Zhivago*, a long and pretty boring film for a seven-year-old.

Our route took us first to Tahiti, then on to the Panama Canal. I can still remember Dad getting me up on deck late at night to witness *Fairstar's* transition through the canal, with electric locomotives pulling the ship through the narrow sections. As an engineer, Dad just loved the whole business. We arrived at Southampton after a five-week voyage.

We spent the next 2½ years living in Putney, London. We travelled everywhere we could: all over Britain, Ireland, and Europe. My fondest memories are visiting great museums, countless castles, and ruins. (I once started walking Hadrian's Wall hoping to get to the end before lunch!) My love of history was born there. Our return journey in September 1971 was onboard the Lloyd Triestino liner SS *Guglielmo Marconi* sailing from Genoa. This time we came home in first class! We sailed via the Canary Islands, Durban, Fremantle to Melbourne. So, I really have sailed around the world. □

## high and dry

by John Wadsley



TSS *Fairstar* in Sydney, February 1969



Rex, Elspeth and John Wadsley in Trafalgar Square, London 31 May 1969



TSS *Fairstar*

MMT Collection

*Fairstar* came to Hobart in 1967 and 1968; it features in our migration display in the Carnegie. We have many pictures in the collection taken by John Craike as well as postcards and other memorabilia. *Fairstar* became a popular cruise ship from the mid-1970s until it eventually met its end at the wrecker's yard in 1997. □

# ship spotter

by Rex Cox



1

Mirambeena — The Bruny Island Ferry



2



3



4

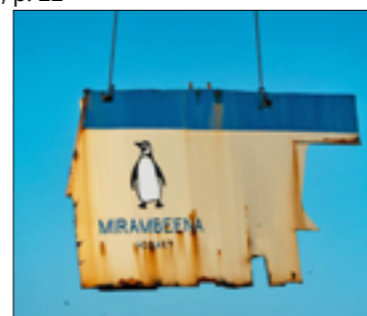
MANY VESSELS HAVE BEEN BROKEN UP in Tasmania over the years, but this activity is generally confined to quiet backwaters. By contrast, recent demolition of the ferry *Mirambeena* (500 grt/1991) in Hobart has attracted media attention and generated considerable interest among passers-by, especially ship photographers.

Built in Launceston for the Transport Commission, *Mirambeena* was notable as being the first purpose-built ferry for the Bruny Island service. The 52-metre vessel could carry around 70 vehicles on two decks — 20 more than its predecessor *Harry O'May* (388 grt/1952). A competition, open only to Bruny residents and ratepayers, was run by the Tasmanian Government in 1990 to name the new ferry and won by Kevin Sawford of Great Bay, who suggested an Aboriginal word meaning 'welcome'. *Mirambeena* commenced service in June 1991 and made 230 000 crossings over the next 30 years, carrying more than 6 million vehicles.

The service was privatised in late 1997 and managed by North Western Shipping & Towage Co. Pty. Ltd. Sealink Travel Group took over in September 2018 and ordered two new ferries as replacements for *Mirambeena*, which had remained in government ownership and ceased running on 25 May 2021.<sup>1</sup> A year in lay-up ended with demolition at Prince of Wales Bay and the Domain Slip during June and July 2022.

<sup>1</sup> *Maritime Times* (MTT 70) Autumn 2020, p. 22 □

1. *Mirambeena*, the new vessel in Hobart, 13 June 1991
2. Under construction in Launceston, December 1990
3. Moving to the demolition berth Prince of Wales Bay, 2 June 2022
4. Escorted by tug *Wandana* to the Domain Slip, 4 July 2022  
Photos: R Cox



Final demolition at the Domain, July 2022 Photo: Brendon Bowes



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## 1st Derwent Sea Scouts – celebrating more than 90 years

MESSING ABOUT IN BOATS can start at an early age. If you're a Joey Scout with the 1st Derwent Sea Scouts, it can start at just five years old, although you have to be a bit older before you can head out in a kayak on your own or sail in one of the group's patrol boats, and can continue through Cubs, Scouts and Venturer Scouts right up until you are 18, and even longer if you carry on as a Rover or Leader.

1st Derwent Sea Scout Group has been teaching boys and, since the 1970s, an increasing number of girls, how to kayak, sail, row and all manner of other water and land-based activities at their hall on the banks of the Derwent since 1931. Last year's 90th Anniversary celebration was a little muted because of the uncertainty around COVID, but the Governor, the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, and Hobart Lord Mayor, Councillor Anna Reynolds, joined in the fun at the hall.

The group was founded in late 1931 following a visit to Tasmania by the movement's founder, Lord Baden Powell. Baden Powell was impressed by Hobart's harbour, declaring at a Civic Reception in his honour that the city needed a sea scout troop. He went on to implore his audience to 'Put your boys into boats; let them face a little danger, and learn to be quick and active in the work'. The Hobart Marine Board leased the group a plot of land sandwiched between the Domain slipway and HMAS *Huon* for £8 a year and built them a hall for £100. The group's second Scout Leader was Captain Douglas S Bull, a redoubtable fellow employed by the Navigation Service as Deputy Director of Lighthouse and Navigation for Tasmania when he wasn't Scouting. Over the years nearly 1500 youngsters have been members with many families maintaining a connection to the Derwent Sea Scouts over successive generations.



Gig Race. Captain DS Bull helms a gig, either *Bass* or *Flinders*, at a Royal Hobart Regatta in the early 1940s.

Christmas camp at the hall in the early 1930s with Leader Goddard in the foreground. Original hall, with its first extension in the background.



above: The hall today, with bridge-making activity far left of photo. The original hall, with flagstaff attached, is surrounded by additions and extensions, which house boats, kayaks and a growing group. The now empty Navy Divers' store is to the left, and HMAS *Huon* beyond.

facing page: The Troop posing for the camera, 1950s. The gigs *Bass* and *Flinders* were ex RAN, originally from HMAS *Australia*, built to a RN design of the 1860s and used by Derwent Sea Scouts from their inception through until the late 1960s. One was lost in the 1967 bushfires, the other is back in the possession of the RAN at Spectacle Island after being recovered by MMT volunteers from a paddock at Coles Bay.

Governors of Tasmania, the Honourable William Cox and Peter Underwood, were members and there are many ex-Derwent Sea Scouts among the membership of the Maritime Museum.

Honour Boards in the hall acknowledge those members who have attained the highest Award possible in the worldwide scouting movement, the Queen's Scout Award. It also honours members who served in WW2, including Ken Hudspeth, Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) and Bar, one of the RAN's most highly decorated officers from that conflict, who went on to have a long involvement with the Maritime Museum Tasmania over many years.

This oldest continually operating Sea Scout Group in Tasmania is currently one of the largest Scout Groups in the state with around 90 active members, and is firmly embedded in the Hobart community, participating in community events such as the Royal Hobart Regatta and ANZAC Day commemorations. It provides an affordable, accessible and equitable way for kids to access water (and other) activities and is already planning its centenary celebrations!

Are you an ex-Derwent Sea Scout? Get in touch with us at [admin@maritimetas.org](mailto:admin@maritimetas.org) and share your story.



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**MUIR'S** BOATYARD



The author at Table Cape Lighthouse



Lighthouses under the control of the Hobart Marine Board – Tasmanian Mail 4 Nov. 1905



Images supplied by TasPorts

## TasPorts supports *Safe Passage: The Lighthouses of Tasmania*

‘In recognition of the vital role Tasmania’s lighthouses continue to play in ensuring maritime safety around Tasmania, TasPorts proudly supported the work of Tasmanian author Garry Richardson for his new book,

*Safe Passage: The Lighthouses of Tasmania.*’

LIVING IN AN ISLAND STATE, TASMANIANS ARE almost wholly reliant upon maritime trade and port operations to sustain our communities and economy. However, the waters around our island are inherently dangerous, with more than 1000 vessels noted as wrecked around the coastline since records began. While technology has greatly reduced the risk of shipwrecks, Tasmania’s lighthouses are still essential navigational aids for thousands of commercial and recreational vessels visiting our shores each year.

In recognition of the vital role Tasmania's lighthouses continue to play in ensuring maritime safety around Tasmania, TasPorts proudly supported the work of Tasmanian author Garry Richardson for his new book, *Safe Passage: The Lighthouses of Tasmania*.

Within these pages, the author has presented a captivating history of Tasmania's 14 staffed lighthouses and the ships that supplied them. The lighthouse keepers could not have survived without the supply ships that played an equally crucial role in keeping the lights operational.

Few are aware that a key priority for TasPorts' predecessor, The Marine Board of Hobart, was the establishment and management of a network of lighthouses, pilot stations, and navigational aids around the state to help guide vessels safely to port. The Commonwealth took control of all Australian lighthouses in 1901, but it was many years more before the Hobart Marine Board ended this work.

TasPorts is committed to the preservation of Tasmania's rich maritime history for future generations and is proud to be associated with *Safe Passage: The Lighthouses of Tasmania*.

*Safe Passage* is a comprehensive book written about Tasmania's 14 staffed lighthouses and is the first compiled since they were all automated.

Containing nearly 700 images and charts—many sourced from previously unpublished keepers' family collections—*Safe Passage* brings to life the era of staffed lighthouses in Tasmania.

*Safe Passage* is available to purchase from the bookshop at the Maritime Museum Tasmania. □



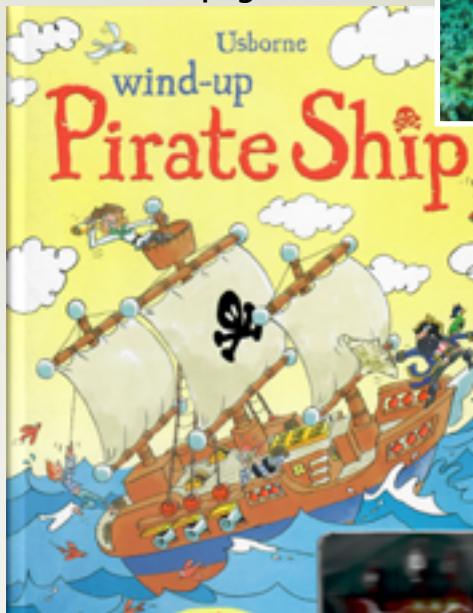
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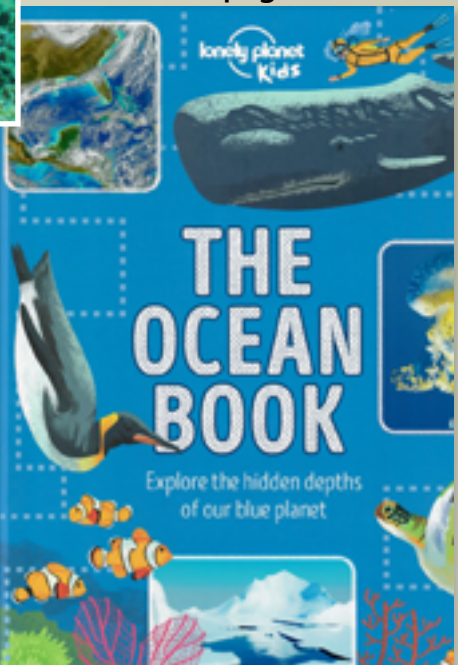


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