

# maritimes

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## Curator's note



Well – what a year, and it's not over yet!! HMAS *Townsville* is the word on our lips. As all of you will know, the Defence Force - through the hard work Secretary of Defence Peter Lindsay, Museum President Tony Manning, and Townsville Mayor Tony Mooney, have gifted the vessel to the museum. Every plate and fork

is slowly being photographed and accessioned into the museum's collection – the ship and its contents remain as if the crew were all on shore leave. It is currently moored at Sir Mick Curtain's wharf, who has been most generous with providing us with this temporary mooring, along with his time and enthusiasm.

However we still have a long way to go before we can berth the vessel at the museum. Once we have waded through the maze of various government departments, hydrographical investigations, architectural planning, public access details to name but a few, the experience will be terrific for all our supporters and visitors.

Our fundraising campaign will be spearheaded by our fundraising committee, consisting of enthusiastic individuals who share our vision.

The car park has finally been configured as a paying car park. The entrance is via a cable gate with an all day charge of \$5.00, a tariff which is in line with the Council's charges. With 30 available parking bays, this may provide us with an additional – at best – income of \$750 per week.

We had our AGM in April and have welcomed a new Board and new, enthusiastic members with whom we are looking forward to becoming better acquainted.

The Jazz Festival has been and gone, with Trevor Keeling and associates working hard to make it a success. As a sponsor of the festival, the museum's Seafarers Gallery was utilised as a 'stage', with the bow deck favoured by many as the place to drink, observe and listen to the music.

Our volunteer status is beginning to improve, with an influx of talented and interesting folk who are

proving to be most helpful with various aspects of the museum's daily life.

Recently, two of our artefacts had an exciting time when they were borrowed for part of the Baz Luhrman film *Australia*. Our small hand built vessel 'Gerry Clancy's boat' and the wooden clinker built lifeboat from the *Moorah* were taken off site amidst a flurry of media frenzy (almost) for the duration of the film production. They have since been returned here to their quiet life.

Talking of quiet life, I've just returned from an 11 day trip in Guam as part of my annual leave – and more about that too.

Viv Moran, Curator

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## A last farewell to Capt. Thorpe Chambers

The Rev'd Norton Challenor recently had to conduct the memorial services for Sune Lindstrom and David Wilson, remembering their lives as two valued members of the Seafarers' Association.

**David Wilson** went to sea aged just 16 yrs - in time to be swept up in WWII and making at least 11 trips on Atlantic convoy vessels during his three years at sea.

In 1969, David and current Seafarers' president John Jewell were among the 11 people who attended the first meeting to form the Seafarers' Association. He was the first President of the Association, and apart from John, was the last remaining member of this original group.

When the Maritime Museum opened its doors on the wharf in 1986, David worked as a volunteer at the museum, accessioning the growing collection and looking after visitors. He was also a member of the Management Committee.

For his invaluable contribution to the museum and the Seafarers' he was granted Life membership of both organisations.

**Sune Lindstrom** remains a little bit of a mystery to us. Apart from knowing that he arrived in Australia from Finland as a 'ten-pound immigrant' in December 1959, and worked on the Snowy River Scheme and various other jobs, we know very little about his personal life.

Whenever it was that Sune arrived in Townsville, he joined the Seafarers' Association in 1983/84. Although he had never served time at sea, he was a keen yachtsman, owning an historic vessel built in 1906. He and Fred Bootes, the first curator of the museum, were good friends, both living at Seafarers House on the bank of Ross Creek.

### HMAS Townsville – background briefing

HMAS *Townsville* was one of 15 Fremantle Class Patrol Boats (FCPBs) built for, and operated exclusively by, the Royal Australian Navy. Taking the name from the city of Townsville, this was the second ship to bear the name. The predecessor was a Bathurst Class Minesweeper, which served as a convoy escort vessel in the waters of Australia, the Pacific and New Guinea during World War II. *Townsville* was proud of her Battle Honours: *Pacific 1942-45* and *New Guinea 1944*.

The first and lead ship of the Class, HMAS *Fremantle* was designed and built by Brooke Marine Ltd, Lowestoft, UK. All subsequent vessels were built in Australia by the Cairns shipbuilders, North Queensland Engineers and Agents (NQEA). *Townsville*, the second FCPB to be built in Australia, was launched from the NQEA slipway on 16 May 1981 by Lady Ramsay, wife of the Governor of Queensland, and was commissioned into the Royal Australian Navy on 18 July 1981. The ship's Company comprised of between three and five Officers, four Senior sailors and 16 Junior sailors. The ship was based at and operated from Cairns Naval Base (CNB) at HMAS *Cairns*.

HMAS *Townsville* had a range of 2360 nautical miles at 12 knots and a maximum speed of almost 30 knots. Displacing over 250 tonnes, the ship had an overall



length of 42 metres and a beam of 7m. Powered by two large 16 cylinder MTU diesel engines, *Townsville* had a rapid turn of pace and could comfortably reach speeds in excess of 25 knots. It was equipped with high-definition navigational radar, the latest GPS satellite equipment - allowing the ship's position to be determined with great accuracy, high and ultra high frequency communications equipment, gyro compasses and echo sounder.

Armed with a 40/60 Bofors gun and two 12.7mm 50-Calibre close range machine guns, *Townsville* also carried two small craft for boarding and other boat operations. *Townsville* was well equipped and ideally suited to fulfill a wide range of operational missions and tasks.

The FCPB's were the Navy's principal contribution to the nation's fisheries protection, immigration, customs and drug and law enforcement operations. They were highly capable and versatile warships, able to conduct a wide variety of missions and tasks, and worked hand-in-hand with other Government agencies including the Australian Defence Force, Coastwatch, Customs, and Immigration, and each year provided up to 1800 patrol days as part of the Coastwatch-managed national surveillance effort. In the event of war *Townsville* would have been tasked with controlling the waters close to the Australian mainland.

One of the primary duties was the contribution to the 'Civil Surveillance Program'. Surveillance and boarding operations conducted by the Royal Australian Navy safeguard Australia's sovereignty and significantly contribute to the security of our nation. *Townsville's* motto, 'Bold and Ready' illustrated the philosophy embraced in support of their mission as they patrolled the expansive waters of Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone. Operations included protection against unauthorized entry, breaches of customs, immigration and drugs legislation, other illegal activities in support of law enforcement and the preservation of the integrity of the national fish-stocks, the marine environment and other natural resources. Action taken against vessels found to be involved in illegal activities often lead to

seizure, arrest and handover to the relevant government agency for subsequent prosecution by the authorities.

Royal Australian Navy Patrol Boats also formed an important part of national and international Search and Rescue operations thus further contributing to Australia's wider maritime interests.

*Townsville* also achieved some significant milestones. In its first year of active service, it gained wide public exposure following the pursuit of the large Taiwanese Fishing Vessel MV *Yuan Tsan* which fled from arrest in Trinity Inlet on Christmas Day 1981. *Townsville* tracked her down attempting to escape from inside the Great Barrier Reef and after a prolonged chase which involved the firing of warning shots, eventually forced the 16 member crew to comply after gaining Ministerial approval to fire directly at the vessel. *Townsville* also achieved the biggest single catch when she arrested a 53 m and 750 tonne Taiwanese prawn trawler.

In the last Fleet Awards from the Maritime Commander, *Townsville* gained the 'Kelly Shield' Runner-Up for outstanding operational proficiency and the 'Silver Platter' for excellence in food services and catering provision.

In 1982, the *Townsville* had a starring role as 'HMAS *Defiance*' in the ABC series *Patrol Boat*. For the recent series, the actors spent time on the *Townsville* while stationed in Cairns undergoing a two week intensive training course with the crew in preparation for their roles on board HMAS *Hammersley* (HMAS Ipswich)

HMAS *Townsville* was decommissioned on Friday 11 May 2007 in Cairns.

## HMAS *Townsville* and beyond

Tony Manning and I attended the decommissioning ceremony in Cairns and were very moved by the poignancy of the event and the patriotism that seeped from every note sung or hushed word uttered. Lots of tears from past and present personnel – and we were very excited at the prospect that we could just about call the vessel 'ours'.

On Friday, May 25, the handover Ceremony took place at Mick Curtain's wharf. Tom Hunter, Mick's workshop manager, went to great lengths to turn the work yard into a more formal and fitting location where the serving of champagne and Michel's finger foods married nicely.

We were also presented with the bell, (engraved on the inside with the names of those who had been christened on board), and a 'scrap' album with highlights of the

ship's career. There will be many stories to tell in the coming months and years.



Vivienne Moran, Tony Manning, Hon. Peter Lindsay and LCDR Andrew Hawke

Our plans for the display of the ship will see her remain in the water as a floating exhibit. We have not finalised where the vessel will sit, but the two options at present are outside the main buildings, or adjacent to the maritime park. Guided tours will be run during the museum's opening hours.

Meetings have been held with the Townsville Port Authority, the Harbour Master, Curtain Bros, Townsville City Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the architects – they are all as excited as we are about the potential for the vessel to be a huge success.

Our fundraising campaign is about to get underway – so watch this space.

A good friend recently introduced me to Bill Leimbach. He is one of Australia's foremost television documentary directors, and has directed such documentaries as Gallipoli, Waltzing Matilda, Waves of change, My brother's Kosova wedding ...to name but a few. Bill is very interested in the *Townsville*, especially after having had a personally guided torch lit tour, and is planning on doing a short 'teaser' DVD for our marketing programme, and a longer full length DVD on either just HMAS *Townsville*, or all of the vessels named *Townsville* (which I now believe number eight, according to volunteer and researcher Peter Nayda – who will continue the investigation. More on this in the next issue.

Tony Manning and I recently had a meeting with Robin Mackay, the CEO of the Naval Cadets. He is enthusiastic about their future involvement and is also anticipating the involvement of *Mission Australia* participants, who may be able to provide building assistance for some aspects of the project, and resources for display and maintenance.

## Stan Bradfield's Day at sea

A phone call from John Jewell started it. On Saturday, April 21, I awoke at 0440hrs, was at John's by 05.30, where we were picked up by Ron Johnson. Out to the RSL villas then to pick up Norton Challenor, and finally out to T.S. Coral Sea.

With 15 cadets, three officers and us four Seafarers aboard the bus we set sail for Bowen at 0700. Two and half hours later we arrived at the Bowen wharf. Fortunately the bus driver decided to chance the rickety wharf and drove us to the end of it, about 750m, where HMAS Townsville was berthed. Boarding was quickly accomplished and, at 1000hrs, Capt Andy Hawke gave the order to cast off the lines.

Slowly the patrol boat went astern to clear the wharf, turned and headed for the open sea. Before long engine revolutions were increased to 620 and the log moved up to 21 knots. With a following sea breeze, at around 10 knots and an almost calm sea, there was no worry about sea-sick cadets, nor old time mariners! Off Bowen we passed close to several shoals of fish, mackerel or tuna, and they were being worked by many sea birds. Lots of pleasure boats around too so the OOW kept a close eye on the radar. Every 15 minutes a position was plotted on the chart and if a change of course had been made to avoid a vessel fishing, a new course was plotted and steered.

Lunch time came and the effort of feeding an extra 26 hands (four more passengers joined in Bowen) was taken in the cook's stride. Seating was a little difficult as the wardroom only seated three with a jump seat for a fourth.

During the afternoon everyone had the chance to operate, but not fire, the hydraulically operated main armament, a 40/60 Bofors gun. Then came firing of the secondary armament, .5 cal. Browning machine guns, by crew members. Three boxes of 100 rounds each were fired, the second on one continuous burst which lasted for only a few seconds. Even with ear plugs in place all passengers were amazed at the noise produced.

After the guns had been secured it was time for man overboard drill. Final rescue was made by a swimmer who brought the dummy alongside where it was hoisted aboard by a tackle mounted on a small davit. Powering the tackle were some of the crew (memories of hoisting the motorboat aboard AMS Dubbo by hand when I was coxswain) so some things have not changed!

Arriving in Townsville the patrol boat had to be backed a couple of hundred metres to her berth. This was done very accurately although the orders were rapid fire: "Slow astern both, stop port, stop starboard....slow astern port, stop port...slow astern starboard, stop starboard" etc. At each order the propeller gave only a

few turns but this was sufficient to slow, stop, or turn the vessel. She handled more like an 8m, twin engine pleasure boat than a 42 m naval craft. Lines went ashore at 1600 hrs, dead on our projected ETA.

The crew and cadets had all changed into their white uniforms (No 6s?) and manned the side for entry into the port of Townsville. All in all it was a delightful day and brought back memories of bygone times.  
Stan Bradfield

## Townsville's RSL drops in

The Townsville RSL have most generously donated \$20,000 for the HMAS Townsville project – but this was not donated in the usual way – more like manna from heaven.



RSL President Rod McLeod, Viv Moran, Lindy Hansen and Kel Keech

Being an adventurous type of chap ( I presume) RSL President Rod McLeod thought he'd make a splash with the donation, and so what else does one do but leap out of the sky and plummet southwards towards the ocean? A safe landing was had and Rod, together with co-parachutist and RSL committee member Lindy Hansen, kindly presented a **very large cheque** to myself and Kel.

We are most appreciative and offer our thanks to the RSL club once again. Hopefully some of the members will become actively involved in the running of the vessel when ready.

## Oracle web design – a new concept

I have been introduced to two live wires who run *Oracle Studio – Digital Creativity*. They have big plans for our website and as a consequence, we will be working on a new-look, user- friendly site. The Townsville City Council has provided us with some grant funding to contribute to this development, allowing us to share our vision for the *Townsville* project and the museum. We need to get our message 'out there' in as many ways as we can, to as many people as possible. And if you are still reading the newsletter, we've succeeded in at least one sphere.

## Car park entry fee

We have finally had installed a cable gate at the entrance to the museum car park. The entrance fee is \$5 in coins - which is in keeping with the TCC tariffs. Staff and visitors are reimbursed this fee.

In the past, most of the parking spaces have been consistently taken by office workers, which included the spaces reserved for museum staff. While this may remain the case, at least the museum will now receive some financial benefit. With 30 spaces at \$5 per bay, we may be – at best – looking at \$750 per week. Although it will take some time for users to get used to the idea of paying, we will be able to pay off the installation loan within a reasonable time frame.

Since the car park has been operating in this way, the traffic police have been most vigilant in their inspections of kerb side parking outside the museum. These spaces are for a period of two hours, and if available, many visitors find that the time is adequate for them to tour the museum. What we really need now is space for coach and bus parking .....

## Cootharinga Society

*On 20th July, 2007 Townsville West Community Centre and the Cootharinga Society of North Queensland hosted the closing ceremony of the "Culturally Inclusive Workshops" at the Maritime Museum, for indigenous people living with a disability.*

*Cultural workshops funded by the Townsville City Council had been held over the preceding months at which participants and their support workers learnt a little bit about Aboriginal and Islander culture, basket weaving, beading and painting.*

*The closing ceremony was held to celebrate what had been learnt, to display participants' works and to thank the presenters.*

*The morning was attended by Local Member Mike Reynolds, Shane Alley from the Townsville City Council, participants, support workers, volunteers and members of the public. Aboriginal Elders from the Wulurukaba and Bindil tribes conducted "Welcome to Country" which was followed by performances by students from the Shalom Christian College and the Wulgurukaba Walkabout Dancers.*

*This was followed by morning tea which included a traditional Torres Strait Island dish.*

Karon Pearce, Lifestyle Services Administrator

## Jazz Festival

Trevor Keeling, manager of this year's Jazz Festival wrote an article for our newsletter – read on –

*The 2007 Palmer Street Jazz Festival – the 11<sup>th</sup> in the history of Townsville's jazz festival – saw most importantly the start of a close working relationship with the Maritime Museum.*

*Manager of the festival, Trevor Keeling, approached Vivienne Moran back in April to see if the Museum would be interested in forming a closer relationship with the festival. "After all, the festival is a Palmer Street icon, and for some years the festival has been performing in the park next door," he said.*

*He was delighted when Vivienne and her staff wholeheartedly endorsed the project, seeing – amongst other things - the benefits of a long-term relationship which will assist in advertising the Museum, which includes the ability to promote the Museum as a performance space.*

*So, not only was the Museum the location for the official launch of the Festival in July, but in August the Maritime Park was host to the dedicated performance area, which impressed patrons no end with its magnificent layout and wonderful atmosphere, but the entrance to the Museum was the entrance to the festival itself; and the Museum's Seafarers Gallery was the performance space for the more intimate jazz bands.*

*"We were also thrilled to be able to host our major sponsors (Carmichael Motors Mercedes-Benz) and guests in the prow of the Museum, where they were able to see everything that was happening in the*

*park and entertain their 300 guests that came over three nights," said Trevor.*

*"I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Viv and the Museum staff for their enthusiastic support (which we reciprocate) and we look forward to*

*developing a long-term relationship which will help promote the Museum, " he said.*



*Maritime Park with jazz enthusiasts*

### Dibbs St anchor

An interesting piece of history was revealed in August this year, with the unearthing of an old anchor in the ex-Dibbs St car park.

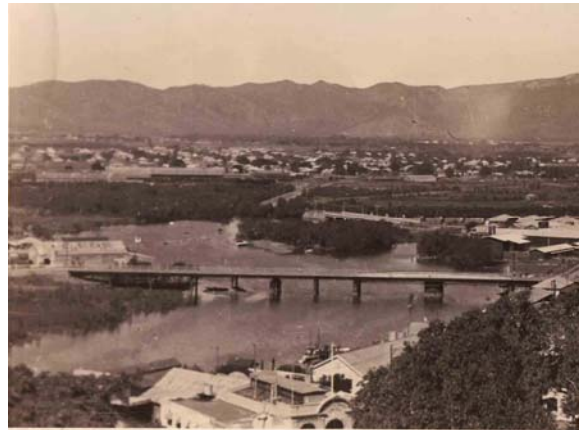


*Trevor Hollins with the Dibbs St anchor*

The excavators working on the site of the Quantum Groups 'Gateway on Palmer' development had unearthed the stock of an anchor deep in the reclaim material and were quite excited about their find. More excavation revealed a sizeable anchor of the 'New Admiralty pattern' design, and is about 1.2m in length. Because this was an historic cultural find, I phoned the Museum of Tropical Queensland to inform the Historic Shipwrecks Officer; he in turn had to contact EPA as the anchor lay on state land (and had it been in the creek, would also have been in state waters and not Commonwealth waters). EPA gave the decision regarding future custodianship to the MTQ who agreed that, lacking any real historical context, the MTQ had no place for it, and so the maritime museum is now its new owner.

The anchor is covered in concretion, which we will not try and remove. It has been watered and sprayed to remove the topical layer of salt and silt and is now being covered in fish oil. This will slow down the rate of evaporation and thus slow the deterioration of the metal.

The anchor will be placed on the anchor wall where a story will be told to put it in context. Trevor remembers the area being covered in thick mangroves – a good place for crabbing. In the 1960s the land was reclaimed and 'Tancred's' opened up a butcher's shop, with meat from their meatworks in Pentland. Eventually the building was pulled down and the land was used as a car park up until very recently. Soon we will have a multi-storey unit complex – a long way from the vessels plying up and down the creek to where the old railway station is today, and where one old vessel even lost an anchor.



*The old swing bridge crossing into Palmer St. The mangroves – or the Dibbs St 'car park', can be seen under the end of the bridge on the left hand side of the photo.*

### AGM and Board members

Since our AGM in March, we have seen some changes to the structure of the Board: President Angelo Rigano had to leave due to work pressures, and as a result, Tony Manning has stepped in as President once more. We have also said farewell to Secretary Robert Tardiani, and Ken Draffen. We thank each of them for their hard work and contributions. We also thank most sincerely our honorary Bookkeeper Ian Yesberg, who works tirelessly behind the scenes.

We have welcomed Capt. John Preston, Trevor Hunt, Andrew Hucker, Peter Whalley –Thompson and Otto Muller.

Not only have we now got a sizeable board, but our member numbers have swelled, thanks to the hard work of John Preston. Our new Corporate members include: Riverside Marine, Perkins Shipping, and Svitzer Australia.

New members include: John Preston, Andrew Hucker, Matt Shirley, Susan Montgomery, Otto Muller, Ranjit Thangiah, Richard Smith, Sardha De Silva, Robert Ibell, Tony Loader, Capt. Hugh Ripley, Peter Kirkby, Dick Greenwood, Trevor Hunt, and Peter Whalley-Thompson. It is great to have you on board and I look forward to getting better acquainted.

## Friends of HMAS *Townsville* Honour Board

Our new honour Board **Friends of HMAS *Townsville*** is filling up with the names of terrific people and / or organisations that have shown their support for the project in various ways.

Thanks very much to you all for supporting us in this project – we couldn't do it without you.

## Volunteers

As always, people move on and enjoy their retirement and travel, or their peace and quiet. It's always a sad time when people leave, and in the last few months we have farewelled Tom Watts, Mick Fathers, Bunny Keith, Don Ditchburn and Kaye Fortington.

On the brighter side, we've welcomed Peter Nayda, Garth Eaton, Marie de Monchaux, Karen Kerr, Margaret Hooper, Harry Somer, Colin Mason, and Norton Challenor - who comes in every Monday and welcomes our visitors.

In April, the staff and corporate members (didn't see too many there..) were invited to view the ship,



Mike Nunn in position

They had a good look around, and as expected, boys liked to be boys with their toys – as Mike Nunn (below opposite) proved as he enjoyed all the comfort the gunner's seat had to offer.

**Karen Kerr** is looking into the history of the creek opposite where the museum is located. Our aim is to provide visitors with a sturdy, aluminum four or six page 'booklet' that will be clamped to the deck railings overlooking the creek. Visitors will be able to view the creek and gain an understanding of how the creek has changed over the years. The next project will be the Penny ferry.

**Colin Mason** has begun work with the wooden clinker built *Moorah* lifeboat. Having had some shipwright

experience, he is looking forward to addressing the sad state of the vessel.



*Moorah's* life boat showing signs of life under the flaking paint.

The *Moorah* was an army survey vessel that worked Out of Brisbane, and was donated to the museum in 1999 by the Queensland Maritime Museum in Brisbane.

The lifeboat has had a busy life recently – it, along with Gerry Clancy's small boat (seen opposite being loaded on a truck, bound for Bowen) was whisked off to grace the set of the film *Australia*, with Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman.



The loading of our star boats

We have Steve McGuire to thank for organizing this, and I'm sure both boats had a good time.

**Peter Nayda** has helped us by building a new steel frame for the display of the two Seagull engines we have. He's also undertaken some research into the history of the Seagull engine which is of great interest to many engine enthusiasts



Peter with his specially made Seagull 'engine frame'

Peter's also doing some research in the 5" gun on the 'stern deck'.

### Life. Be In It

We have recently joined forces with *Life. Be In It*, a Work for the Dole program. This is a Commonwealth Government initiative funded through the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. The clients that we take on will be responsible for keeping the external environment clean and tidy – leave sweeping, weeding, window cleaning and general maintenance under the guidance of a staff member. Hopefully this will take the pressure off the staff member who generally does this maintenance, allowing him time to do what he's best at – making, mending, fixing and answering many questions about local history.

### Pontoon – corrosion at the waterline

Our pontoon has shown signs of deterioration along the waterline, begun with the unnoticed loss of the anodes originally attached. Although new ones have been attached to slow the corrosion process down, the damage needs to be addressed. Tom Hunter from Curtain Bros. has the lucky job of tackling the problem. The vessel usually occupying the pontoon, *Seababy IV*, owned by Rod Mathiesen will be away for two months doing fishing charters. This is the time now for the work to be done. Tropical Diving's vessel *Jazz II* left in March and was replaced by Rod's vessel. This has turned out to be a good working relationship for all of us.

### Cleveland Bay Detention Centre Art display

Once again, the Detention Centre has housed a fabulous art display at the museum, with work produced by the young men living at the centre. The display was launched on Wednesday 12 September and closed on Wednesday 19 September.

To Viv and the team at the Maritime Museum:

*The Cleveland Youth Detention Centre Art Exhibition is a time for the young people of Cleveland to show off some of their works to the larger community. I believe the young people feel a sincere sense of worth to know someone has gone out of their way to view their work, and that is good enough to be on display in a gallery open to the public.*

*The exhibition shows the young people a vehicle to which they can make an income after their release in an attempt to curb their offending behaviour.*

*The monies raised will go to the individual young persons who produced each item.*

*I would like to thank Viv and the volunteers at the Maritime Museum for their hospitality while I was at the Art Exhibition and for having me feel like a welcomed member of the team.*



*Palm fronds: material culture*

Tim White, Cleveland Bay Centre

### A trip to Guam

In August I went to Guam to spend 10 days with my husband Bill, who had been employed by the Guam Heritage Office to develop a database of all the known shipwreck sites in the waters around Guam – out to 12 miles. Guam is a small peanut shaped island, home to approximately 150,000 people, and a territory of the United States. It is north of PNG on the same longitude as Cape York, a four and a half hours flight from Cairns. Being prone to cyclones most of the buildings are two storeyed with small windows, although this doesn't apply to the huge tourist hotels that hug parts of the coastline.

We had hoped to do some underwater site investigations, but the volume of information we found in the historical record meant that most of the 11 days I was there were spent in front of the computer, talking to historians, diver operators and 'locals' - it was no small task. We located 107 sites, and at the time, this didn't include traditional canoe sites which we had begun to document when I left.

The wreck sites (and this may simply be a cannon or an anchor) dated from the wreck of the *San Pablo*, lost in 1568, to the most recent loss in the 1990s. The wrecks have lain quietly underwater while Guam has experienced foreign domination, two world wars – and enormous changes to their culture.

It became a Spanish 'outpost' from the early 1600s.

Located midway between the Philippines and Acapulco, its peaceful people and clean water offered salvation to the Spanish ships and sailors that slowly travelled across

the vast expanse of the Pacific in their galleons, carrying trade goods, spices, fortunes in gold and silver (these Manilla galleons were known as 'The Prize' and were much sought after by privateers, buccaneers and pirates) all bound for Spain by way of the Spanish lands of 'New

Spain'. The missionary priests and administrators enforced their ways of life on the Chamorro people, wiping out most of the population of dissenters by the mid 1700s.

In 1899, following the Spanish-American wars, the Americans occupied Guam, a legacy which remains. During Japan's advancement into the South Pacific, the Americans fled, leaving the 'Guamanians' to face the terror of the Japanese by themselves. The Americans returned to 'liberate' Guam in 1944, and have remained.

### Did you know...

**...that the *Merchant Royal* treasure ship's half-billion-dollar 'prize' has probably been discovered, begging the question: Who owns the past?**

*Some of you may have heard of this recent discovery off Land's End, Cornwall - a discovery that has raised the question - once more, of who 'owns' the past.*

*It appears that for many months, the Tampa-based Odyssey Marine Exploration Company, a private salvage company, worked quietly out at sea on a project that was only recently brought into the public arena. The work being undertaken is in international waters, allowing the salvage company to salvage 'the treasure' that they have found.*

*With little thought likely to be given to those material remains without monetary value, we are unlikely to learn much of the history of the ship, except how much gold it was carrying.*

The following is an account written by Michael A. Mohammed: [mmohammed@sptimes.com](mailto:mmohammed@sptimes.com) or (813) 226-3404.

Pounded by a storm on the last leg of a five-week journey, the *Merchant Royal* limped through the sea on 23 Sept 1641, weighed down by tons of gold, silver and jewels.

Its 80-man crew feverishly worked two pumps to keep out the ocean that was leaking through the groaning and gapping planks of the *Royal*.

Although the ship was privately owned by the English, it carried a load of treasure fresh from Spain's American mines. The doubloons' original courier, a Spanish treasure ship, had arrived at the Azores islands aflame. Spanish authorities put out the fires and hired the 700-ton *Royal* to complete the trip, not unusual when the lines of public and private, nationality and allegiance, crossed in far different ways than today.

When the news of the wrecking reached London, Britain's secretary of state interrupted Parliament to announce that the *Royal* had sunk 10 leagues, or roughly 30 miles, off Land's End, Britain's south western point. It was one of the largest seafaring disasters of the time.

According to a contemporary account in **Ye Olde Maile**, as the ship and its crew approached the English channel, "*night came on and foule weather, they plyed their two chaine pumps, in midst of which labour both the pumpe chaines broke at once and fell into the wells.*"

Most of the crew escaped in a longboat to be rescued by the *Dover Merchant*, a smaller ship accompanying the *Royal* on its journey.

Seven men, the broadsheet says, ran down to fill their pockets with treasure and drowned in the ship as it sank. "*The Captaine was the last, who would not forsake her until she was sunke even unto her cook-roome ports.*"

Now, the *Merchant Royal* might return from the sea, complete with its treasure and 36 bronze cannon.

And with recovery will come questions. Who owns treasure from a different time, a different world? Spain, the country that mined the gold and silver? England, the country whose ship transported it? The descendants of the slaves who dug it out of mines in the bowels of the Earth? The captain whose ship and personal fortune sunk? Or is it finder's keepers?

And if a country lays a claim, how similar is, say, the England of 1641 - in which civil war was about to break out and a king to lose his head - to the England of today? Can a ship that went down in one world, a mere 21 years after the Pilgrims reached Plymouth Rock, be claimed by another, ours? If the rule of law reaches so far back, can people or nations be held accountable for transgressions such as slavery from those same times?

Odyssey Marine has released footage of gold and silver coins it says came from 'a' shipwreck. The company has been tight-lipped about the ship's identity, saying officials still need to verify it.

British shipwreck historian Richard Larn, who maintains the seven-volume, nearly 50,000-entry Lloyd's Shipwreck Index of the British Isles, said he's almost certain Odyssey has found the *Royal*.

Larn lives near Land's End, Britain's southwest tip. For two years, local fishermen have watched Odyssey's sonar ships combing the sea about 24 miles from Larn's home. "That's the rough area where the records say that the *Merchant Royal* sank," Larn said, and the *Royal* is the only wreck anywhere near the English Channel that holds the amount of treasure Odyssey recovered.

Some archaeologists worry that a for-profit company like Odyssey could overlook the *Royal's* enormous historical value, erasing traces of the past that exist nowhere else.

"I have to part ways fundamentally with the idea of selling what is found," said Jim Delgado, executive director of the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M University. "The flash of gold and silver often obscures the history."

He added that a colonial-era ship like the *Royal* could teach historians a great deal about the period.

"We know more about Roman seafaring than we know about the role of ships in the rise of the modern world economy," he said.

Subtle clues that might seem worthless to treasure hunters can lead to major discoveries for historians. For example, the scatter pattern of a decaying ship's cargo can help experts figure out what the ship looked like - but only if the wreckage is carefully photographed before any items are moved.

Delgado gave another vivid example, from the "Gelidonya wreck," a merchant ship that sank 3,000 years ago off the Turkish coast. The excavation team found a box filled with "concretion," a hardened mix of oxidized metal and dirt. Slicing up the block, they found perfect impressions of a Bronze Age woodworker's tools.

"Archaeology costs. When you have shareholders seeking the maximum profit, extensive archaeology gets in the way," he said. When it comes to commercially salvaged shipwrecks, "in every case I'm aware of, commercial value has outstripped scientific value."

The waters around Florida are filled with ruined wrecks, places where treasure hunters used explosives or the force of their propellers to grind the site up in search of gold.

"If we have, say, a fish population in the gulf, we can change laws and regulations so hopefully they bounce back," said University of West Florida archaeologist

Greg Cook. "The problem with shipwrecks is they don't bounce back."

Larn agreed that commercial companies are more likely than academics to damage a site - but said if the treasure hunters didn't find it, no one would.

Even after all that work, Odyssey's bonanza is not yet secure. Some experts have suggested Odyssey knows which ship it has found but stays mum to ward off history's hold on the wreck.

The Spanish government, for example, has already pledged to take the company to court over the treasure

it lost so long ago. But the world has changed a great deal since 1641.

For Delgado, the Texas A&M archaeologist, the controversy is about "who owns the past, and what the most appropriate uses of the past are."

And who knows - Spain used slaves to rip the gold, silver and jewels from the earth. Their descendants might want a cut.

A careful examination could generate "sympathy for the people whose lives were rolled under and plundered," said Delgado, as well as for the hard-bitten sailors who worked on the ship. "You start putting voices back into the record for people whose story was never written down."

That old British broadsheet described Capt. John Limbrey's depression at the loss of his ship:

*"The Captaine on his landing repaired to his house and family, with a hankercher about his neck, and will not be seen or spoken with (as yet) by any his grief is so great."*

Which, incidentally, introduces yet another claim on the bullion: Limbrey's descendants could try to recover part of their ancestor's personal fortune, which sank with the ship.

Michael A. Mohammed can be reached at [mmohammed@sptimes.com](mailto:mmohammed@sptimes.com) or (813) 226-3404.

### And finally...

....Some well deserved thanks to:

**The Port Authority** for continuing to support us, especially in our ventures with HMAS *Townsville*; **Our patron** and Chairman of the Port of Townsville, **Ron McLean**; **Our Hon. Bookkeeper Ian Yesberg**; and All our corporate sponsors, members and friends.

We also wish Life member Russell Melville a speedy recovery, having recently had a full knee replacement!

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**New Flash**

**It was announced yesterday that the Chairman of the Townsville Port Authority, Mr Ron McLean is retiring from his position as of today, Friday 28 September.**

**The Board of the Museum would like to offer their Best Wishes to Ron for his next adventures in life, and to thank him for his patronage of the museum.**

**The incoming Chairman is Mr Ross Dunning, and we look forward to our association with him in the future.**



**PORT of TOWNSVILLE**  
 Nexus North Queensland

## What's in the Bookshop

Our collection of books and souvenirs is growing.  
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### CHARTS

First Fleet chart  
Descaliers 1550 *La Terre Australis*  
Jansson 1650 *Mar di India*  
Bellin 1753 *Terres Australia*  
Dunn 1774 *Geography. Description of the world*  
Flinders 1814 *Terra Australia*  
Tallis 1851 *Australia*  
Willaim Bligh 1792

### About Matthew Flinders

Ernestine Hill: *My love must wait.*  
Matthew Flinders: *Trim*

### About James Cook

Philip Edwards (ed): *Journals of Captain Cook*  
Antonia MacArthur: *His Majesty's Bark Endeavour*  
Alan Frost: *Voyage of the Endeavour*  
Alan Villiers: *Capt. Cook, The seamen's seaman*  
Bernard Smith: *Imagining the Pacific. In the wake of the Cook voyages*  
Ray Parkin: *HM Bark Endeavour* (hard and soft copies)

### Townsville history

Pam Carver: *Capt Robert Towns*  
Gibson-Wilde: *Gateway to a golden land*  
Judith O'Donoghue: *A Magnetic Life*

### Shipwrecks

Peter Maiden: *Shipwrecks of the New Guinea gold explorers*  
Maureen Nettle: *The Yongala Mystery*  
Max Gleeson: *SS Yongala: Townsville's Titanic*  
T. Matthews: *Shipwrecks and seafarers' scandals*  
Owen Chase: *Wreck of the whaleship Essex*

### Exploration

Miriam Estensen: *Discovery*  
Tim Flannery: *Terra Australis*  
Tim Flannery : *The Explorers*  
Brett Hilder: *Navigator in the South Seas*  
Ian Nicholson: *Via Torres Strait*  
N. Philbrick: *In the heart of the sea*

### Early Europeans in Australia

Tim Flannery (ed) *Two classic tales*  
Neville George: *The Peruvian*  
Don Charlwood: *The Long Farewell*  
T. Crago: *First Fleet and Year of settlement*  
D. Hopkins: *Transported beyond the seas*  
J. Nicholson: *The First fleet*  
L. Rose: *Richard Siddins of Port Jackson*  
Mike Nash: *Cargo for the Colony*  
Robert Holden: *Orphans of history*

### Reference

William Torrance: *Motorships of the 30s (Brisbane River)*  
Ian Farquar: *Howard Smith Shipping*  
Mori Flapan: *The Tug Waratah*  
Jack Loney: *Australian sea stories*  
Jack Loney: *Wrecks on the Queensland coast*  
Jack Loney: *Australian shipwreck coast*  
Jack Loney: *Australian shipwrecks v.4*  
Jack Loney: *Australian run v.6*  
Ian Nicholson: *Gazetteer of Sydney shipping*  
Ian Nicholson: *Log of Logs, Vols II & III*

### History

Giles Milton: *Nathaniel's nutmeg*  
A Moorehead: *The Fatal impact*  
Evan McHugh: *1606 – An epic adventure*  
Stephen Pumphrey: *Latitude*  
Rainer Radok: *Capes and Captains*  
S. Reeves: *Floating brothel Lady Julian*

### WWII

Olive Weston: *Olive, WWII nurse*  
Tom Frame: *HMAS Sydney*  
B. Allsop: *Australian Army watercraft. Unknown Fleet*

### Miscellaneous

Martin Terry: *Maritime paintings of early Australia 1788 - 1900*  
Trevor Bounford: *Gem Knots*  
Warner: *Fresh approach to knotting and ropework*  
Ron Edwards: *Knots - ornamental and useful*

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### CD's

Anne Eagles: *Townsville Under Weigh*  
*Songs of a City*

### DVD's

*Unsung heroes: The Krait*  
*Yongala*  
*Voyage of the Nautilus*  
*Submariners*

