

# Maritime Times *of Tasmania*

Our maritime history & present day news.

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*Terra Linna* (1880) a gaff-rigged cutter under full sail at Cygnet. Important maritime skills needed in the restoration process were traditional rigging and sailmaking. Story page 14 Photo: Peter Higgs

## *Maritime Arts and Skills*

SAILMAKING - RIGGING - HERITAGE BOAT RESTORATION - PAINTINGS  
SHIPS' MODELS - FIGUREHEADS - PHOTOGRAPHY - SCRIMSHAW

AND A NEW EXHIBITION AT THE MARITIME MUSEUM OF TASMANIA



**Maritime Museum of Tasmania**

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The Committee also includes representatives from external organisations: Alderman Eva Ruzicka (Hobart City Council), Scott Carlin (TMAG), and Kevin Moore (TasPorts)

The Maritime Museum of Tasmania acknowledges the support of the City of Hobart, Murdoch Clarke Lawyers, and TasPorts.



**MARITIME TIMES OF TASMANIA WELCOMES ORIGINAL ARTICLES FOR PUBLICATION**

Contributions may be historical or newsworthy and with themes reflecting the Museum's mission to promote research into, and the interpretation of, Tasmania's maritime heritage.

They may be short notes, or articles with text about 700–1200 words, accompanied by images if possible. Text may be edited, and publication is at the discretion of the editor.

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

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

Please submit contributions to The Editor at the postal address above or email to [admin@maritimetas.org](mailto:admin@maritimetas.org)

Alternatively, you can leave your contribution at the front desk of the Museum at the street address above. Please remember to include your contact details.

**Deadline for the next edition is 15 August 2017.**

# from the president's log



by Kim Newstead

I am very pleased to report that your Museum has been successful in obtaining a grant from Arts Tasmania to fund our staff position of Maritime Heritage Coordinator for the next four years. This position is very ably undertaken by John Wadsley. It is particularly pleasing that the funding covers a four-year period, giving us the opportunity to plan and implement a number of initiatives with certainty and continuity. This significant grant will enable us to continue with our role of delivering programs and projects on behalf of the Maritime Heritage Organisations of Tasmania (MHOoT), which includes the following:

Bligh Pacific Museum of Exploration, Channel Heritage Centre, Wooden Boat Centre, Living Boat Trust, Runnymede (National Trust), Woodbridge Marine Discovery Centre, Spring Bay Marine and Discovery Centre, East Coast Heritage Museum, St Helens History Room, Warships & Marine Corps Museum, Bass & Flinders Centre, Low Head Pilot Station & Museum, Bass Strait Maritime Centre, Burnie Regional Museum, King Island Historical Museum, Cygnet Living History Museum, Ulverstone Local History Museum, The Moorings Museum, Esperance Discovery Centre, Stanley Discovery Museum, Australian Wooden Boat Festival, Royal Hobart Regatta Association, May Queen Trust, Tasmanian Sail Training Association, Wooden Boat Guild of Tasmania, Admiral Restoration Group, Steamship Cartela Limited, SV Rhona H, Windeward Bound, Friends of Mt Nelson Signal Station, Friends of Tasman Island, Friends of Mattsuyker Island, Friends of Deal Island, Cape Bruny Lighthouse, West Coast Visitor Information Centre, Deny King Heritage Museum, Tasmanian Sea Canoeing Club, Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office, LINC Tasmania, Parks and Wildlife Service, Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority, National Archives of Australia, Australian Maritime College, Australian Antarctic Division, CSIRO and the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies.

Our successful submission was prepared by John, who will certainly be busy as we have committed to support and enhance the MHOoT network using direct contact, email, social media, newsletters, seminars and sharing of resources; offering support to MHOoT members with regard to research, museum management and conservation; and collaborating with other maritime heritage and community history organisations on future displays where the Museum can provide assistance. One of the first projects will be to update and relaunch a statewide touring leaflet 'Tasmanian Mariners' Trail' for use by visitors and residents, incorporating a variety of places to visit with maritime heritage displays and content. If you are reading this and would like to join the network please contact John at the Museum.

Other activities include: arranging school visits to the Museum and supporting school education programs externally and internally, using the Museum's collections; organising and hosting an annual seminar/conference for MHOoT members; arranging public presentations and regular talks on maritime-related themes, and promoting them to the general community as well as MHOoT organisations; representing the Maritime Museum at Mystate Australian Wooden Boat Festival meetings and co-ordinating the Museum's contributions to the event and recording oral histories of maritime identities around the State. The Maritime Museum is more than the presentation of our collection at Argyle Street, as you can see by our support for MHOoT in developing our islands' rich Maritime Heritage statewide.

In this issue we acknowledge two major birthdays in June. Our *Westward* bosun, John Wedd celebrated his 80th birthday and incredibly *May Queen* turned 150. Makes you wonder if *Westward* will still be floating in the dock when it turns 150, or by then will it be a feature display on the hard at Macquarie Point as part of a Sydney Hobart hall of fame or Maritime Heritage Centre?

A recent new display item at the Museum is a large model of *Nella Dan* that has attracted many positive comments already. Due to its size, the model has been located on the stair landing. Call in and have a look at *Nella* a well-known local ship. The model is currently on loan, although longer term you never know!

As we grow and expand we need more volunteers to operate the Museum. My closing comment is a plea to all members to consider providing some volunteer assistance and encouraging others to volunteer. Our volunteer team is a happy crew, however they really do need a few more crew to spread the watches. ■

## in this issue

- Maritime Arts and Skills
- 06 *Mary Blair* paintings
- 10 Scrimshaw
- 14 *Terra Linna* sailmaking and traditional rigging
- 18 Ships' models  
*Flying Childers*  
*Harriet McGregor*
- 20 *Varg* 8-metre titles
- 24 King Island Museum photography  
*Netherby* model
- 27 *Olga* ARHV
- + book reviews and regular features

# from the brig

## Nella Dan model

The Museum's graceful staircase is currently home to a rather impressive model of *Nella Dan*, complimenting the equally impressive portrait of the ship that hangs below it in the entrance lobby. The model is on loan to the Museum from the Australian Antarctic Division and it had previously been on display in the foyer of the IMAS building on Princes Wharf.

The full size *Nella Dan* sailed to the Antarctic every year of the twenty-six years it was chartered by the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions (ANARE). Built as an ice breaker by the Aarborg Shipyard Pty Ltd, Denmark, in 1961, at the time of its construction, *Nella Dan* was regarded as setting the standard for polar vessels.

On its last fateful voyage in December 1987, during resupply operations, *Nella Dan* dragged its anchor and was driven aground just metres off Macquarie Island. A decision was eventually made to scuttle the ship and it was sunk in deep water off Macquarie Island on 24 December 1987.

The model was constructed by members of the Ship Modelling Society of Victoria as a club project commencing in 1971. ANARE supplied plans and participating members met two hours ahead of the main monthly club meetings to complete the model. The 'remotely-controlled' model took some 3000 hours to build and was constructed to 1/25 scale from Western Red Cedar, with brass windows and portholes (glass inserts) and the hull was laminated externally with fibreglass. The overall dimensions of the model are 10ft x 18inches by approximately 18 inches draft. The model was powered by a 6V aircraft starter motor and controlled using a model aircraft RC unit. The model was capable of turning to port or starboard but restricted to forward motion only due to the complexity of trying to simulate 'reversible pitch' propellers.

The model was launched by Mrs Sid Rose at Albert Park Lake in Melbourne at 10:00 am on Sunday, 2nd December 1973. Initially loaned to the National Trust (*Polly Woodside*) for display, the model was returned to the SMSV in 2009. It was then donated to ANARE who shipped it to Tasmania where it is now part of the Australian Antarctic Division Library Special.

We are grateful to the Ship Modelling Society of Victoria (SMSV) for their assistance with this article. Details of the Society's activities and some photographs of the *Nella Dan* model under construction and afloat can be found on the Society's website at <http://shipmodelsvic.org.au/>

Editors Note: see also page 9



*Nella Dan* model Photo: Maritime Museum of Tasmania Collection



Construction of the *Nella Dan* model — and not a power tool in sight Photo supplied by Ship Modelling Society of Victoria Inc.

### new members

We welcome new members:

<b>John Bridge</b>	<b>Terence Keown</b>
<b>Ingrid Roberts</b>	<b>Barbara White</b>
<b>Graham Roberts</b>	<b>Russell Griffiths</b>
<b>Colin Beecroft</b>	

### Not already a member?

You can show your support for the Maritime Museum of Tasmania, and enjoy the benefits, by becoming a member. You can join online, or download an application from at: [www.maritimetas.org/support-us/become-member](http://www.maritimetas.org/support-us/become-member)

### Membership Fees

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

<b>Individual</b>	\$30
<b>Family</b>	\$40
<b>Concessions</b>	\$20
<b>Interstate</b>	\$20
<b>Overseas</b>	\$20
<b>Quarterdeck</b>	\$25 plus \$275 donation
<b>Perennial</b>	\$1000

Perennial is once only, or four years Quarterdeck membership



# the carnegie gallery

## THE TURNING TIDE - Australia's War at Sea in 1942

mid-July - end of October 2017

The next exhibition in our Carnegie Gallery will be on the dramatic events faced by Australia in 1942. By April, Japanese expansion into south-east Asia and the Pacific seemed unstoppable. But within a few months, the tide had turned after some pivotal naval and land engagements, including the Battle of the Coral Sea. The exhibition will also examine the impact of the war in Tasmania, from defence against sea and air attack, to local ship building in support of the war effort.



The transport *Zealandia* landing troops in Hobart on 7 January 1941 Photo supplied by Rex Cox

Our thanks to Ian Gibson, Graeme Broxam and Neil Coates for the hours spent in exhibition research and development.

## SUBMERGED — A NATIONAL TRAVELLING EXHIBITION

The Australian Maritime Museum Council in collaboration with the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM), are planning a small touring exhibition on the theme of Australian shipwrecks. The challenging concept is to produce a two-dimensional exhibition that is small enough to be hosted by local history rooms or libraries around the country, but that can be augmented with additional local material by larger venues. The Maritime Heritage Organisations of Tasmania was invited to contribute to the planning of the exhibition by participating in a workshop held at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston.

The annual get together of museums, history rooms and others with an interest in Tasmania's singular maritime heritage is a valued opportunity to share experiences and stories, and to hear news from around the State. This year's meeting provided an appropriate forum for the fourth 'Submerged' workshop, with the ANMM's team of Asst. Director Peter Rout and designer Em Blainey leading the workshop sessions.

Following on from the success of the ANMM's 'War at Sea' flat-pack exhibition, which has been touring Australia for a couple of years, the 'Submerged' exhibition is intended to present eight large pull-up banners featuring a selection of shipwreck stories from around Australia. The exhibition concept allows Submerged to be exhibited as a self-contained exhibition in museums, libraries and other public spaces, or for a museum venue to add its own panels, using templates provided and, where possible, objects from local collections. The basic idea is to create an attractive, eye-catching display that particularly enables small, regional museums or other venues to present exhibition material in which local stories can be explored within the context of the larger national narrative.

Tasmania's islands (over 350 of them) are the sites of a considerable number of shipwrecks. A top selling item in the Maritime Museum of Tasmania is a tea towel that lists 463 named shipwrecks around Tasmania's 4882



Workshop delegates tour the *Sydney Cove* exhibition with curator Jon Addison. Photo: John Wadsley

kilometres of coast. And that only covers the years 1796 to 1900! This demonstrates one of the challenges for the Submerged team: How do you choose the final selection of wrecks for the national exhibition? It also demonstrates the attractiveness of the project for smaller museums. Even if your local shipwrecks don't make the final cut, the templates provided allow you to create your own pull-up banner to augment the exhibition when it comes to you or a location near you.

The Launceston workshop explored a number of Tasmanian wrecks, some well known, such as *Sydney Cove* (1797) and the subject of a fantastic permanent exhibition at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, some lesser known, such as *Esk* (1886) whose Master's negligence in steering his ship onto the rocks was no bar to his becoming Premier of Tasmania in later life! The workshop encouraged participants to look at these wrecks in terms of the constraints of preparing exhibition panels. Em gave tips in limiting the story to just a couple of hundred words, pulling out nuggets of information that might catch the imagination.

The workshop was very positively received. Delegates headed home with the intention of reviewing current text panels in their museum, or of researching their favourite shipwrecks in anticipation of offering them for selection for the national exhibition. ■

[www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/national-location-information/dimensions/border-lengths](http://www.ga.gov.au/scientific-topics/national-location-information/dimensions/border-lengths)



facing page, top: 'The *Mary Blair*' Chinese artist, c.1880, oil on canvas MMT Collection

facing page, lower: 'The *Wild Wave*', Chinese artist, c. 1865, oil on canvas MMT Collection

right: Detail from the painting 'The *Mary Blair*' (facing page, top) of a typical Fujian sea-going junk



## Mary Blair Hobart and the China Trade

by Chris Tassell

**'The Maritime Museum now has two significant China trade portraits of vessels with a strong Tasmanian association that sailed between Hobart and China for more than a decade.'**

The importance of Tasmania's trade with China is not just a recent phenomenon. During much of the 19th century there was a very active Tasmanian interest in and trade with China. *The Hobart Town Gazette* (4 March 1820) noted that 'On Thursday arrived from China, the brig *Greyhound*, Capt. Campbell, with a valuable cargo of merchandize.'

The growing affluence of Tasmania from the 1830s onwards saw a great range of Chinese furniture, porcelain, silver, silk, ivory and other luxury goods being brought to Tasmania simultaneously with their export to Britain, Europe and North America. These goods included both traditional Chinese products as well as items specifically produced for western markets.

Oil painting on canvas was not a Chinese traditional art form but by the 1780s such paintings were being produced for western clients, particularly merchants and ships' captains. These paintings included portraits, landscapes, port views and ships' portraits. The China trade paintings were generally produced in studios and often those involved were copyists rather than artists, hence the distinctive appearance

of many of these paintings which often have a slight awkwardness to the western eye. Ships' portraits were particularly popular with mariners and were produced in substantial numbers. The quality of the paintings varied considerably as did the materials used. In some cases, the works were framed with Chinese style frames while others returned as rolled canvases to be framed in locally made frames. During the latter part of the nineteenth century in particular a number of China trade paintings were brought to Tasmania, some in Chinese frames while others were to be framed here.

Recently the Maritime Museum was given a China trade oil painting, a portrait of the Tasmanian barque *Mary Blair* nearing Hong Kong. *Mary Blair* is a very well-documented vessel. Basil Lubbock observed that 'Besides America, Australia was becoming a growing consumer of tea, and through the seventies some fine little clipper barques worthily upheld the racing traditions of the trade by their smart passages from the tea ports to Melbourne and Sydney. Perhaps the best known of these clipper barques were the *William Manson* built by Duthie of Aberdeen in 1872 for Frazer of Sydney, and the *Mary Blair* built by Duthie in 1870 for Hobart owners.'

(continued on next page)



### Volunteers Recognition Awards

The work of the Maritime Museum's volunteers was acknowledged at a reception hosted by the Lord Mayor of Hobart, Alderman Sue Hickey, at the Hobart Town Hall recently.

Committee member Michelle Blake and Volunteer Coordinator Gerald Latham received a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of all our volunteers.

Many thanks to all our volunteers; without you the Museum would not function.

Photo: MMT



## Mary Blair (cont.)

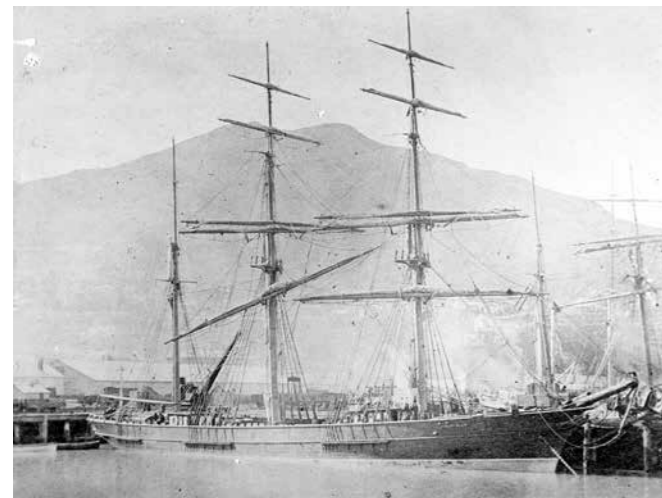
He also recorded that 'William Manson only registered 366 tons and *Mary Blair* 311 tons, but these vessels crossed two skysail yards and were sailed for all they were worth' (Lubbock, 1914). William Lawson, similarly impressed by its performance, recorded that 'Another Hobart Town barque the *Mary Blair*, of Scottish build, sailed from Hobart Town to Lyttelton in four days and two hours, from heads to heads' (Lawson, 1949).

Launched in October 1870, *Mary Blair* was originally a wooden schooner built by Duthie of Aberdeen for J. Ewan & Co. Sydney. It was one of many clippers built in Aberdeen for Australian and New Zealand interests during the latter part of the nineteenth century. When it arrived in Sydney for the first time on 12 April 1871 *The Sydney Morning Herald* commented that it 'is truly a really beautiful vessel and justifies all the excellent reports made regarding [its] admirable lines.'

Tasmanians are known to have crewed on the vessel from the time of its arrival in Sydney, Andrew Angus for example was boatswain on the voyage from Foo Chow, China to Sydney in March 1872. The same year also saw *Mary Blair* converted from a schooner to a barque, probably in Sydney.

By 1875 *Mary Blair* was registered in Hobart with new owners Belbin & Dowdell of Hobart. Once in Hobart the number of Tasmanians in the crew increased to more than 50% of the ship's complement with most of the remaining crew being Chinese. Just over ten years later, in 1886, *Mary Blair* was sold to interests in Adelaide and, in 1893, to Dutch interests in Singapore.

The Maritime Museum's portrait of *Mary Blair* is a classic China trade painting which we know was painted after 1872 but before 1886 when the ship was sold to an owner in Adelaide and then used largely in the southern Australia trade. In this painting *Mary Blair* is portrayed entering the Pearl River near Hong Kong. That it is a view of the ship near China is confirmed by the inclusion of a Chinese junk in the distance. This is a typical Fujian sea-going junk painted in black and red, with a highly-decorated stern and bow, with distinctive large sweeping wings and painted eyes



to guide the vessel in its travels. Although the *Mary Blair* painting has been damaged in the past, a not uncommon occurrence for China trade paintings because of the very thin canvas used, the portrait is of great significance. It is the first known China trade portrait of a Tasmanian-owned and operated vessel to enter a Tasmanian public collection.

The receipt of this donation prompted a review of the Maritime Museum's important maritime art collection and another China trade portrait of a Tasmanian vessel *Wild Wave* was found. *Wild Wave*, a brig of 180 tons, was built by De La Mare in 1854 in Guernsey and arrived in Melbourne on 30 December 1854 where it was sold the following February. It began trading immediately with South America, the South Seas and China, returning from Shanghai to Sydney on 11 April 1856. By 1861 it was reported to be in Hobart and in the following year part-owned by Hobart merchant Peter Facey.

The Museum's painting probably dates from the 1860s. It is certainly no later than 1874 when *Wild Wave* became a total loss on the Montebello reefs. There was in fact a second *Wild Wave* that visited Tasmania much later in the nineteenth century. Built in 1875 in Liverpool this vessel was a much larger three-masted ship, which was wrecked at Circular Head in 1923. Clearly, it was not the subject portrayed in the Museum's painting.

The Museum now has two significant China trade paintings of vessels with a strong Tasmanian association that sailed between Hobart and China for more than a decade. These Chinese-painted images of Tasmanian ships emphasise the importance of Tasmania's trading relations with China during the nineteenth century in a way that few, if any, other objects can. Both ships' portraits are an important part of Tasmania's maritime heritage.

The two paintings require conservation attention and the Maritime Museum is now seeking funding for this so that these very important paintings can be safely displayed in the future. ■

## References

Lawson, W. *Blue Gum Clippers and Whale Ships of Tasmania*, Georgian House, Melbourne, 1949.

Lubbock, B. *The China Clippers*, J Brown & Son, Glasgow, 1914.

left: *Mary Blair* at Port Lyttelton, NZ after 1872 when it was rigged as a barque. Brodie Collection, La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria

# in remembrance

## DAVE WOOTTON

Dave Wootton was a regular, friendly and welcoming face at the Maritime Museum's front counter and his recent sudden passing has been felt keenly by all who knew him. Although a native of Cheshire, in England's north-west, there was something of the scouser about him and he could be relied on for a story for any occasion. Dave's career as a merchant seaman had brought him to Tasmania in the 1970s where, like many others, he had fallen for a local lass. He settled ashore in Hobart, raising a family and spending the rest of his career working at Wrest Point. Dave's humour and unflappability was perfectly suited to welcoming visitors to the Museum and he will be much missed.

## ERIC BARNARD

MMT Foundation and Life Member Eric Barnard died recently in Western Australia. Well known in State political circles, Eric was also enthusiastic about maritime history and I first got to know him through our membership of the World Ship Society. We shared a number of sessions on the front desk at the Museum in the early 2000s and enjoyed discussions about his service with the RAN in WW2, and shipping in general. He wasn't a great fan of the new cruise ships then appearing on the scene, and I imagine would be even less impressed with the appearance of some of them today! Eric moved to the west some years ago to be closer to family, but maintained his interest in the Museum and was delighted to receive Life Membership in 2014. —Rex Cox

**NELLA DAN** This painting by Ib Odfeldt, of polar ship *Nella Dan*, is displayed in the foyer of the Maritime Museum and was featured in *Maritime Times of Tasmania* No 43, Winter 2013. Now a database of videos of the ship has been collated and made available at: [http://www.maritime-executive.com/preview/nella-dan-a-legend-among-polar-ships#disqus\\_thread](http://www.maritime-executive.com/preview/nella-dan-a-legend-among-polar-ships#disqus_thread)



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## Scrimshaw Art of the Mariner

by Scott Carlin

WHALING IN TASMANIAN WATERS was Australia's leading export industry pre-1840. Before the advent of the petrochemicals industries c. 1860, whale oil was used to lubricate fine machinery, provided the fuel for London's street lamps, provided domestic lighting and was also the basis for perfumes and soap. Whale bone was also an important material pre-plastics, providing handles of clothes and tooth brushes and other items. Flexible baleen from the feeding plates of the right whale was famously used to reinforce women's corsets.

Hobart collector Colin Thomas has assembled a scrimshaw collection with the breadth and quality of institutional collections in New Bedford, Massachusetts USA and Hull, Yorkshire, England, other former whaling centres. Thomas's collection is chiefly Tasmanian in origin and a touchstone for understanding early Hobart. Part of the collection was recently exhibited at Narryna, the 1830s house of merchant, shipbuilder and whaler, Captain Andrew Haig (1793 - 1871).

Thomas is quick to say that he does not support the continuance of whaling in any form. 'What was acceptable in the early 19th century is not acceptable today. I fully support the conservation of these majestic marine mammals. However, the personal risk faced by early whalers and their creativity shown in scrimshaw artworks should be acknowledged and respected.'

Whaling is inextricably linked with Hobart's origins. In 1803, the *Albion*, captained by American, Eber Bunker was hired by the New South Wales Government to take Captain John Bowen and his party to Risdon Cove. *Albion* encountered a school of sperm whales off the East Coast at Great Oyster Bay. Bunker's contract allowed him to conduct whaling during the voyage and the expedition waited while he boiled down three carcasses for lucrative sperm oil.

Lieutenant-Governor David Collins who replaced Bowen and relocated the settlement to Sullivan's Cove in 1804, requested a report from his Harbour Master, William Collins, on the maritime commercial

potential of the settlement. Collins was not slow in recommending the relocation of the Southern Whale Fishery from London to Hobart. By 1806 William Collins had established a shore whaling station at Tryworks Point, now Droughty Point, Rokeby. While colonial, British and American vessels exploited whaling and sealing in Tasmanian waters, the British Government saw Hobart Town primarily as a prison settlement and it remained closed to merchant ships until 1813. It was not until 1828 that the British Government lifted heavy import duties on sperm whale oil.

In shore or bay whaling the whales were sighted from an onshore tower or vantage point and the whaleboats returned to shallow water to process their kill. This involved cutting the carcass into chunks that were boiled down in large trypots. The boiling or trying process rendered the flesh into oil. Trypots were used in graded sizes and an exceptional pair is on view in Salamanca Place, Hobart.

Southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*, also known as the right or black whale) came north from the Antarctic in winter to calve in the sheltered bays of south-eastern Tasmania. In 1803 the Rev. Robert Knopwood recorded travelling up the Derwent by boat and needing to keep close to shore owing to the risk of the boat being capsized by whales.<sup>1</sup> Other commentators recorded difficulty in sleeping because of the calls from whales cavorting in the Derwent. The right whale was the mainstay of shore or bay whaling until the late 1830s when it had been hunted almost to extinction. Right whales feed by sieving krill through horny baleen plates hanging down from their upper jaws. Flexible baleen became an ideal material for corset stays, umbrella spokes, furniture and walking stick inlays. As fibre it provided bristle for brushes.

Each Summer, schools of sperm whale (*Physeter microcephalus*) migrated north, searching the Tasman Sea for giant squid and cuttlefish. Sperm oil was superior to right whale oil for lighting, burning more clearly. Spermacetti, a sweet smelling oil made from

SCRIMSHAW, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is to 'adorn whalebone, ivory, shells or other materials with carved or coloured designs'. Its derivation is said to be 'early 19th century, of unknown origin ...' Scrimshaw belongs to ancient traditions with engraved deer horn found in prehistoric sites such as the Lascaux Caves (1700 BCE). The term scrimshaw has since come to embrace all items that are a by-product of the whaling industry.

a wax in the whale's head cavity (where it assisted the whale's buoyancy) improved the brightness of candles. Additionally, ambergris, a sperm whales' intestinal secretion, was used as a fixative in the perfume industry.

In the early 1830s Hobart's New Wharf was constructed together with the warehouses that face what is now Salamanca Place. By the late 1840s as many as 50 whaling ships might be seen tied up at New Wharf with most of the colony's businessmen also taking an interest in whaling. From the late 1830s to the 1850s was the great era of sperm whaling. While mainland Australia struggled owing to a financial downturn in 1842, Tasmania's economy remained buoyant owing to whaling, wool and a convict labour force.

The dangerous business of sperm whaling is recorded in William Duke's theatrical tableau, 'Offshore Whaling with the *Aladdin* and *Jane*' (1849) in the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery. Set in Storm Bay against a backdrop of Mount Wellington, ten whale boats (their prows painted red as typical of Tasmanian whale boats) are aiming to slaughter a large pod of whales. Several sperm whales are diving out of reach but two in the foreground are in their death throes, blood foaming from their blow holes. Sailors are being dragged to safety from boats swamped by the heaving whales. Few of the sailors of the day knew how to swim. Duke shows the catch rather than the pursuit in which the harpooned whale dragged the whale boat for several kilometres, known then as the 'Nantucket sleigh ride'. Water was thrown over the rapidly unwinding harpoon rope as the pursuit got underway and this could easily claim a whaler's limb. A harpooned whale could drag the boat under and a tomahawk was always on hand to cut the rope if needed. Blood loss over hours of pursuit would leave the whale exhausted allowing the harpooner to move in to pierce its vital organs.

In Duke's scene one whale's flesh is being flenced (cut away from the bone) and hoisted onto *Aladdin's* deck for rendering down in trypots. The trypots sat in lead trays on the ship's deck. Furnaces under them

were kept burning day and night until the whale was consumed – its flesh melted into oil and drained off into casks kept in the hold. The smoke, stench and grease was constant. A fire spreading from a ship's galley or tryworks was fatal to operations.

In the 1860s whale numbers were declining and petroleum and kerosene replaced whale oil in lighting and industry. The last Tasmanian whale ship sailed out of Hobart in 1899. English and Norwegian whalers plied Tasmanian waters into the 1920s and 30s.

### A Remarkable Collection

Colin Thomas's collection encompasses the breadth of scrimshaw from items of personal adornment, to sailors' gifts to their sweethearts and tools to maintain the majestic rigging of the whaling ships.

Whalers were paid a ley or a proportion of the catch according to the value placed on their role. Harpooners earned a very high share. Herman Melville's *Moby*



above: Ditty box to contain jewellery or sewing materials in whale bone and baleen with Huon Pine oval tops and bases. facing page (top): Several walking canes including one with *Turk's head* hand grip owned by Captain Richard Copping. Colin Thomas Collection.

## Scrimshaw (cont.)

Dick (1851) records the whalebone and teeth being divided among the crew according to their ley. Sperm whales have between 40–52 teeth in their lower jaw, hence the number of scrimshaw sperm whale teeth in circulation. Lengthy periods between whale sightings were occupied in scrimshandering. Sailors typically used jack knives (per the two in the exhibition) to incise the design before rubbing in a colouring in the form of ink, soot or tobacco juice. A sailor using a jack knife was clearly responsible for the pair of teeth engraved with sailors dancing the shuffle steps of a hornpipe. Other sections of the sperm whale's dense lower jaw bone were cut for walking sticks or flat 'pan bone' sections.

Notwithstanding the 19th century being a highly visual culture, the quality of the engraved teeth raises questions about who the scrimshanders were. The fineness of the engraving between a pan bone scene of two ships offshore from Lord Howe Island and a pair of enormous sperm whale teeth indicate the same hand. Has this engraving been done using a surgeon's tools or fine steel plate engraving tools? The scenes' composition are reminiscent of William Duke's work. Duke was an engraver of whaling scenes and it appears his work has provided inspiration for engraving whale teeth and jaw bone.

In 1841 Thomas Scott sailed with Captain Charles Bayley on a 22-month whaling voyage to the Pacific Islands. His diary tells of crew members who made 'very neat' walking sticks, cribbage boards and other items. The Captain took a lathe on board to turn sperm whale teeth into 'whale ivory' components of walking sticks and household items. A fine collection of Bayley scrimshaw is on exhibition at Runnymede, New Town, a house named for the leading ship in the Bayley whaling fleet. Colin Thomas's collection includes comparable turned items from egg cups to cork screw handles, funnels, punch ladles and pastry crimps. A particularly attractive item is a small flask which sits on a turned stand surrounded by small goblets, each turned from a sperm whale tooth. The flask contains enough liquid to fill the goblets.

Thomas's sailors' tools include fids (used to splice ropes), tools to bind ropes together (avoiding rope burn), seam rubbers used in flattening sail canvas for sewing, and net maker's shuttles. These share a showcase with sealers' clubs, a refashioned whale beculum or penis bone.

Among sailors' gifts to their sweethearts, scrimshaw corset busks were a favourite (perhaps the anticipation of fitting the busk made it the gift that gives). Ditty boxes to contain jewellery or sewing materials had sides of whale bone or baleen with Huon pine or cedar oval tops and bases. The sides were often pierced with the junction at the back in the form of strapwork, reminiscent of American Shaker boxes.

Among the rings is one pierced with an early version of the Australian Coat of Arms. Dressing table sets were a trophy item and exercise in ugly beauty. They took the form of a raised platform, often with a back plate of engraved pan bone, supporting a pair of engraved sperm whale teeth, occasionally a pin cushion fitted into a carved sperm whale tooth or a pocket watch. More workaday gifts were knitting needles, crochet hooks, embroidery tools, wool winders, buttons and combs.

Whalers made prestige items they may have used themselves, sold or presented to patrons such as walking canes (one in the exhibition doubles as an opium pipe), whip handles, clothes brushes, boot button hooks and handles for razors and their strops. Several walking canes have splendid Turk's head hand-grips, named for the rope knot. One of these was wielded by Captain Richard Copping when he murdered his female servant.

Sperm whale teeth engraved with whaling scenes, scenes of ships, portraits of actors, actresses and celebrities, ladies of fashion and ladies of the night were also presentation items, possibly with the latter a target audience. The scenes reflect a great variety of sources with fashion plates from high-end magazines such as Ackerman's *Repository* (1809–1829), actors performing their roles from popular broadsides and tinsel pictures, to portraits of royalty from publications such as the *Illustrated London News* (1842–2003).

One small portrait is clearly based on an early studio photograph. Images were transferred from paper templates onto the teeth by pricking the paper and pouncing powdered graphite or pigment onto the ivory surface. This method is the evident in a portrait of Quaker prison reformer, Elizabeth Fry. The scrimshander has not joined the dots but allowed them to be part of the composition.

One of the Colin Thomas's most enigmatic items is an Australian cedar whaler's trunk c. 1825–50 inlaid with whalebone. The front is inlaid with a central compass, a full and a crescent moon, the focus for navigation by the flanking octants. The sailor to the right of the panel wears the garb of a Boston whaler, while the figure to the left is a Polynesian warrior, wearing an Hawaiian feather helmet or *mahiole*. While provenanced to East Coast Tasmania, the trunk recalls the cosmopolitan nature of whaling.

In the 1840s Thomas Scott described his fellow crewmen on Charles Bayley's *Wallaby* as 'the scrapings of Hell, Bedlam and Newgate'. Deep-sea whaling crews included former slaves and ex-convicts. Captain James Kelly and others founded the Derwent Sailing Club in 1826 to train young Tasmanian-born men as whalers.

While it provided an extraordinary view of whaling as a highly dangerous trade and an era with vastly different

sensitivities from our own, the exhibition supported the conservation of whales. Southern Right Whale populations are listed as endangered but recovering from the wholesale 19th century slaughter. Northern Right Whale populations are facing extinction. The sperm whale is still a target for Japanese whaling. Its current worldwide population is not known and its conservation status is listed as Vulnerable (IUCN 2008).

### Endnote

<sup>1</sup> The Diary of the Rev. Robert Knopwood, first Chaplain of Van Diemen's Land 1803-1838, 28 June 1803



A scrimshaw sperm whale tooth 'Whaling at Twofold Bay NSW' with a scene of harpooning a spouting whale from a longboat. Colin Thomas Collection

## Narryna

103 Hampden Road, Battery Point

General admission to Narryna is \$10 adults and \$8 concession. Historical societies and community groups (10 people and more) are welcome to book tours of the house and gardens.

Open: Tuesday to Saturday 10am - 4.30pm  
and Sunday 12 noon - 4.30pm

T: 6234 2791 E: narryna@tmag.tas.gov.au

## 80th birthday celebrations for John Wedd



John Wedd with his wife, Erica, MMT Secretary Beth Dayton (left) and volunteer Fay Carrick aboard *May Queen* for John's 80th Birthday morning tea. Photo MMT



*May Queen* in Constitution Dock Photo: Bob Chesterman

'A fine new barge built by Mr. G. W. Thorpe, of the Franklin, has just been launched for the river coasting trade. The barge has been constructed at the Franklin, is of 60 tons burthen, with a keel of 60 feet, and is, we are informed, a remarkably fine vessel. The craft has been named the *May Queen*, and is the fourth boat of the same description built by Mr. Thorpe, who also owns the vessel, within the last few years' (*Mercury*, 6 June 1867)

So reported the *Mercury* on the launching of *May Queen* 150 years ago. While no longer new, the 'fine barge' is still with us today, the last of its kind afloat and the focal point of Constitution Dock. Early next year, the Museum's Carnegie Gallery, will host an exhibition of *May Queen* themed artwork by Jack Chesterman.

*May Queen* was a fitting venue for the recent celebration of Museum volunteer John Wedd's 80th birthday. John, who was the Museum's Honorary Secretary for many years, is still actively involved with the maintenance of both *May Queen* and *Westward*, as well as regularly opening the Museum and serving on the reception desk.

We wish John and *May Queen*  
Many Happy Returns.

# Traditional Sails and Rigging for *Terra Linna*



**Terra Linna** - a gaff-rigged, double-ended centreboard cutter, 28 x 9 x 3.9 feet, was built in 1880-1881 by George Luckman, in Sandy Bay, Hobart. It had a blackwood keel with Huon pine batten seam carvel planking on blackwood. The original owners were George Luckman and Harrington Wedge Knight. It was one of the first nine yachts registered with the Derwent Sailing Boat Club (later Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania) and had a history of successful competition, as noted below. Photo: Peter Higgs

## YACHT RACE FROM HOBART TO PORT ESPERANCE

A novelty in the shape of a forty-mile race by the 28-footers belonging to the Derwent Sailing Club was inaugurated on the occasion of the Port Esperance Regatta.

About 7.45 on the 9th instant, Mr. Knight got them all away to a good start, but the Terra Linna was delayed some time owing to some gear being fouled. The breeze was light N.W., and with the assist ance of spinnakors the fleet went bowling down until off the Grange where the wind fell very light and hauled more off shore. ... Light baffling winds was the order of the day for some time until a smart breeze was picked up across Brown's River. Magic, who had gained a lead by the use of the oars, was enabled to place a large gap between herself and the rest who were following in this order: ... The breeze here began to freshen from the westward which necessitated topsails being doused on all but Magic and Terra Linna. The relative positions were not altered at the Passage Mouth and here again the [boats] reduced sail. [After Peppermint Bay] Terra

Linna, who maintained her reputation for stiffness with her throat settled down and staysail off, went flying ahead of the leaders off Kinghorn Point.

Bar accidents, the Terra now had the race in hand. The usual lull under Long Bay shore gave the three contestants left' in the race an opportunity to get their topmains housed and all ready to face the Huon where a good ducking awaited them. The leader tackled it and made for Woody Island. On clearing Three Hut Point a very heavy sea was encountered, and with the furious breeze that was blowing it is astonishing that any headway at all was made.

... When off Woody, the Terra made a stretch for the mainland, weathering Arch Island ... the wind and sea were just as bad at Three Hut when they got there. [Later] the breeze was much lighter and [they] worked their way - wet and cold - for their destination. Once inside Blubber Head, the water was smooth, and all was pleasant sailing. The Terra Linna dropped her anchor first 35 minutes ahead of Magic, thus winning the hardest and longest race ever sailed by this generation of boats.

*Globe* (Sydney) Friday 26 March 1886, page 3

When *Terra Linna* was found at Battery Point in 2001, in a state of neglect with planks and rigging missing, research into its history soon indicated that this was a boat worth rescuing and restoring.

With financial aid from grants and donations, and the work of professionals and volunteers, the Wooden Boat Guild, with project manager Peter Higgs and boat builder Noel Hall, supervised the restoration. The boat was relaunched on 23 June 2012 at Bellerive by Tasmanian Premier Lara Giddings and Noeleen Hall. *Terra Linna* was admitted to the Australian Heritage Vessel Register on 1 February 2007 and sailed again at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival in February 2013. Many people were involved in the restoration project, but two highly specialised and interdependent maritime skills needed were sailmaking and rigging. This work was guided by old black and white photographs (right).

Russ Streckfuss, from Storm Bay Sails, explained: 'The sail cloth for *Terra Linna* came from England and replicates the look and feel of cotton but in a rot-proof durable polyester. The panels are cut narrow, as this is the way they were in the original photos supplied by Peter Higgs. Sail cloth in the late 1800s could only be supplied in narrow bolts, which I have been told was the limit of the weaving looms capabilities. With these sails we used the old methods of external roped edges and for the eyes we used hand-sewn rings with swaged in brass liners. Certainly some details are hard to perfect in current times. This is largely due to modern fibres taking over and the old styles disappearing. An example of this is the 'rat tailing' of the end of sewn-on edge ropes where the rope appears to magically and gradually decrease in diameter over the last 6" or so. Modern ropes simply don't 'hold the lay' that well and get all frizzy when tapering the rope down with a sharp blade. We do our best. Another skill used in the past was the rolling of seams. This process involved folding under the edge (hemming) of every seam (both sides of the sail!) before sewing the panels of the sail together. The labour involved in this is staggering. These days, polyester can be heat sealed and glued to prevent the edges from fraying. Not the case with cotton. The modern fabrics are much faster to work with. There is no doubt an apprentice assigned the task of hand sewing eyes (or roping, or seaming) would get quite fast, but not quite as fast as fitting a modern stainless steel eye with the hydraulic press.

'Unfortunately, the hand craft seen in the old sails is economically difficult to produce, as wages have



left: *Terra Linna* in full sail (Courtesy WL Crowther Library)  
above: rigging aloft  
below: aft deck and cockpit

improved greatly since then and with the huge numbers of hours involved in producing these sails, the skills have largely faded away. I haven't come across anyone in the sailmaking industry still able or willing to produce authentic reproductions of traditional sails, but there may be one or two with an interest. One client wanted the detail of three hand-sewn eyes with roped in thimbles at all corners and reef points for his sails. I commended him on his enthusiasm and provided him with the support, cut and sewn panels and hardware for him to hand-finish over a long winter. It was simply not in the budget for me to do this work in my loft and while he made an excellent job of it, he expressed surprise at how his whole winter disappeared. I do remember discussing the pleasure in the process where you enter a peaceful dream-like state in the repetition while your hands automatically follow the learnt patterns. Perhaps this is why my mother knits?

'These days we can still make sails using the old skills but only for restoration projects, and accept that the reward is not financial, but rather the joy in seeing old craft sailing with authentic sails. Needless to say, we can't take on these projects too often as the rent still needs to be paid! There is something very nice about producing traditional sails. They become a personal expression of creativity rather than taking on the feel of a mass produced commodity, probably due to the amount of time they spend in your hands. I imagine those who build and restore wooden craft feel the same way about a nice piece of timber as it is put in place.'

During the restoration of *Terra Linna*, Russ collaborated with Anastasia Konstantinidis, a traditional rigging

Russell Streckfuss - Storm Bay Sails

[www.stormbaysails.com.au](http://www.stormbaysails.com.au)

Phone 0407 534 219.



**Terra Linna (cont.)**

specialist, who was appointed to reassess the options available and to make and install the new rig. *Terra Linna* had undergone several modifications to its rigging arrangements during its long life and now has a cut-down version of an older rig. Few of the original fittings remained with *Terra Linna*. A new mast was crafted and dressed with the new standing rigging. New blocks were fashioned out of she-oak, and new bronze fittings cast. The rigging followed original arrangements shown in old black and white photographs.

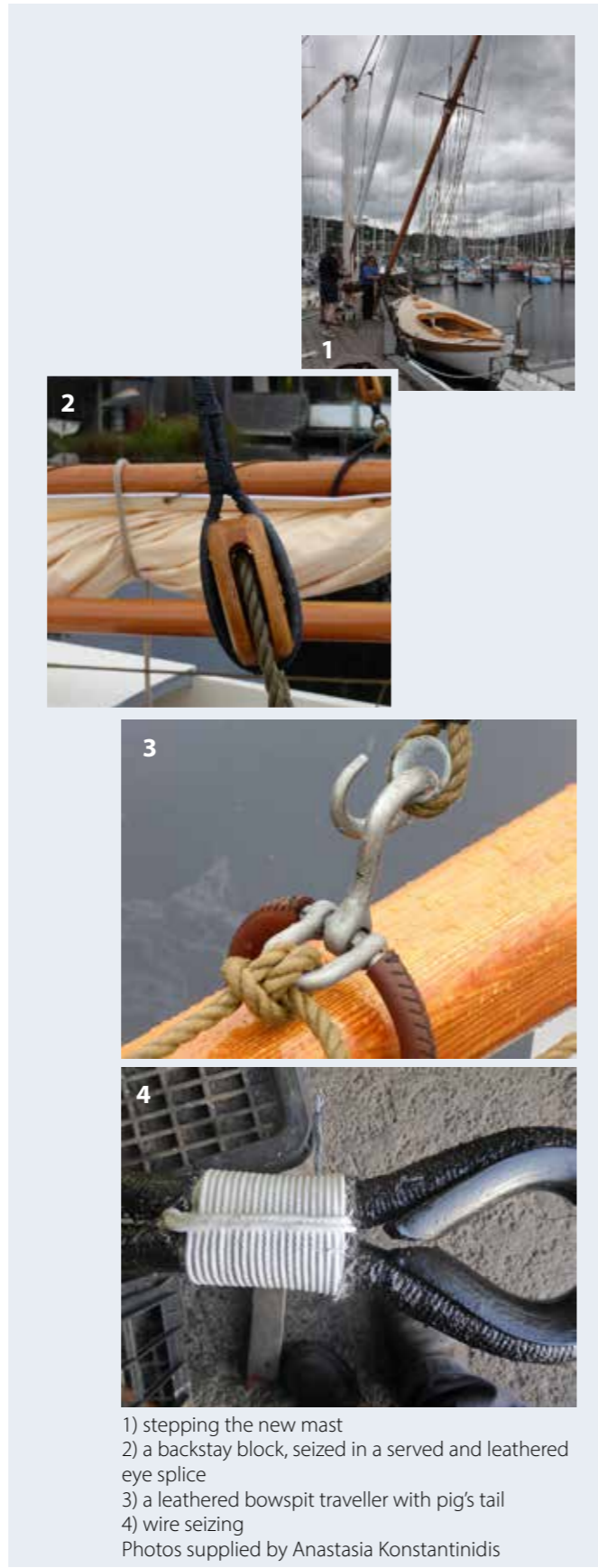
Anastasia explained: ‘The standing rigging, the shrouds and forestays, is 20/70 high-tensile galvanised 7x7 wire (7 wires each consisting of 7 strands with a wire core). This construction is used for the standing rigging as it has less stretch. The wire is “parcelled and served” i.e. treated with tallow or grease then wrapped in light canvas, treated with Stockholm Tar and wrapped with marline, which is applied under tension with a serving tool. This protects and preserves the wire. The shrouds are then leathered and spliced with a soft eye around the hounds. A thimble is turned in at the bottom where it is set up to the chainplates with a lanyard and tensioned.

‘*Terra Linna* is a gaff-rigged jackyard tops’l cutter, with running backstays. The running rigging has been done with Spunflex, a synthetic rope imported from Austria. It is a durable and highly UV-resistant brown hemp look alike, which is sympathetic to the traditional look. A yacht of the 1880s would originally have had its lines made of cotton or hemp, whereas a working boat used manila, hemp and/or sisal, all of which would have been tarred or tanned to prevent rot.

‘The work involved in traditional rigging is very labour intensive and repetitive, bringing its greatest reward when the sails are hoisted and trimmed to the breeze, showing off the vessel’s beauty and function.’

Anastasia worked on the rigging of the *Endeavour* replica, on *Enterprize* and other tall ships. She is currently re-rigging *One and All*, a tall ship based in Adelaide and new rigging projects will include *Kerrawyn*, a 1949 Tasmanian ketch, and *Lady Nelson*. ■

Note: There’s a model of *Terra Linna* on display at the Maritime Museum. It was built by Noel Hall for the Wooden Boat Guild. The sails and much of the model’s rigging were made by Noeleen Hall. Both played a pivotal role in *Terra Linna* sailing again.



1) stepping the new mast  
 2) a backstay block, seized in a served and leathered eye splice  
 3) a leathered bowsprit traveller with pig's tail  
 4) wire seizing  
 Photos supplied by Anastasia Konstantinidis

Anastasia Konstantinidis Traditional Rigging  
 Cygnet, Tasmania.  
 Phone 0447 432 532



**Further reading:** Broxam, Graeme & Wooden Boat Guild of Tasmania (2017). *Terra Linna: the history, recovery and reconstruction of Tasmania's oldest racing yacht* (3rd edition). Navarine Publishing, Hobart.

# school holidays program



Photo: John Wadsley

## School Holidays Program, July 2017

### — Nautical Fun and Games —

As we will be in the depths of winter, we are heading indoors for the next school holiday program. We will have a variety of maritime-themed games, puzzles and fun activities to get excited about. So keep your eyes peeled for the advertising when it comes out, as our program always fills up quickly.

Any queries, please call John Wadsley at the Museum

or email: [john.wadsley@maritimetas.org](mailto:john.wadsley@maritimetas.org)



Artwork by holiday program volunteer, Louis Rodway



# BOATS BOATS BOATS

An exhibition of paintings

by

**Peter Sharp**

member and former volunteer with the

Maritime Museum of Tasmania



## The Victorian Artists Society

430 Albert Street, East Melbourne

**3-30 July 2017**

10am-3pm weekdays

1pm-3pm weekends



## Celebrating another Milestone!

Congratulations to Mark Hosking who, while attending to lots of other details for the Maritime Museum, does such a stellar job of getting *Maritime Times* together, printed and posted to you.

Many Happy Returns, Mark.





*Flying Childers* the ship featured on the Hobart City's Coat of Arms; facing page: *Harriet McGregor*  
Photos: Michael Stoddart; Coat of Arms used with the permission of the Hobart City Council

## The art of making model ships

by Michael Stoddart

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN MAKING MINATURE REPLICAS of ships for at least 5000 years, for clay effigies of ships have been found in archaeological sites of that age. Some Christian churches in European coastal towns display model ships used to bless the fleet to ensure safe voyages or full nets; some date back to the 12th century. The fascination with model ships continues unabated to the present day. As oceanic shipping developed in the 18th and 19th centuries, sailors frequently whiled away long months at sea by constructing models of their ships using strips of wood, whalebone or even the skeletons of birds that came to grief during storms. The pastime has a long and varied history.

French and English seamen, captured during the Napoleonic wars in the early 19th century, often built model ships during their imprisonment, selling them so they could buy, or bribe their captors, for various small comforts. Whalebone was generally available and, though it is harder to work than timber, some prisoners' models are quite exquisite. It's thought that the Maritime Museum of Tasmania's beautiful little whalebone model of *Elizabeth* was built by a French prisoner transported from Canada for participating in a mutiny in that colony - presumably a French Canadian convicted and transported to Australia after the Canadian uprisings of 1837-1838.

Back in the heyday of Tasmania's shipbuilding past, over 1000 vessels were built in and around Hobart at yards on the Domain, Battery Point, Bellerive, Kangaroo Point and Macquarie Point. Some ships

were built further afield, e.g. at Launceston, Port Arthur and Macquarie Harbour, but Hobart's industry was the biggest. Alas, few of Hobart's historic ships were built from plans. Instead the shipwright's skill, experience and a good eye ensured a seaworthy craft would result. Usually it did, but not always. The absence of plans is a headache for model builders of Hobart's historic ships for there is little for them to go on other than the scanty information recorded in the ship's registration papers of length, beam and rig. Sometimes the shipwright might carve a scale model of half the hull from a solid block of timber to show the putative owner, or to convince himself that his new hull shape would work. The Museum has many such half-hulls and modern scanning techniques can now turn these carved objects into scale plans from which a modeller can work. Examples can be found on the Museum's website (<http://www.maritimetas.org/resources/hull-scanning>).

**Enterprise** One famous Hobart ship, *Enterprise*, was reconstructed largely from a watercolour sketch painted by Georgiana McCrae in 1841. Built in Hobart in 1835 by William Pender and William Harvey, *Enterprise* was taken by John Batman and John Fawcner to establish a settlement by the River Yarra where Melbourne now stands, and was that city's founding ship. A plan for the replica *Enterprise*, which is a frequent visitor to Australian Wooden Boat Festivals, was modelled on details recorded on Hobart's ships register (No. 4/1830) and on McCrae's sketch which, fortunately, survived the passage of time. From this a

model maker's plan has been produced by a Melbourne ship modellers' business. Occurrences like this are rare and usually a model builder is obliged to develop plans from measurements taken from sketches and paintings of historic ships.

**Harriet McGregor** By a remarkable stroke of luck, modellers' plans are available for one of Hobart's most loved historic ships, the clipper *Harriet McGregor*. *Harriet* was the pride and joy of Alexander McGregor, a wealthy shipping magnate of Lenna in Battery Point. McGregor's brother John built *Harriet* at his Domain shipyard in 1871 and, for almost a quarter of a century, the beautiful ship made an annual run to London and back. On its first voyage, Lloyds of London surveyed it and awarded it their top rating.

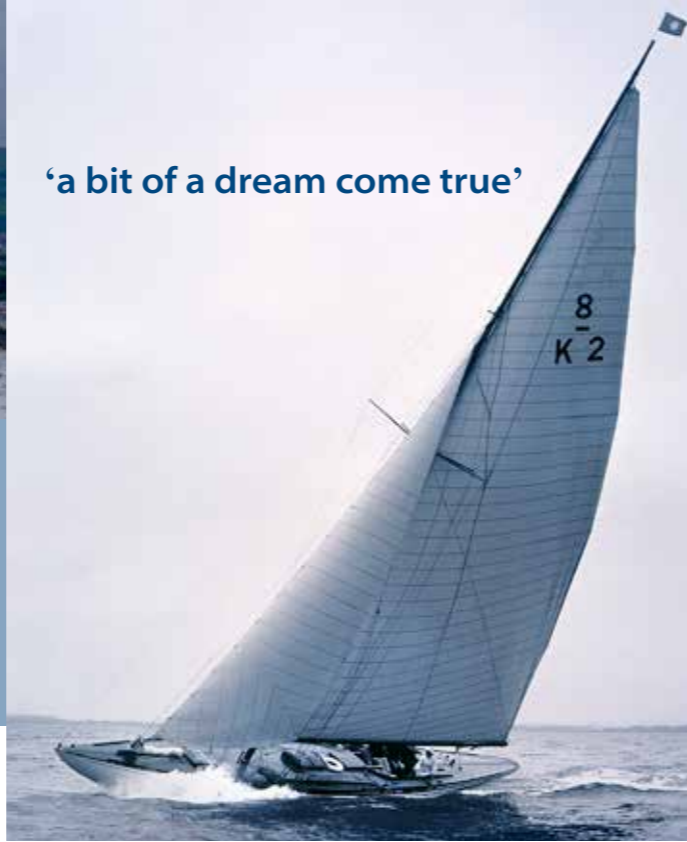
Between the wars, a British naval architect named Harold Underhill took an interest in *Harriet* and collected as much data as he could about the dimensions and sail plan from Lloyds. He took its lines from a half-hull model in Hobart, and completed a modellers' plan just as the London blitz started. By good fortune *Harriet's* plans survived, though a great deal of his other work was lost. My model of Hobart's favourite ship (photo above, right) is built from Underhill's plan.

**Flying Childers** Another of Hobart's treasured ships is *Flying Childers*, a six-boat whaling vessel built in 1846. *Childers* made 28 whaling expeditions during its 30-year lifespan and seldom returned without the hold full of barrels of sperm whale oil. It was built at the height of Hobart's whaling success at a time when whale oil

export revenues equalled, or exceeded, revenues from all agricultural products combined. It was designed and built by John Watson in his Battery Point shipyard, and on its maiden voyage was crewed by many of the young apprentices (average age 19) who had built it. The captain, Edward Lucas, was himself aged only 20 years.

No plans of *Childers* exist but a couple of old photographs are of sufficiently high quality that I could accurately measure its length, masts, yards and other features. I can't say that my model (above, left) is exactly what it looked like, but I can say it is a faithful representation of the few images that have survived. Incidentally, *Flying Childers* is depicted on Hobart's Coat of Arms (inset), as a tribute to a famous ship and the industry that contributed so much to Hobart's history.

Lastly, a word about how historic ship models should be presented. Everyone agrees models should be as accurate as possible in every detail of structure and layout. Some hold that if the ship was painted black from stem to stern, so should the model also be painted. Others think it should also be a beautiful object reflecting the inherent beauty of sailing ships. I subscribe to this second view and unapologetically use the finest timbers I can find. I built *Harriet's* hull from English cherry, the decks from silver ash to which I've added a few feature planks of beautiful pinkish pear, and the masts from walnut. I built *Childers'* hull from figured liquidambar and holly, and used the same snow-white timber for the decks. However you like them, models of Hobart's historic ships should reflect the graceful age of sail. ■



‘a bit of a dream come true’



The amazing reconstruction and restoration of a classic 8-metre yacht, which had been declared unsalvageable, was detailed in ‘It’s all shipshape’ by Bruce Stannard (*Mercury*, 24 July 2016). Here Kraig Carlstrom and Carolyn Mason describe how that yacht, *Varg*, is now preparing to race in the 2017 World Titles and for the Neptune Cup.

# Tasmanian yacht *Varg* prepares for the 8-metre World Titles

by Kraig Carlstrom and Carolyn Mason

OUR CLASSIC 8-METRE YACHT *Varg* was completely and meticulously recreated by Wilson Boat Builders of Cygnet. Now it will be competing in the 8-metre World Titles to be held 10–20 August 2017 at Hankø Island in the Oslo fjord, 130km south of Oslo, Norway. This is a bit of a dream come true only made possible by some very serious sponsorship.

a bank-guaranteed amount equal to half the value of the yacht, to make sure you don’t sell the yacht overseas. The Carnet lasts for 12 months, but we hope to have *Varg* back in Australia by about the end of October 2017. We as yet have no idea what will happen on return to Australia regarding fumigation.

**Transport** will be in several steps. Tasfreight, using a very low loader, are generously helping with moving *Varg*, sitting in its cradle, from Kermandie Marina to Devonport, then on SeaRoad to complete the road and sea trip to Port Melbourne. We would also like to thank Coast House Tasmania for their generous support. Scandinavian Wallenius Wilhelmsen Shipping Line will be looking after transportation of *Varg* from Port Melbourne to Singapore on *Tamerlane*, then to Bremerhaven, Germany, on another of their large orange car-carrying vessels. *Varg* will be stored under deck on a Wilhelmsen dolly, but it will also be sitting on a beautifully constructed steel cradle that Hobart Metal Works specially made for us. It will be a two-month voyage each way. Once the yacht makes it to Bremerhaven it will be back on a Swedish low loader and prime mover for the road trip to Kiel, onto another ferry to Gothenburg, Sweden, then up over the Norwegian border to Fredrikstad Marina, 10km from Hankø Island, to be lowered into the water and there get its mast rigged and its measurement certificate completed by Swiss 8-metre specialist measurer, Guy Roland.

**Hankø Island** in southern Norway is a summer base for the Royal Norwegian Yacht Club, who will be sponsoring the event, which promises to be particularly popular this year as it is King Harald’s 80th birthday and he will be racing his famous 1938 green hulled 8-metre yacht *Sira*. The King’s royal yacht *The Norge* manned by the Norwegian Navy and sporting its perfect glossy cream paint will also be present. It is expected that at least forty 8-metre yachts from around the world will attend. Each year the 8-metre World Titles event normally moves around Europe, although last year it was held in Toronto, Canada.

The first 8-metre yachts were built in 1906, and were gaff-rigged until about 1915 when the first bermudan yachts appeared. They were all built to the first International Rule which dictated their fundamental design, until this rule was revised into the second International Rule of 1919 to 1933. So *Varg*, being a 1924 Norwegian Johan Anker build, is a second rule 8. There was yet again a third International Rule starting in 1933 that ran up until World War II.

**The Neptune Cup** (pictured top, facing page) is for all three International Rule classes, and it is this wonderful and quite beautiful cup donated by the Coats cotton mill dynasty originally to the Royal Northern and Clyde Yacht Club that *Varg* will be racing for. There will also be modern 8’s racing with winged keels etc., but they will be racing for the *Sira* Cup. All yachts race and start on the line together.

In our class as a second rule 8 we must have dacron sails. We cannot use a boom vang or traveller as they didn’t exist in our period. *Varg*, when it arrived in Australia, sported Australia’s first genoa and soon won the 1928 Sayonara Cup, beating gaff-rigged Victorian entry *Acrospire*. There were only three 8’s ever imported into Australia, *Varg* and *Saskia* being the most well-known. In addition about 12 other Australian 8’s were built, with about six of these still existing. We have unfortunately recently lost *Saskia* and *Erika J* to the UK.

**So how will we go** in the rather professional competition that we will encounter in Hankø? We know we should be faster than early-build gaff 8’s but the 3rd rule 8’s built just before World War II should have the edge on us. There are some exceedingly wealthy owners who can easily afford to pay the best professional young crews but at the same time there are family-owned and crewed boats competing on a more moderate budget. We have a Tasmanian crew of six, including two females, and a Sydney crew of six males and we plan to alternate crews daily. At present there are 40 spectators from around the world coming along to join us, plus 15 Swedes.

We have just had Col Anderson, Doyle Sails, Melbourne, construct a new full-sized genoa for us to match our other mitre-cut sails, and a second flatter spinnaker, more of a reaching shape than our conventional spinnaker. We are a bit heavy having had a bit of a basic interior fit out, self-draining cockpit and 21hp Nanni diesel engine. Most boats carry motors. If anything though we do know a thing or two about winds coming from all directions, having raced in stiff winds on the Channel for many years. Hankø weather is normally 6 knots in the morning building up to 16 knots in the afternoon, really quite perfect for an 8. They don’t reef, but sail with a full genoa, so if it blows above 20 they can be in trouble. Racing will be cancelled if it is over 25.



More realistic though is our attempt to have the best-looking boat and best turned-out crew (above). To this end the sporting clothing company Silver Fleece in South Australia have been the most wonderful of supporters producing for us a period range of 1920’s pure wool cricket cable-knit jumpers and vests plus a range of high quality but rugged Rugby jerseys. Silver Fleece have also produced in-house all the embroidery for these garments. They make the clothing for the Australian cricket team. Topped off with cream baggy hats, shoes and cricket trousers we will be ready to hit the water or the bar in the evenings. Should it look like heavy weather or rain Henri Lloyd have come up with everything we could possibly need in the way of jackets and hi top waterproof trousers, all in red and black with matching embroidered caps.

(continued on next page)

facing page: 8-metre yachts racing; *Varg* in full sail; this page: Hankø Norway (Photo: Linn Hansen); the Neptune Cup; yachts in Norway; above: Kraig and Carolyn on *Varg* with the crew in their Silver Fleece outfits. Photos, except where indicated, were supplied by the authors.



*Varg's* long journey — from reconstruction at Cygnet, Tasmania, to racing in the World Titles at Hankø in Norway. The voyage to get there will be the longest ever undertaken by an 8-metre racing yacht.

Clockwise from above: clamping during the reconstruction of *Varg*; spraying the mast; on the road to Devonport with Tasfreight, with *Varg* on the steel cradle built by Hobart Metal Works; at Port Melbourne in preparation for loading; cut-away view of *Wallenius Wilhelmsen* (*Varg* will most likely be transported on the highest internal deck); *Wallenius Wilhelmsen*; King Harald's naval crew bring guests ashore at Hankø; the King's personal 8-metre yacht *Sira*, (Photo: Ivar Gilså); the 1926 regatta at Hankø with Crown Prince Olav's 6NII *Oslo II*; *Varg's* end cap; Coast House Tasmania is one of *Varg's* sponsors. Photos, except where indicated, were supplied by the authors.

In Sydney, The Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club expressed an early interest in sponsoring us, as *Varg* has a history there, so we will be proudly flying their burgee at every opportunity. We have had a two-metre one made up for the top of the mast as well. Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron were also supportive of our endeavour. *Afloat Magazine* is our media sponsor, and French specialist yachting photographer, Christophe Favreau, has been filming a video of our campaign, starting from Cygnet, which he will hopefully complete in Hankø. Bruce Stannard, one of the *Varg* crew, has kindly been providing commentary.

So there we are: a massive logistical exercise which is very complex in many areas. Just finding housing is difficult as the whole area around Hankø will be booked out. We have managed to secure two houses on the island close to the yacht club, but everyone else will have to stay around Fredrikstad, 15 km away, and catch the ferry across the sound to the island, which has only one, now booked-out, hotel.

His Majesty King Harald V of Norway maintains his family's naval traditions with a passionate interest in sailing and in 8-metre racing in particular. The boat closest to shore in the historical photograph (below) is that of his father, then Crown Prince Olav, competing in the 1926 regatta at Hankø. King Olav was a personal friend of Johan Anker (1871–1940), Norway's greatest naval architect and the designer of *Varg*. He arranged for a large stone memorial to Anker on Garnholmen, a rock island off the southern tip of Hankø Island, from where this 1926 photograph was taken (as were many other iconic glass-plate yachting photographs) and off which all racing in the 2017 event will be held.

The photograph (right, centre) shows King Harald's naval crew bringing guests ashore at Hankø. The 8-metre challenge at Hankø in August 2017 will include celebrations for the King's 80th birthday and his personal yacht *Sira* (below right) will compete.

It promises to be an interesting time. ■



Coast House Tasmania wishes *Varg* all the best for the World Titles in Norway



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maritime photography  
and more ...

‘... the King Island Museum’s collection of shipping photographs is perhaps one of the richest to have survived in any regional museum’



Hoisting cattle on *Yambacoona* in 1909 at Currie Harbour wharf.



SS *Wauchope* stranded on rocks at Currie Harbour about 1911.



The seaplane *Windhover*, which came to grief on Currie Harbour breakwater, was eventually broken up. Its three engines, however, were salvaged. Two pieces of the aircraft are on display at the King Island Museum. Photos: King Island Museum Collection

## Weighing in on King Island’s maritime history through imagery and an exemplary model

by Luke Agati, King Island Historical Society

been preserved in numerous photographs taken throughout the twentieth century. Taken by local and amateur photographers, most of whom remain anonymous, the King Island Museum’s collection of shipping photographs is perhaps one of the richest to have survived in any regional museum representing local maritime history. One of the earliest photographs in the collection is of *SS Yambacoona* (1899–1917). Built in 1899 by EL Jack (at Trevallyn in Launceston) to a design by Mr W Jolly, *Yambacoona* was constructed for the King Island cattle trade to an order from Melville and Frank Stephenson of the pastoral property ‘Yambacoona’. Weighing 184.8 gross tonnes and measuring 109.4ft (33.3m) x 19.5ft (5.94m) x 9.3ft (2.83m) *Yambacoona* was capable of carrying 50 head of cattle or approximately 600 sheep. It also boasted ‘superior accommodation’ for up to eighteen passengers. *SS Yambacoona* left Launceston for Currie Harbour on her maiden voyage on 18 May 1899.

*SS Wauchope* (1905–19) was perhaps the most popular vessel to service the island in the early twentieth century particularly during the First World War. This popular steamer will forever be remembered in King Island

history as the ship which carried over two hundred of the island’s men (a third of the island’s population) to military camps and recruiting stations in Tasmania and Victoria to join the AIF for the battlefields of Gallipoli, France, Belgium and elsewhere. *Wauchope*, of 296 gross tonnes measured 127ft (38.7m) x 25ft (7.6m) x 9.2ft (2.8m). Its fiery demise at Portsea Victoria in 1919 remains a mystery. Although never proven, it was believed that the vessel was deliberately set alight because of its non-union crew. *Wauchope* which was ready to set sail for King Island before its inexplicable destruction carried 28 cylinders of acetylene gas for the Cape Wickham lighthouse, as well as benzene, oil and other cargo.

Apart from the rich collection of maritime photographs depicting vessels from coastal traders to cray and fishing boats and the like, the museum also holds a variety of photographs to include, shipwreck scenes, life at Currie and Cape Wickham lighthouses, images of harbour scenes shot from various spots, wharf and jetty scenes, and many other maritime curiosities. One of the most unusual photographic pieces in the collection is the wreckage of the three-engine seaplane *Windhover* which crashed at Currie Harbour breakwater carrying five passengers from a Melbourne service in 1936.

Another interesting photograph taken on the Currie wharf in 1927 was an anchor, recovered by chance, from *Whistler* wrecked at King Island in 1855. The same anchor impressively sits outside the Maritime Museum in Hobart as a permanent reminder of Tasmania’s rich maritime past.

### Engravings

Apart from the collection of photographs, the King Island Museum also holds an assortment of nineteenth century engravings, including a hand-tinted copper



Coloured engraving in the King Island Museum Collection. The final moments of the clipper *British Admiral*, wrecked 3kms south of Currie Harbour in 1874. This was the third deadliest shipwreck in King Island waters. The engraving, executed by Ebenezer & David Syme, also appeared (in B/W) in the *Illustrated Australian News* 15 June 1874.

**King Island (cont.)**

plate of *Cataraqui*, several of the wreck of *British Admiral* and woodblock engravings of *Blencathra*, *Brahmin* and *Netherby*.

**Netherby**

Recently the King Island Museum was fortunate to have added to its acquisitions a model of the ship *Netherby*. Wrecked in 1866 just south of Currie Harbour carrying nearly 500 souls, the 944 ton British emigrant ship was one of the very few wrecks at the time that boasted not a single loss of life. In 2016 more than 140 descendents of *Netherby's* passengers rallied together on King Island to pay tribute to the courage of their forebears on the very spot on which they were marooned. Commissioned by the King Island Historical Society in 2014, the model was made on the island by local craftsman, Christian Robertson, who has an outstanding knowledge of the island's shipwreck history. Custom-built for the sesquicentenary of the wreck of *Netherby* in July 2016, the model took centre-stage along with *Netherby's* bell (loaned for the occasion) in the museum's newest exhibit room named after the ship. The model, which was the most photographed exhibit during the three-day event, generated new and renewed interests in the island's shipwreck history. Although there are no known photographs or images of the *Netherby*, other than F Grosse's dramatic engraving of 1866, meticulous research in shipbuilding design using records of the period were applied to create the model (right). ■



Model of *Netherby* in the King Island Museum. This detailed work took two years to build and measures approximately 1000mm x 700mm x 400mm  
Photo: Luke Agati



left: Artwork (2016) by Luke Agati, which hangs in the Netherby Room, King Island Museum. The author explains the process: 'I transferred the image of the ship from the engraving and reassembled it on a photograph of the actual site, then pastelled the engraving to blend in with the colour of photograph. The idea worked.' The original artwork hangs in the Netherby Room, and another framed copy now hangs in the King Island Hospital. The Netherby Home (a nursing home) is named after the ship because there was no loss of life from this wreck.

**King Island Museum**

Lighthouse St, Currie

Open Sept–June Daily 2–4pm

03 6462 1512

Photo: ©2015 Lisa Wood



The talented film crew from OffCenterHarbor.com based in Maine USA, has visited Tasmania during two Australian Wooden Boat Festivals and has made some great videos about our local boats and maritime skills, including couta boats and craypot making. Visit them at their website:

[www.offcenterharbor.com](http://www.offcenterharbor.com)

Photo: ©2017 Benjamin Mendlowitz

In February 2017, at the Maritime Museum of Tasmania, burgees were presented to owners of boats recently added to the Australian Register of Historic Vessels (ARHV). One of these boats was David Pittaway's *Olga*.  
Photo: S Babbage ANMM



# Olga's Story

by David Pittaway

I'd been working as a registered nurse in the Emergency Department of the Royal Hobart Hospital for a few months. One day a gentleman presented with a non-urgent condition, and was duly put under my care in a low acuity section of the department. We got chatting, as you do, and he mentioned he was a glazier. Our discussion moved down the construction line, where I divulged I'm also both a carpenter and a Wooden Boat Builder, having graduated from the Wooden Boat School at Franklin in 2006. His ears pricked at this, he turned to me and asked if I wanted to buy an old wooden boat. On hearing that I'm interested in all old Tasmanian boats, his sister-in-law Muriel, sitting bedside, then piped up and invited me to look at her husband's boat, which at the time was taking up valuable garden space in her back yard at Austins Ferry.

Next time my girlfriend Southerly and I drove to Hobart a week or so later – we live in Franklin – we decided to contact Muriel and have a look at this old boat, now known to be *Olga*. So Southerly and I met *Olga* in Barry and Muriel's front yard, on her bespoke trailer, all covered with an even more deteriorating blue tarpaulin. While I poked around, under, over and in *Olga*, Barry told us her chequered history.

*Olga* was built by Harry Grining in Strahan, launched in 1923 – 30' long, 6'8" beam, double-ended carvel Huon pine planking on Tasmanian Oak keel, Huon pine floors, blackwood and Celery Top pine ribs, powered by an 8hp oil engine, which was long gone. The layout is basically a 15' long enclosed cabin, with storage under laid fore and aft decks. My educated guess is that she was designed as an all-purpose boat for the Grining family's Huon pine timber-getting and milling business, being used to tow Huon pine log rafts from the Gordon River to the Strahan wharf\* as one of the tourist boats (if not the original boat) up the Gordon River, and as a recreational boat for the Grining family. The only known photo of *Olga* in the 1920s pictures a family outing in calm waters (next page).

*Olga* was later used as the pilot boat by the Macquarie Harbour Harbour Master, assisting vessels to navigate Hells Gates, and for getting supplies to the lighthouse staff across the harbour mouth from Ocean Beach. At some stage *Olga* was sold to Hobart Ports Corporation (HPC), and was allegedly used to build the Barnes Bay jetty. After HPC, *Olga* was moored at Dunalley by her new

owner, whom I understand took *Olga* to Maria Island and Triabunna as a pleasure and fishing boat. I believe it was during this time that a fly-bridge fabricated from form-ply was added to *Olga*, which required the aft half of her cabin being cut away.

A Mr Shay then owned *Olga*, when she was moored at Bellerive. At some stage later, the mother of Barry's mate Trevor, a Mrs Dingle, owned *Olga*, and saw fit to move her to Austins Ferry. This was when Barry first came into contact with *Olga*. Barry helped with the move, towing *Olga* to Austin's Ferry from Bellerive using a 12' dinghy with an outboard motor – an adventure in its own right.

By now, *Olga* had an old 3-cylinder Ferguson tractor engine, coupled to a Morris Marine gearbox. In the early 1980s, after the engine had been removed and rags stuffed in the resulting holes in the hull, while tied up in Austins Ferry Bay she was boarded by unknown persons and the rags removed, which resulted in her sinking and being washed up on Carrols Point. Barry thought this to be a waste of a boat, and on hearing this, Trevor said, if he could refloat her, Barry could have *Olga*. So Barry did refloat her, and then kept her moored in Rusts Bay, just downstream of Austins Ferry. Soon after, Barry was alerted to a theft in progress on the boat by a neighbour. Barry disturbed and interrupted their heist, but the villains still made off with some brass items, including lights, dogged port holes and an ornate rudder tiller. Barry promptly assembled a substantial trailer and brought *Olga* to the safety of their back yard, where she remained for the next twenty plus years.

Barry knows motors, and attended the Hobart TAFE to do an Adult Education class about advanced diesel engine maintenance. He worked on a 1943 Ailsa Craig Ricardo RFR2 20HP marine diesel engine during that course, which he ended up buying, and then got more work done including a cylinder re-bore and other major works. Barry still had the Morris Marine gearbox at home and, given the original gearbox from Ailsa Craig was lost to a rubbish skip at the Hobart TAFE, Barry adapted the Morris to Ailsa Craig, which was a complete unit that came with my purchase of *Olga*. When buying paint to complete the engine job, Barry bought water-based primer, which was sold to him as mineral based. This mistake by the shop assistant means paint is still peeling off the engine as I write.

By the time Southerly and I came to view *Olga* in 2010, Barry had received one or two offers of sale, but nothing serious. On that first day in Barry's yard, while standing

(continued on next page)

\* The Grining family mill was on the Strahan wharf where Tasmanian Speciality Timbers (TST) now have their Strahan retail outlet. Randall Morrison, of TST, is a great-nephew of Harry Grining.

## Olga's story (cont.)



Olga 2017 on her bespoke trailer at Franklin Photo: David Pittaway

Olga 1926 with the Grining family on a Gordon River cruise. Photo from the family archive

next to *Olga's* propeller, admiring her underwater lines and musing over how much work there would be in a complete restoration, my thinking was drifting to the logistics of moving her, storing her, etcetera, then my daydreaming was abruptly interrupted by a dig in the ribs from Southerly saying, "Go on, buy her" —note the quotation marks. Barry stated his asking price, I accepted, and a deal was done.

We agreed that, because I had nowhere to put *Olga* in the short term, she could stay in their yard, but I soon bought a huge tarpaulin and covered *Olga* for the next winter. About eighteen months later, I had *Olga* and trailer moved by low-loader to Franklin, to be kept in the back yard of our riverside block. All this time we had been owner-building a house south of Franklin, starting in 2007. The plan all along was to build a shed later for my boatbuilding ventures, be they as a business or otherwise.

Now I had *Olga* to consider, so the shed plans needed revision to accommodate her restoration and physical size. I now am able to move *Olga* around by myself, which is an invaluable situation when a solo practitioner.

One week after *Olga* came to Franklin, Barry and Muriel drove down to Franklin for a day out, and to deliver some odds and ends Barry wanted me to have that came with *Olga* when he got her, and items he had accumulated with *Olga* in mind, such as timber and assorted fittings. When Barry and Muriel were walking up from the garden, where *Olga* now sat, to their car parked on Franklin's main street, across the road my neighbour was walking into his home. This was no ordinary neighbour, this was Brian Morrison, cousin of Randall Morrison, and yet another great-nephew of Harry Grining! I introduced Brian to Barry and Muriel, explaining the relevance of *Olga* to Brian, and of Brian to Barry and Muriel. I told Brian of Southerly's and my

road trip to Strahan, Queenstown and Zeehan, seeking photos or any other providence of *Olga's* history, a trip that was fruitless in that regard. Brian was at the time getting ready to move from his home, but he wondered out loud if he might have a photo or two of *Olga* in his collection of family photos, currently packed up ready for moving house. Thinking maybe, but unlikely, we parted company and Barry and Muriel headed home to Austin's Ferry.

I went home, to be rung thirty minutes later by Brian, wondering if a photo he found could be that of *Olga*. I promptly returned to Franklin, to find Brian holding a 3"x2" black & white photo (above) of whom we imagine is the Grining family, out on a day excursion in *Olga*. After such an exhaustive search over the internet, inquiries to TasPorts and to Marine and Safety Tasmania, and travels to the West Coast to follow up any lead no matter how tenuous, the only useful photo to assist in *Olga's* restoration was found some 75m from her new home. How Tasmanian.

*Olga* finally arrived in her shed on Braeside Road in February 2014, having been under tarpaulins on the Franklin foreshore for nearly two years. I soon got to work stripping her down of all internal fittings and linings, to expose as many structural members as possible for detailed inspection. At my first meeting with *Olga* at Barry and Muriel's place, I crawled all over her banging all and sundry timbers with a tiny ball-pen hammer, concluding that the boat was grossly structurally intact. Now with the advantage of a bare hull, I could see the work ahead – gaps between component timbers of the bow gripe; the poor state of the blackwood ribs; the dubious state of the Huon pine forward frames; the oil and fuel soaked lower bilge planks, especially the two garboard strakes and the two next-to-garboard strakes; the decrepit shoe under the deadwood; the rotten sacrificial shoe

protecting the first shoe; and the cabin needed repair. The photo Brian Morrison gave me is a side-on shot, from which I will be able to base the restoration on.

As a past Coordinator (the role now known as President) of the Living Boat Trust from 2005–2008, I am familiar with the Australian Register of Historic Vessels. I proposed *Olga* for registration in July 2015, receiving confirmation of her registration by David Payne in May last year, and I received an ARHV pennant for *Olga* at a ceremony held in the Maritime Museum of Tasmania on the eve of the 2017 Australian Wooden Boat Festival.

*Olga* currently lives in her shed up on Braeside Road, south of Franklin. All the blackwood ribs (from keel up) have been removed, replaced by Celery-Top pine ribs, with all the original Celery-Top pine ribs (paired each side from deck shelf down, their bottom ends sistering the tops of the blackwood ribs, the over-lap running under the bilge strings) remaining in good condition.

Four Huon pine floors have been replaced, with four more to go. The forward floors needed replacing, the aft floors had to be removed to allow replacement of about 2500mm of keelson and the removal and replacement of as many keel bolts as possible. Most of the copper bolts were sound, but the nuts and washers had fused, so they entire bolt had to go. The ferrous bolts will be pulled, to be replaced by copper bolts with silicon-bronze nuts and stainless steel washers.

Once the new keelson and floors have been bolted in, new engine beds will be fabricated and fitted, then attention will turn to replacing planking as needed, then I'll get down to splining and caulking – just how much of what is to be caulked and what is to be splined is yet to be finalised. Meanwhile, a stainless steel tray will be made to sit under the engine, to catch as much engine fluid loss as possible, and the same engineers will strip the engine back and paint her with appropriately robust engine paints. British Racing Green of course, with red lettering.

Internal fitout will be kept as basic as possible, to retain the flexibility of use I believe the Grinings had in mind when designing *Olga* way back when. My one sacrifice to modernity will be to finish off the restored cabin top with FGR plywood sheeting over the current laid timbers. Why build in maintenance? Fear not you purists – if the Vikings had had epoxy, they would have used it.

I hope to have *Olga* launched before my 60th birthday, in June 2020. If that's not soon enough for you, please come down and give me a hand —or just come to have a sticky-beak. ■



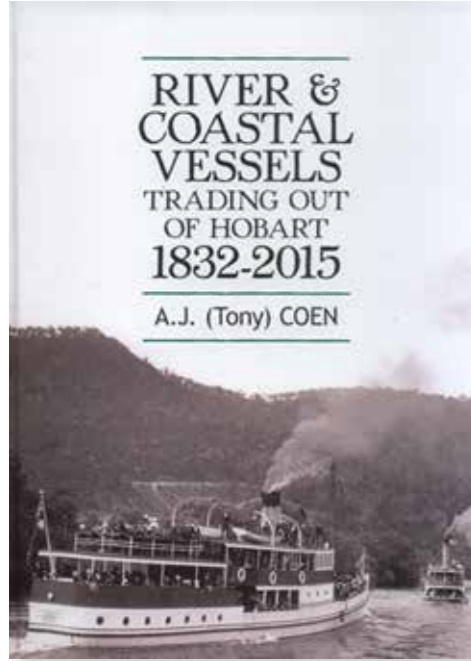
## in search of Lucy



- 1 *Lucy* after the elongation
  - 2 Cutting out the stem at Franklin. The little boy is the author's grandfather
  - 3 William Ball with the frame of *Lucy*
- Photos supplied by the author

*Lucy* was a slender carvel-built passenger launch with canoe stem and stern, built of Huon pine in 1900, at Franklin wharf by William Ball. Powered by a two-cylinder petrol engine, it had a built-in toilet and a galley with a kerosine stove. In 1906 *Lucy* was elongated by 10 feet, to 47 feet at C. Lucas' boatyard at Battery Point. Licensed in 1906 to carry 22 passengers, *Lucy* travelled up and down the Huon, making regular appearances at the Huon Regatta. The license lapsed in 1926, but the launch was still being used by the family into the 1930s. It was owned by my great-grandfather, and my 96-year-old father remembers going on *Lucy* during school holidays. It was moored in a boatshed on the other side of north Egg Island, at a property called 'Riversdale'. We don't know what happened to it after 1935. If you have any information about this distinctive boat, please contact Rob Linnell. [roblinnell5@gmail.com](mailto:roblinnell5@gmail.com)

# book reviews



## RIVER & COASTAL VESSELS TRADING OUT OF HOBART 1832-2015

by AJ (Tony) Coen

Publisher: Forty South Pty Ltd, Hobart  
Illustrated, xii, 372 pages

## RIVER AND COASTAL VESSELS TRADING OUT OF HOBART 1832-2015

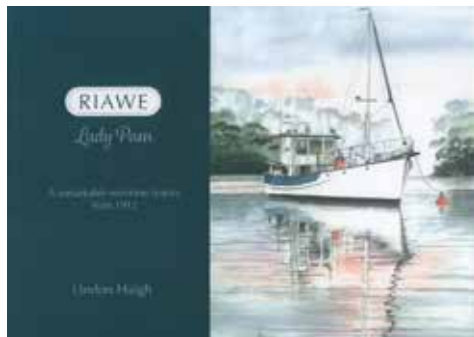
This book certainly lives up to its title, as author Tony Coen has cast his net wide and included all manner of engine-powered vessels operating within and out of the Port of Hobart since the 1830s.

The well-known ferries, river steamers and coastal traders are here, of course, but you will also find details of the tugs, pilot boats, dredgers and other harbour craft, steam launches and even the Risdon punts. Though many of these vessels have had a lengthy association with Hobart, there are others whose connection has been brief – for example, the river steamer *Ceres*, locally owned from July 1909 until its sale to Geelong the following year. Contrast that with the barge *Kulanda*, still employed by Tasports at the age of 72 or thereabouts, and the former tug *Maydena* of similar wartime vintage, continuing to operate out of Hobart as fishing boat *Tacoma II*. Both have spent virtually their whole working lives in Southern Tasmania.

It is inevitable that some craft will be well publicised and documented, either during their careers or later, while others will mysteriously slip under the radar. The author has not allowed the latter to escape, however. One of these 'mystery' vessels (for me, anyway) was *Seymour*, acquired in 1923 for the Maria Island trade and lost about a year later; its story is told, along with those of many other lesser known craft like *Natone* and *Beagle*.

Some MMT members will recall that the Museum owned the steam whale chaser *Cheyne II* between 1979 and 1982. That chapter in its career is documented, along with its earlier whaling activity and subsequent history. It still exists (just), ashore near Albany and slowly rusting away.

The bulk of the book is given over to vessel profiles, listed chronologically according to the year in which their association with Hobart began. The narrative for each is followed by a table providing dimensions, machinery and other details, and the many photographs include a good selection from the Maritime Museum collection. Chapters have also been included on the ferry revival following the Tasman Bridge disaster and on the 1981 delivery voyage to Hobart of *Challenger Head*, the author being a part-owner. There are very useful summaries and owners' listings, along with an index of ships' names, and the book is recommended to anyone interested in local maritime history.



## RIawe

by Lindon Haigh

Publisher: Lindon Haigh, Hobart  
Illustrated, 58 pages

## RIawe - Lady Pam: a remarkable maritime history from 1912

This is the story of a dream-boat. Or, as the author, Lindon Haigh, puts it 'the story of one boat, two lifetimes and the people who knew and loved her in the various periods of her life'. The author would not be unusual in dreaming of the perfect boat to own, a dream that could be traced back to childhood experiences aboard family vessels. Coming from a family of commercial fishermen, his particular dream was to own a traditional fishing boat. Unlike most such dreamers, the author, with his wife's support, eventually brought his dream to life by becoming the owner of the fishing boat *Lady Pam*. What he didn't realise was that the *Lady Pam*, believed to have been built sometime in the 1940s and well known as a fishing boat around Tasmania and, for a time, along the Victorian coast, had a previous, less well known, life as *Riawe*, a cutter built by Ned Jack at Trevallyn on the Tamar River in 1912.

This book is the result of the inevitable curiosity about the boat that ownership provoked and pieces together the various strands of the boat's history. The author has uncovered a wealth of information from a variety of sources to tell each part of the tale. Originally built for William Holyman and Sons as *Riawe*, the

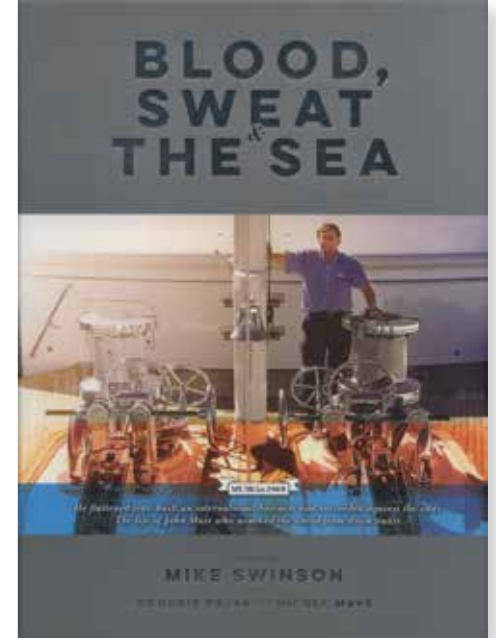
## BLOOD SWEAT & THE SEA

Mike Swinson tells the story of John Muir, the Battery Point boy whose determination built an internationally successful business. The author rightly says his book is an insight into a man whom he describes as 'like a bloody Blue Heeler.'

John Muir's great-grandfather, William Jenkins Muir, emigrated from Scotland in 1876 and married the Tasmanian-born daughter of two Scottish convicts. William began work as a seaman and ended his career as a light-keeper on Tasmania's coast. The Muir relationship with the sea had begun in Scotland but endures as the book draws the reader into exciting anecdotes of life on the Tasmanian waterfront, boatbuilding, sailing and adventure that led to John Muir's gritty resolve to manufacture unsurpassed marine equipment.

In the chapter 'Rights of Passage' John's schooling and early days in Battery Point are portrayed. Life for boys brought up in the 1950s allowed a freedom and independence seldom encountered today. But it brought with it challenges and a need to be resourceful, something the 'Blue Heeler of Battery Point' soon learnt in schoolyard scraps. When John left school he began work as an apprentice in 1961 at AG Webster Woolgrowers where he qualified as a diesel fitter. He then joined his father Jock at Muir's Boatyard and Slipway in Battery Point and it was here in the early 1970s that John began manufacturing fishing winches at Muir Engineering. The business expanded and moved to a factory in Kingston where John's perseverance and the skills of his staff developed the company into a worldwide leader and innovator for anchoring systems. The difficulty of breaking into the super-yacht market is told in detail and illustrated with photographs of many of the amazing vessels fitted with Muir winches. John Muir's European contacts recognise his determination to do business and Jeroen Jeltjes of Belship described him as 'half gentleman, half street fighter'. John has always had a tough reputation, reinforced by Robert Clifford's story of a visit by the bailiffs in his foreword to the book.

*Blood, Sweat & the Sea* is more than the biography of a remarkable Tasmanian who stubbornly built an international business from scratch. It tells the history of the Muir family, and their sailing exploits; and it chronicles the influence of friends, employees and colleagues whose many anecdotes are quoted in the narrative. It is a prodigious work by first-time author Mike Swinson. If not a book to read from cover to cover, it's definitely a book to delve into for anyone interested in maritime Tasmania.



## BLOOD SWEAT & THE SEA

by Mike Swinson, with Georgie Pajak (designer) and Nicole Mays (researcher)

Publisher: Forty South Pty Ltd, Hobart  
416 pages, more than 700 illustrations, with maps and an index

36 foot long cutter was first used servicing the islands off Tasmania's north-east coast, where its shallow draft gave it an advantage over the larger vessels in the company fleet. Carrying stock was a principal occupation and the author has found a report that *Riawe* once carried 90 sheep from Bridport to Waterhouse Island. While finding this hard to believe, the author discovered that sheep would be carried in a dinghy one by one to the cutter waiting off, where they would be 'neatly placed in a sitting position, in rows across the boat'.

After similar use off the north-west coast, the boat moved to new owners at Beauty Point in 1924, where it spent many years as a ferry and workboat. During World War II *Riawe* was commissioned into the RAN, with its owner, Gordon Allison, enlisting and being commissioned alongside his boat as a CPO, although known locally as 'The Admiral'.

As HMAS *Riawe* 772 the boat saw service on river and coastal patrols during which it purportedly encountered a surfaced Japanese submarine off Greens Beach, with nothing more dangerous than a wave being exchanged between the vessels.

After the war the boat was converted for use in commercial fishing, being renamed *Lady Pam* and covering just about every corner of the Tasmania's coast under a succession of owners. The author's detailed research has uncovered stories from each stage of the boat's life, all presented in a lively and readable style.

Good use is made of photographs and contemporary documents, with an appendix detailing the boats owners, general specifications and the various modifications over its life. A useful index of vessels and people is also included.



# notes from the curator

by Rona Hollingsworth

## Figureheads

A figurehead in our society is a leader with no real power. This could also describe a ship's figurehead except that superstitious mariners, faced with the vagaries and dangers of the seas, did believe their figurehead had power to drive off bad spirits and protect their ship and crew – and even sceptics were often proud of the identity bestowed by their figurehead.

Watercraft in ancient Roman and Phoenician times and many other cultures around the world sported carved figures on their prows. In Europe and its colonies figureheads were particularly common between the 16th and 19th centuries. Their use declined as steam replaced sail and extended prows were no longer needed to carry rigging and sails (although some early liners carried on the tradition with impressive figures on their bows).

The Maritime Museum has three full figureheads from *Zephyr*, *Mary Wadley* and *Waterwitch* as well as the torso, head and arm of the *Svenor* figurehead, and also an arm from *Countess of Seafield*. All were salvaged from ships wrecked in Tasmanian waters except for the figurehead from the *Waterwitch*, which was hulked when its whaling career ended. However, none of these vessels was built in Tasmania and nothing is known of the figureheads' makers. *Countess of Seafield* (1848) and *Svenor* (ex *Corrievrechan*) (1884) were built in Scotland, *Zephyr* (1866) in Sydney, *Mary Wadley* (1874) on the Macleay river, NSW, and *Waterwitch* (launched as HMS *Falcon* in 1820) was built at the Royal Naval Dockyard in Pembroke, Wales. Figureheads were often repainted, sometimes colourfully and sometimes in plain white. Some had to be replaced because of accident, rot or even a vessel's name change but it is unlikely that a Tasmanian carver made any of our examples. The original figurehead of *Waterwitch* would probably have been carved by a Navy employee, perhaps from Plymouth or Portsmouth since a list of Pembroke Docks'



Tasmanian carver Roger Brown made this ornamental figurehead of the witch Nanny who, in Robert Burns' epic poem, chased Tam O'Shanter wearing only a cutty-sark (short vest) —the inspiration for the name of the famous clipper ship *Cutty Sark* MMT Collection Photo: John Wadsley



*Petrel* (1848) was built on the Tamar River with (surprisingly) a swan figurehead. Painting by James Smith, John Millwood Collection. Photo: QVMAG

employees did not include a carver, and vessels built there were sent to the larger yards for their fitout. Shipping registers record 361 figureheads on vessels made in Australia between 1832 and 1903 (Marshall), mostly on vessels built in New South Wales and Tasmania which no doubt relates to the importance of ship building in those colonies. Unfortunately, only 14 appear to have survived in Australia (including our *Mary Wadley* and *Zephyr*), but the carvers are seldom known.

One Tasmanian carver has been mentioned in news reports. This is William Duke (1815–1853) who arrived in Hobart in 1846 after working as a house carpenter in Ireland, a theatre scene painter in Sydney and a portrait painter in New Zealand. In Hobart he was soon receiving accolades for his scene painting at the Royal Victoria Theatre in Campbell Street. Duke was here when Hobart was a thriving whaling port and he left us with wonderfully descriptive paintings and lithographs of whale catching (see also p. 11).

His first figurehead may have been made for *Fair Tasmanian* (1849) built by John Watson at Battery Point. 'Her figurehead reflects much credit to the carver, Mr Duke, the more so as we understand this to be the first display of his skill in this art' (*The Courier* 22 January 1848). Nineteen months later another

reporter thought Duke's figurehead for *Derwent*, recently launched at Degrafs yard was the first. 'What praise due to Mr Duke, the carver of the figurehead, it being the first attempt of the kind' (*Colonial Times* 21 August 1849).

Many figureheads have ended up on wreck sites, or on foreign shores when vessels were eventually dismantled or sunk. One Tasmanian example from *Panama*, built by John Watson at Battery Point in 1850, has been found in Sweden. (see *Maritime Times*, Spring 2012). Perhaps one day a Tasmanian-made figurehead will voyage back to Hobart to be cared for and displayed at the Maritime Museum.



A selection of figurehead cards by Players Cigarettes MMT Collection

# high and dry

by John Wadsley, Maritime Heritage Coordinator

## HM Colonial Sloop *Norfolk*

On the theme of maritime arts and skills, I recently spent an enjoyable couple of hours at the Bass and Flinders Centre in George Town. This is one of those hidden gems that more people should visit on their travels around Tassie. It's rather tucked away, but well worth the hunt! And the crowning glory of their display is the replica of HM Colonial Sloop *Norfolk*. This beautiful creation was crafted by Richard Harris and volunteers in Ellendale over three years, with plans obtained from the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich in the UK by Bern Cuthbertson. The hull is Huon pine, the decks, mast and spars are Celery Top pine. For the nerdy types out there, its dimensions are: LOA 34 feet, beam 11 feet, draft 5 feet, with an all up weight including ballast of 16 tons. *Norfolk* was built in the traditional fashion, using approximately 10 000 treenails or 'trunnels'. There are no metal fastenings in the hull and, as befits a replica of such traditional construction, no engine. The only power is from sails and oars. It's a real beauty to behold in the enormous cavern of a former picture theatre, now home to the Bass and Flinders Centre. The beautiful timbers have mellowed with age, and it dominates all other exhibits.

Back in October 1998, Cuthbertson and a crew of nine began a re-enactment of the historic 1798-99 voyage by surgeon George Bass and naval officer Matthew Flinders, which proved, by sailing through Bass Strait, that Van Diemen's Land was an island. They followed

the original route, circumnavigating our island, using traditional navigating equipment, such as sextants. The only concession to modern maritime safety was having two radios and lifejackets. Even the food they carried on board was more akin to the 18th century, including salted pork and salted beef, supplemented by fresh food from each port.

I can think of no finer example of modern maritime craftsmanship, in an absolutely truthful replica, than the *Norfolk*. The only crime is that more people don't visit it in George Town. And, if that's not enough, you can see the fine replica of the whaleboat *Elizabeth* that Cuthbertson used to re-enact Bass's 1797 voyage from Port Jackson to Westernport in Victoria.

So get to it, people. Get yourselves up to George Town. And, of course, while you're there, head along to Low Head and visit the Pilot Station Museum and the Lighthouse. But do it on a Sunday when they sound the fog horn at noon! That is a noise worth travelling to hear.



HM Colonial Sloop *Norfolk* Photo: J Wadsley

# knot so hard

a series by Frank Charles Brown

## No 42 The Manrope Knot

This knot is constructed from two basic knots, namely a Wall Knot and a Crown Knot. In most cases the knot would be made in three- or four-strand rope, and the tyer would need to unravel about a length of about twenty times the diameter of the rope. Tools such as Swedish fids, prickers and needle-nosed pliers are usually very helpful when tying this knot.



1. Unravel the rope the desired length and seize with some twine to prevent further unravelling. Make the Wall Knot as shown in Fig. 1. Draw down the strands but keep the knot slack so as to allow doubling by passing the strands through the knot.

2. Make the Crown Knot above the Wall Knot as in Fig. 2. Again draw down lightly.

3. Begin doubling the knot by passing the first strand alongside its own part already in the knot as shown for the red strand in Fig. 3. Repeat the process with the other two strands. The result of this action should be that the individual strands will appear at the top of the knot as in Fig. 4.

4. The next action is to pass the strands down through the centre of the knot so that they emerge at the base. The final task is to tighten up each strand using a pricker or the pliers. Finishing may be by laying the Working Ends alongside the rope and clapping on

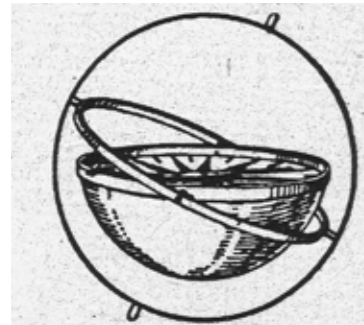
some Common Whipping. Alternatively, if the knot has been firmly dressed down, the ends can be cut off close to the knot.

**Note:** There are several video clips that may be viewed on YouTube, mostly for four-strand knots, but the same principles can be applied to three- or five-stranded ropes.

# from the galley

THERE IS A DEFINITE ART TO COOKING AT SEA, while being pitched and tossed around. I suspect that, for most cruising yachties, cooking is something that is undertaken while berthed. However, even on a mooring a boat can move around considerably. Fitting gimbals to the stove can, in combination with pot restraints, help to prevent the cook's efforts ending up on the galley floor.

**Gimbals** are a series of concentric metal rings so to permit an object mounted in or on it to tilt freely in any direction, in effect suspending the object so that it will remain horizontal even when its support is tipped. The device was first described by the Greek inventor Philo of Byzantium, in the second century BCE, and was used with an inkpot. Records of gimbals also appear in China a century or so later, used with warming stoves and incense burners.



Early modern dry compass suspended by gimbals, drawn by French inventor Villard de Honnecourt, c.1570  
Image: Wikimedia commons

Maritime applications have ranged from Roman siege engines mounted aboard ship in the first century CE to the more widely known mounting of compasses and chronometers from the middle ages onwards. I'm not sure when gimbals started to be used with onboard stoves; I found a review of an oil stove that 'could be supplied fitted to gimbals' in the January 1939 edition of the magazine *Motor Boating*.

In the Maritime Museum's collection, gimbals can be found on a mercury barometer (right) and on two compasses but, to date, we don't have a stove. Photo:MMT



One writer on cooking at sea suggests using a pressure cooker if the mooring is lively. Having a lid that is firmly fixed to the pan prevents the pan's contents being slopped around the galley. So, here is a recipe for lamb shanks cooked in a pressure cooker.

## LAMB SHANKS

### Ingredients

- 4 lamb shanks
- 1/2 cup plain flour
- Salt and pepper
- 3 tbsps olive oil
- 2 onions, peeled and sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 cup red wine
- 1 jar (700g) tomato passata
- 1/4 cup continental parsley, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 lemon, the rind grated

### Method

1. Roll the lamb shanks in the plain flour, salt and pepper to coat.
2. Heat the oil in the pressure cooker base and brown the shanks all over. Remove and set aside.
3. Place the onion and garlic into the same pot and fry for 2-3 minutes. Pour in the wine and cook off for 2 minutes.
4. Add the passata and return the shanks to the pot.
5. Bring to the boil and place the lid on. Bring to pressure and reduce heat to maintain pressure.
6. Cook for 30 minutes.
7. In a small bowl, combine the parsley, garlic and lemon rind, then add a dollop on top of the shanks just before serving.

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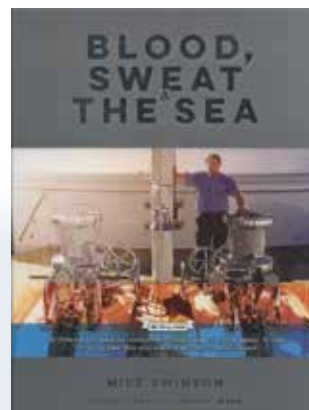
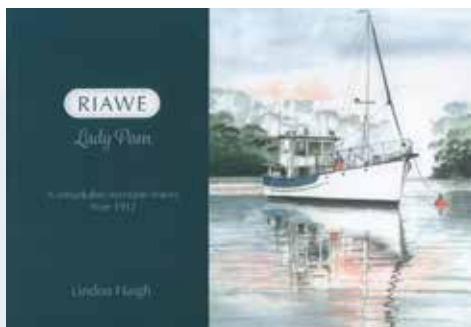
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# May Queen celebrates 150 years since launch at Franklin on 5 June 1867

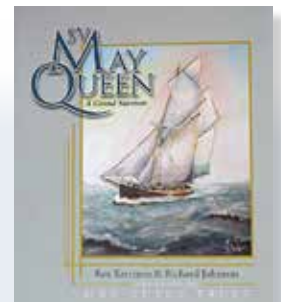
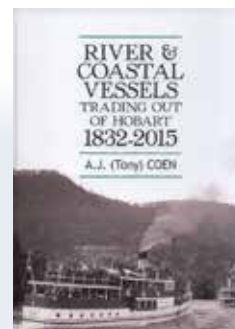


*May Queen*, a 20m trading ketch, also raced successfully at regattas. Photo: Bob Chesterman above: with *Admiral* at Constitution Dock (see also p. 13)

below, right: *SV May Queen: A Grand Survivor*, by Rex Kerrison and Richard Johnson (2014) tells the story in detail. This book was reviewed in *Maritime Times of Tasmania* No 47, June 2014, p. 7



3 new books reviewed pages 30–31



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