



# Scuttlebutt

September 2021

[NEWSLETTER OF THE CANBERRA  
MODEL SHIPWRIGHTS SOCIETY](#)

Established 21 April 1988. Incorporated 16 January 1991.

**OBJECTIVES:** To foster and maintain interest in building model ships, boats, associated fittings, gear, equipment, armaments and relevant items and structures and the pursuit of excellence in this field.



**EXPO 2021 - CANCELLED - See President's report page 3.  
Special issue of Scuttlebutt, October 2021, page 2.**

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS - 2021-22

President Bob Evans  
Vice-President Matt Shepley  
Secretary Bill Atkinson  
Ass.Secretary Ray Osmotherly  
Treasurer Peter Hateley  
Members Robert Hodsdon, Rod Carter  
 Elizabeth Hodsdon  
Public Officer Ray Osmotherly  
Appointments made by Committee:  
Member Liaison Max Fitton  
Web Master – Steve Batcheldor  
Newsletter Editor - Brian Voce

## EXPO 2021 CANCELLED

The CMSS Expo which was to have been held be held on September 18-19 has been cancelled due to Covid uncertainties.

## Gatherings

The Society meets at the Men's Shed at Melba on the third Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. (except December and January). Visitors are welcome.

## Web-page

CMSS members are encouraged to visit our website at: [http:// www.canberramodelshipwrights.org.au](http://www.canberramodelshipwrights.org.au). Instructions for using this website are on the site itself where members will need to register. The webmaster will help you in any way possible. We seek content for the website - everything from photographs of your models through to interesting web-links and chat.

## Facebook Page

The Society has a Facebook group to promote the Society and to attract new members. Please feel free to post items on the page and share it with your Friends. <https://www.facebook.com/canberramodelshipwrights/>

## Subscriptions

Annual Membership:

- Canberra Area-Single \$30.00, Couple \$45.00.
- Country/Interstate-Single \$15.00, Couple \$22.50.

Payment Details:  
 By Cash to Treasurer  
 Post by cheque/Money Order to: c/- 5 Stretton Crescent, Latham, ACT 2615 ; or  
 Bank Deposit to  
 Beyond Bank - BSB 325185  
 Acct Name - Canberra Model Shipwrights Society (or CMSS)  
 Acct No 03452396.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

### SPECIAL OCTOBER EDITION

There will be an interim issue of Scuttlebutt in late October, with our usual quarterly edition following in December. The October special edition has been scheduled to help fill a gap following the cancellation of Expo 21 and will give members an opportunity to report on model-making or other related subjects of interest to us all. We are asking especially for illustrated reports on your latest modelling. I have at least two such articles promised, but it would be wonderful to have many more. Long and detailed, short and succinct - all welcome. Can you help?

Please send material to [bvoce@ozemail.com.au](mailto:bvoce@ozemail.com.au)

Deadline: mid-October.

## RIVER BOATS AND OTHER JOYS

It was reassuring for your editor to receive a number of positive responses to my invitation to contribute to this issue, including a report by Mike Pearson on his discovery of Rodney Hobbs and his comprehensive collection of model paddle boats on display in Wentworth. Rod is no stranger to Scuttlebutt readers. but as a follow-up, we contacted Rod Dingey in Tongala, Victoria, thanks to help from Bruce George. Rod has displayed his models at CMSS Expo and he has responded with an article on his passion. Peter Hateley heard about this from Bruce and has written about an earlier visit to Riverboat Rob's Wentworth shop - with lots of photos. All in all, modelling paddle boats has become a centre-piece to this issue. There are claims that the Murray River today has the largest fleet of operational river paddle steamers and paddle boats in the world. You can read more about that at:

<http://www.paddlesteamers.info/Australia.htm>

<http://www.murrayriver.com.au/paddleboats/>

Maybe it's time to think about making a paddle boat model.

And, if after all that you still need an incentive, we asked Gary Renshaw at Modelers Central, who needs no introduction to members, about his ideas. He told us (and you first heard it here): 'We have one Murray River PS in the early development stage - PS Brindabella - the design is for it to be a real cargo vessel with hoists etc.

**INSIDE**

**President's Report - 3**  
**Linking East and West - 4**  
**Sharing Our Hobby - 6**  
**Hooked on Paddle Steamers - 8**  
**A Fine Collection - 11**  
**Rod's Museum - 13**  
**Lady Nelson 30 Years on -15**  
**Enjoy Learning Ship Terms - 18**  
**Help for the Toolbox - 20**  
**Rich Maritime History - 21**

and larger than the Isabella we currently have.' Gary said he had done all the autocad drawings, but at this point there was still some way to go.

He added: 'We're also looking at a Paterson River PS from the Hunter Valley - that area also has a rich history of paddle steamers, even a rear-wheeler that was very uncommon.'

But this issue has more than paddle steamers to contemplate and is full of great reading. Sincere thanks to all our contributors.

**Brian Voce**, Editor

Another three months have passed; hard to believe, isn't it?

Also, just to show how wrong us mere mortals can be, the scenario is vastly different now to when I wrote the June letter.

We have had no choice but to cancel Expo21, the risks would have been far too great and besides that I doubt that our friends at Mount Rogers would have been available during September. Disappointing this may be, but it is certainly far from being the end of the modelling world. We have decided not to try for a different date early next year, but rather to stay with the tried and proven timing of mid-September 2022. More than likely this will remain at the Mount Rogers School, provided they remain happy to have us. Our colleagues at the Sydney Model Shipbuilders Club have postponed their event until November. Details can be found on their website.

That leaves us with the Wagga event at the end of October and the ACT Scale Modellers Expo in November, depending on how things shape up. I won't make any definitive statements this time! I think it is important that we maintain a positive attitude during these times. It is certainly disappointing to have to cancel yet again, but it should not lead to despair. We still have our hobby, no matter what you are engaged in building, and it is important to continue occupying one's mind and keep looking forward to the brighter things in life which are surely to come rather than giving way to doom and gloom.

In the meantime, what can the CMSS do for you? Probably nothing without suggestions and input

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

from you, the Members, and for that matter any non-members reading this superb Newsletter.

For starters, our venerable Editor has suggested an interim Newsletter be produced before the next scheduled publication in December. I think this is a great suggestion, but its success will obviously rest with you, the readers, to provide input, however long or short. Those of you who follow the ACT Scale Modellers Society will have noticed a couple of recent initiatives from that fine modelling body which I thought we could perhaps pick up on.

One is a regular posting of projects you have under way during this enforced modelling period (sounds better than "lockdown"! ). We have both our Facebook page and the Website. Why not use it?

The other suggestion was a "helpline" where you can get assistance with problems you are experiencing (in relation to modelling of course!) or are seeking advice on subject information and so forth.

Any other suggestions will be greatly appreciated. In conclusion, let us use this hobby we have been blessed with to keep our minds productive and achieve some great projects which we can show at Expo22- after all it won't be a good look if we turn up after a two-year absence with nothing new to display!

Please take care of yourselves, stay safe and do the right thing and we can get back to whatever then passes for normal. - BOB

MAX FITTON talks about his ongoing commitment to link East and West into the CMSS fold and details the lengths he has had to go to to surmount officialdom's hurdles.

## END IN SIGHT FOR LONG-HELD PLAN

### West Coast News

At very long last, there is 'movement at the station'.

As some readers will recall I tried to get a Western Australian Chapter of CMSS going without success. We commenced when we got four modellers together, one of whom is now in Modellers Heaven where all good modellers finish up; one has quit modelling and a third member found the travel too far from his home to my backyard shed, leaving me to carry on.



Not long after the demise of this group I joined the Falcon Men's Shed – a group of elderly gentlemen (some might query my inclusion in that grouping).

There were all sorts of things wrong with the way they ran the operation (nice woodworking machinery in a small shed), but no insurance, not incorporated, etc. This got sorted on 17 June 2016 when we became incorporated and got insurance. At that time we had 10 members and \$188 in funding. Shortly afterwards our numbers reduced to eight, but have since increased to about 45.

With only a modest increase in numbers, our shed rapidly became too small to house members working on machinery in a safe environment, so on 20 September 2016 the Mandurah Council was approached to acquire land on which to build a larger shed. Council formally approved that allocation of land adjacent to our existing shed in October 2020. Within a week of their decision someone found possum poo on the designated land. Experts were brought in to confirm the presence of these protected animals. Some of our members went down at night and shone torches to no avail. No possums could be found. The experts agreed with our findings, but added that it was possible that

possums that lived locally could occasionally use the said trees, so humans are excluded from destroying them. Oh dear, back to square one, or nearly.

The lot on which our shed is located is designated for community use. Also on that land is a Family Centre building. We were offered tenancy of that building after Council rescinded their original agreement. This was agreed, but then along came a small group of Mothers who complained to Council that they would lose their one morning a week of play group time if we had the entire building.

So plans were again changed. Council would only give us half. We are now in a situation where we will have about half of the building - but we will only sign a lease if we can build a shed on other land within the designated lot. We have viewed the draft lease which put the onus on us to maintain the building and grounds to which we would not agree.

It is possible that we might get somewhere before Christmas, but I am not too sure in which year. Council has, however, agreed that we can move in to part of our proposed part of the building. If everything happens and sufficient funds can be raised we will finish up with a new woodworking shed, a metal shed (the old shed slightly reconfigured), a scroll-saw room, a model ship building room and a largish meeting room. These facilities and activities are what members consider will attract more local men to become members and so help themselves to a more healthy mental life.

As can be seen this has all taken a long time to reach this stage, but the idea of a ship modelling room has certainly been on the cards for some time.

So how does one set up a modelling room? Benches and chairs are one essential and any benches we will make in-house. But what else is needed? So when President Bob called for those interested in acquiring some of the tools etc. from Liz Green. I thought it about time I put my money where my mouth was so I offered to buy a goodly proportion and this would be a good start. Problem 1 - how to get the goods to the West. Some calculations were done and it appeared that the box size for shipping purposes would be well over a shipping-ton an estimated shipping cost which may start at \$2,500. Grace Removals, however, have kindly agreed to provide the carriage on a pro bono basis, so we are looking forward to getting the goodies in the relatively near future. Bob handled the packing and delivery to Hume so I can only say a very big thank you to him.

It is of little consolation to him that he has regained space in his garage to store more kits.

I am hoping to have the room set up by Christmas and will send photos of what we have achieved. I have also asked our Committee to apply for affiliate membership of CMSS. Sometime we will have an official opening and I will be asking for the room to be named the Canberra Model Shipwrights Society Inc Western Australian Chapter Room. I live in hope.

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Light at the end of the Tunnel?

### Scuttlebutt Artist - Dunc Holmes



Illustrations Duncan Holmes

Duncan Holmes (Dunc), journalist, food writer, photographer, artist, bon vivant, family man and a cherished old friend, who provided many of his wonderful ship sketches for Scuttlebutt, died in Vancouver in March, aged 85. We have his permission to continue to include his illustrations in our newsletter. - Brian Voce, Editor Scuttlebutt



## The Seldom Seen Side of our Hobby

**There are a number of ways in which the CMSS can contribute and assist others simply by sharing our knowledge and interest in our hobby - Bob Evans explains**

I have often felt that modelling should not simply be a collection of grumpy old men (women also build models, but are generally not grumpy) beavering away in workshops to produce works of art which in many cases are not seen by anyone bar themselves and perhaps family members. Our own Expo and other such venues usually entices some of them out of their shelters to exhibit their efforts, not for self-satisfaction, but to allow others to see and gain pleasure from seeing their efforts. All too many models, unfortunately, do not see the light of day. I hasten to add that a majority are more than happy to show what they have built and to share their knowledge with the visiting public; it is those who are shy that we need to entice from the shadows and to give non-members something to think about.



In fact, the only time we get to see some of this work is when the unfortunate modeller passes away and family members seek help to either find homes for the models, to have them repaired, or to seek advice as to what can be done with them.

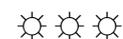
I feel that this is where the CMSS can be of help I believe, at least in some cases.

It is important to stress that we are not a professional organisation and do not seek to do work for profit. My view has always been that we would be willing to help a worthy call for assistance and I will try to illustrate this with a number of examples. You will have read the story of the "Huia" model in the last edition, so I won't repeat myself here. Suffice to say it now rests in the "Huia Settlers Museum" located quite close to Auckland. The photo below was taken by a friend who went to inspect the model's new home.

It was a real pleasure to have been involved in this exercise and the model repair was really quite straightforward. Not only did it bring satisfaction to the family of the late builder in fulfilling their wish to donate the model to the Huia Settlers Museum but it enabled Matt Shepley and myself to meet

some wonderful people at the New Zealand High Commission.

A very satisfactory outcome and certainly great for the CMSS. I look forward to visiting the Museum myself when travelling becomes a reality again.

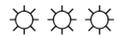


Another example came in the form of a contact from a lady who had lost her husband shortly before she contacted the CMSS. Her husband was relatively new to the hobby, but had managed to build two hulls and had almost completed one other model, the "Perseverance". The hulls were of the "Endeavour" and the "Sirius". All three came with the pieces required to complete them and all three were of a very high standard.

Along with the models came a large number of small hand tools and a Dremel drill and stand. A figure was agreed on and the CMSS paid, with the idea that Members would be free to offer a price and any amount over the original purchase price would also be paid to the lady concerned. I picked up the goods and stored them in my elastic-sided garage. Fortunately, the models were soon snapped up and only one remains with me until travel is again possible.

I am pleased to say that Max Fitton has purchased the small bits and pieces with a view to start a ship modelling interest at his local Menshed. It is also well worth mentioning that a well-known removalist company will be shipping the goods to Max free of charge because the Menshed are the recipients.

Despite the constant cries of doom and gloom we are fed daily, not all is lost and there are some good things happening around us.



Another contact involved the repair and clean up of a model junk which had been purchased by the lady's father in Malaysia many years ago and had been lying in a wardrobe for some time gathering dust and with the sails rotting away. The idea with this project was to clean, repair and provide new sails in time for the gentleman's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. This work was carried out, and I am very grateful to my very great friend for making a new set of sails for me. Her expertise with needle and thread is vastly superior to mine!



The birthday is in September and with current restrictions in movement I'm not sure it will be collected in time. Unfortunate perhaps, but it will happen at some stage.



The before and after photos show what can be done without too much effort.



"Perseverance", almost completed



"Sirius" and "Endeavour" hulls.

Last, but by no means least, comes a contact from another lady wishing to donate a model, unbuilt, of the "Endeavour" from Artisanía Latina.

This was also sent to Max as a fitting addition to his proposed model-building class.

So, you can see that there are a number of ways in which the CMSS can contribute and assist others simply by sharing our knowledge and interest in our hobby. This should not only give us pleasure in being able to help others, particularly during these challenging months, but in adding a new dimension to the hobby.

Think

about it!



# HOOKED ON PADDLE STEAMERS

Rob Dingey tells his story of 22 years of model making



My love for paddle steamers came from a grade 6 project when I was on a visit to Echuca.

There I'd seen a model of the Pevensey (my favorite paddle steamer) built by Kevin Hutchinson and I thought that I would have a go. I built a very crude model of the Pevensey from MDF in a scale of 10mm to 300mm and put a radio-controlled car on her for power. It worked very well, but didn't last that long because of the MDF.

I then built a model of the Ulonga (Pevensey's sister) in the larger scale of 15mm to 300mm which made a nice sized model (I still have this model today). After that I was hooked on paddle steamers from the Murray River and it is now 22 years since that model was built.

For me I think it's the enjoyment of being able to work on something that has played an important part

in Australia's history that is often forgotten, even if my replicas are in small scale.

I build a mix of models that existed or still do exist. These may bring back memories for people who might have cruised on one, or maybe had parents or grandparents that worked on or owned a particular paddle steamer.

The great thing about my models is I can take them anywhere and am not limited to the Murray River and so I can educate people who may have otherwise never seen a paddle steamer.

I currently have 16 models. I have a goal of 50+, so I still have a long way to go. I have purchased tooling that makes the building process quicker and most of my tools are full size - table saw, bandsaw and so on. I have a mini-table saw for stripping down planking and trim timbers. My latest tool is a 3D printer that

has opened up a whole new level of detail that can be added to my models.

When I have enough models and interest I would like to open a mini museum for all my models to be on display, I have already started this with a small

display room at my residence in Tongala which can display 16 or so models at once and this display is opened to the public regularly.

## REBUILDING THE PEVENSEY

Right - Pevensey before rebuild



My model of the Paddle Steamer Pevensey was built in 2000. She was built from photos in a scale of 15mm to 300mm making her about 1.6 meters long. She has undergone a few minor changes and had a new hull only 18 months after she was originally built, as the the bow and stern shapes were incorrect and her deck was pine planking which was also not correct. She is powered by a windscreen wiper motor and a 12-volt battery. Her controls are a Sabre 2 channel AM radio with a mechanical speed controller and standard servo for the rudder.

She has been to numerous rallies and displays and can also be seen working in the DVD Australian Live Steam while she was at the Echuca steam rally. She really hasn't changed much over the years, - just replacement parts - and was never fully finished. Around 2007-08 she became a permanent display piece at the Port of Echuca, originally in the cargo shed and now in the Discovery Centre. During an inspection earlier last year I noticed that she was in need of some TLC. She was removed from display and taken home for repairs; the Ulonga took her place on display during her absence.

Once she returned home it was found that more work was needed than originally thought to stabilise the model; she had large cracks in her hull and the paddle boxes were

falling apart to the touch. The paddle boxes were replaced and the hull repaired. She got new doors as the originals were printouts and had warped and a new helm was 3D printed and painted. A new engine was designed and printed out as the original was a plastic pipe for the boiler and a block of wood for the cylinder head. The new engine has most of the details of the original boat and really catches the eye. Gone is her very rusty deck which has been replaced with metal-look paint with simulated rust spots. The red gum sponson deck was left, as this is timber from the paddle steamer Success's hull, obtained while she was in Mildura.

The model is now finally complete after 20 years, but has been retired from being a working model as the hull will crack again as she has never had fibreglass coating. As she is on display all the time there is really no need for her to be a working model. To make this model a working model again the hull would need to be fibreglassed to make her completely water tight. With plans to build a new Pevensey model there is really no need to do this work and hopefully this display version will now last another 20 years.

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Completed model next page

Pevensey's new engine room - a work of art. The engine has most of the details of the original.

Below - Pevensey after rebuild.



Mike Pearson got a nice surprise when he visited Wentworth where the Darling and Murray Rivers join and found Rodney Hobbs and his exhibition of model paddle steamers

## 'A VERY FINE COLLECTION'

On a recent holiday my wife and I came across a shopfront in Wentworth, the town where the Darling and Murray Rivers join, with the provocative sign outside proclaiming 'Paddle steamer exhibition by Rodney Hobbs'. Say no more, we went in, where over 30 ship models are presented along with steam engine models, lots of photographs and riverboat memorabilia, and Rod has written fact sheets for each of his boats.



Rodney Hobbs - Photo courtesy of 'West Darling Arts Post'.  
All other photos - Mike Pearson

using scrim mesh for plasterboard joint tape, spray-painted several times, as railings; paddle-pop sticks as deckhouse walling; and cubes of scrap wood covered in hessian as wool bales. For some boats Rod has

made a number of models representing changes over time, such as his five models of the *Marion*, an 1897 steamer that still operates from Mannum. A number of model boats are under construction in the back workroom.

This is a very fine collection of well-made ship models that is a must to visit if you are in western NSW.

Rod has been building Murray/Darling paddle steamers since his first at age eight, the *Alpha* built for his grandmother who had been a governess for a riverboat family who owned it early in the last century. One of the five children, Pearl Wallace, herself became a riverboat captain. Rod's models are all scratch-built, mainly from photographs as plans are few and far between. He utilises whatever is at hand as his materials – interesting ones include

### Riverboat Rod's Model Paddle Steamer Display

Shop 20 Darling Street Wentworth NSW 2643

Wednesday to Sunday 10 - 4

Donations appreciated

Telephone: 0429 370 239

[riverboatrod@gmail.com](mailto:riverboatrod@gmail.com)





### Riverboat Rod's Display

Over 30 ship models are presented along with steam engine models, lots of photographs, riverboat memorabilia and fact sheets.

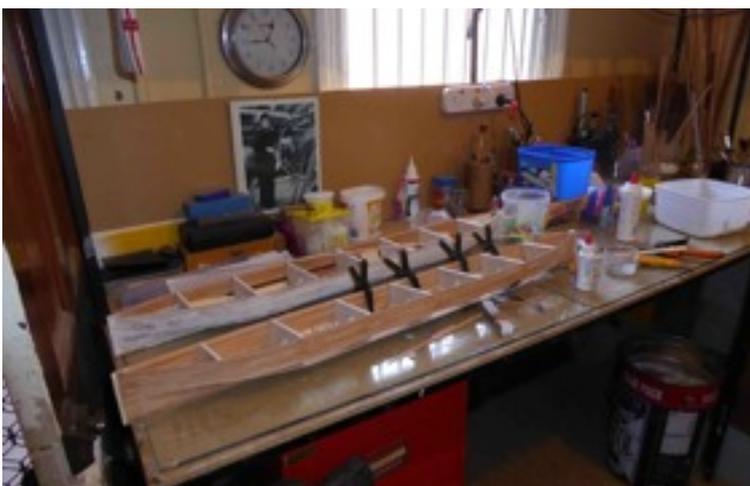
★

## PETER HATELEY RECALLS AN EARLY VISIT TO ROD'S MUSEUM

During a week's stay in Mildura in 2014 we enjoyed a one-day trip to Wentworth, NSW, which included tours of Wentworth Prison, a visit to the confluence of the Murray and Darling Rivers and a visit to Riverboat Rod's model "Museum". His display is in an old shop in Wentworth and all the models are scratch-built by Rod, mainly from old photos and sometimes from drawings he has been able to obtain. The models are of a high standard and he has produced some of the lesser-known river boats, as well as differing versions of the same boat, e.g. the Marion in all its variations (next page).

He is very knowledgeable and happy to talk to you. While I was there, he was building the only catamaran paddle boat that plied the river systems. The photos with this short report show many of the models with explanatory details and Rod's workshop (below) out the back of the display area.

I have also included a photo of the Ruby which was being restored in Wentworth at the time and also the Coonawarra on the slipway during our visit to Mildura - next page.





The models are of a high standard and Rod has produced some of the lesser-known river boats, as well as differing versions of the same boat, e.g. the Marion in all its variations, shown above.

Below - Models and the real thing: Ruby (left) and Coonawarra (right)



## History at Sea - the Lady Nelson tells her story 30 YEARS IN TASSIE WATERS



### MAL RILEY

“Close your eyes, when I tell you to open them you are sailing up the Derwent in 1803 on the original Lady Nelson”. This is the beginning of the “Horrible Histories, Lady Nelson” presentation given to school children that come on excursions on the Lady Nelson in Hobart.

The replica Brig the Lady Nelson was built largely from community funding for the 1988 Bicentennial. She is an icon of south-eastern Tasmanian waterways. For over 30 years she has plied these waters educating schoolchildren, undertaking sail training or just giving visitors and locals a pleasant outing on the water. The Lady Nelson is a not-for-profit organisation and is run entirely by volunteers.

Many people are not aware of the integral role the original Lady Nelson played in Tasmanian and Australian history.

The Lady Nelson brought the first settlers to both southern and northern Tasmania. On the present day school voyages, the children are taken through the impact that these and subsequent settlers had on the original inhabitants of Tasmania. The story of



Mathinna (the girl in the red dress above - painted by Thomas Bock, a convict artist, when she was at Government House) is told to the students. She was orphaned on Flinders Island, taken into Government House in Hobart by Sir John and Lady

Jane Franklin. Then a few years later, Mathinna was abandoned and sent back to various orphanages. On leaving the orphanage at around 16, she fell between two cultures and didn't fit into either. While still young (between 17 and 21) she lived with the Oyster Cove people and was thought to have been drinking, when she tragically fell over and drowned in a puddle.

Lieutenant Grant brought the Lady Nelson to Australia from England and upon his return published a book on his adventures on the ship. In the book there is an illustration of Pemulwuy who fought a 12-year campaign against settlement in NSW. Grant describes him as a "troublesome fellow". At the time

people said the illustration (right) was a remarkable likeness. This is the only known image of this important Australian historical figure. His story is currently being made into a movie.

The Mate of the Lady Nelson, Jorgen Jorgensen, killed the first whale in the Derwent and this

started an industry. It is said that early Hobart was built on the whale's back. Jorgensen has his own amazing story in that he was briefly the King of Iceland, explored much of the Central Plateau, was a spy, a transported convict, fought for and against the Royal Navy and was an organiser in the "black line". His likeness, wearing a crown, features on the Ross Bridge.

The students then hear about Mary Wade and conduct a short play about her court case. She was found guilty of theft and at 11 years old sentenced to death by hanging. Prior to this the youngest child executed in Georgian times was 9 years old, for

arson. By royal pardon some of the female death sentences were commuted to transportation and thus Mary was sent to Australia, arriving on the Lady Juliana in the second fleet. The older students get more detail about the Lady Juliana, also known as the floating brothel. During her life in Australia, Mary had 21 children of which only 7 survived. When she died she had around 300 direct descendants and this is now likely to be in the tens of thousands. One of her descendants is Kevin Rudd, former Prime Minister of Australia. We do not know for sure if Mary was on the Lady Nelson, but she was certainly in many of the places the Lady Nelson visited and if not on board would have at least seen or known of the vessel..



The Lady Nelson brought Governor Lachlan Macquarie and his wife to Tasmania from Sydney in 1811. Governor Macquarie then started naming things after himself, family and associates. The streets he named in Hobart include; Campbell St (wife's maiden name), Argyle St (where he grew up), Elizabeth St (after his

wife), Bathurst St (after his boss), Liverpool St (after Earl of Liverpool, another boss), Antill St (after his aide) and of course Macquarie St. The Macquarie's journeyed from Hobart to Launceston naming things along the way, Lachlan, Macquarie Plains, Macquarie Springs, Antill Ponds, Oatlands, Ross, Perth, and the Elizabeth and Macquarie Rivers and many more. The Governor and his wife departed Launceston and they spent Christmas Day 1811 on the Lady Nelson at sea in Bass Strait. Macquarie liked the Lady Nelson so much that when she was wrecked on rocks at Port Macquarie NSW (named

after guess who) he ordered her to be refloated and repaired and put back in service. He even named Mount Nelson after his favourite little Brig\*.

Other exploits of the Lady Nelson were capturing a pirate ship in Jervis Bay, naming the rip at the entrance as she discovered (to Europeans) and entered Port Philip Bay, bringing settlers from Norfolk Island to settle in New Norfolk in Tasmania and much more.

The Lady Nelson was the “white van” of the early colony. The arrival of the Lady Nelson in the various ports brought much excitement. Ship arrivals brought new supplies, news from the outside world, new people, convicts, settlers and reuniting families. Lady Nelson touched many colonists during her 25 years of service.

Lady Nelson left Port Essington (near Darwin) in 1825 to source supplies for the starving outpost. She never returned. Attacked by pirates the crew was killed and the ship ransacked and burnt on the island of Babbar (east of Timor).

The replica Lady Nelson was built in the late 1980s and has been sailing Tasmanian waters ever since. Countless thousands of Tasmanians and visitors to the State have enjoyed time onboard her. Some come out for a short voyage, others want a longer voyage and some families have chartered the ship for longer sails for the whole extended family. To travel (albeit for a short time) in the mode of your forebears gives you a brief insight into their lives. Come down and pay us a visit – we sail most weekends.

\*C.J. Dennison “Where in Tasmania: a compilation of place names and their histories in Tasmania”

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Ever thought of a holiday in Tassie? There are direct flights now from Canberra to Hobart. You can combine your holiday with a charter on the Lady Nelson to go away for a couple of nights or more - up to you. Where we go depends how long we have and on what the wind is doing, but there are plenty of places to go around SE Tasmania. We tend to pick the destination that combines best sailing and a scenic anchorage. During the evening you can have a wine and discuss the day, have a sing-song or history presentation. Many of you build old sailing ships; this is an opportunity to get onboard one, pull on the lines and see how it all works. The cost of chartering is \$2000 per day. This cost is for up to 10 people and includes all meals. So see if 10 of you can get together for some time on the water. - *Mal Riley*

Our Next Issue will be in October - an extra issue before our normal quarterly in December. This special issue in a sense will help fill a gap with the cancellation of Expo 21 and will give members an opportunity to report on model-making or other related subjects which should be of interest to us all.

Please send material to [bvoce@ozemail.com.au](mailto:bvoce@ozemail.com.au) Deadline: mid-October.

## Increase your understanding of ship terms while enjoying a good book

### Brian Voce

For most people, recognising and being able to put a name to the hundreds of fittings, ropes, sails and paraphernalia of a ship is baffling and (if you, a novice, happen to be at sea and part of the crew) can also be downright dangerous if you get it wrong. Names have evolved over time, distance and countries - references to the futtock-shrouds, for instance, suggest some cursing might have had a role as well.

One can get help in learning this bewildering language. There are many reference books and time spent surfing the net can be illuminating too.

But a really enjoyable way to learn the lingua de mer (if there is such a phrase) is by reading good nautical books. Villiers, Conrad, Melville and Forester spring to mind (and there are many more worthwhile authors to entertain you), but I draw upon two of my favourite writers to illustrate how they can help us reach an understanding of the language of the seafarer. Or at least to reassure us that we are not the only ones who struggle to differentiate between a cringle and a bowline.

### Eric Newby

In 'The Last Grain Race', written by travel writer Eric Newby, he describes his steep learning curve when, with no experience of the sea at all, he joins the mighty four-masted steel barque Moshula, bound for Australia. Newby was just 18 and his little knowledge of life before the mast might have come from some reading and particularly some very



romantic ideas of life at sea impressed upon him by a very much older land-bound enthusiast.

Newby's first sight of the Moshulu is in Belfast where he reports to the Second Mate who immediately orders him to the top of the mainmast. Newby gamely climbs up and up in his slippery landlubber shoes (with a side-trip out on a yard) and eventually gets to what he considers his goal (after removing his shoes), with dizzying views of Belfast and beyond, only to be urged further by shouted

commands from below – "Oop, oop!!" But 'Oop' is just a slender pole with no supports. He must shin up those last few feet. Only when Newby meets the real 'top', and there is really no further he can climb, does the Second Mate sort of relent and allow him to return to the deck. But not before ordering him to climb up and sit on the top itself – which Newby wisely declines.

Newby describes the moment:

I embraced the royal mast and shinned up... I stretched out my arm and grasped the round hardwood cap 198 feet above the keel and was surprised it was not loose or full of chocolate creams as a prize. Now the bloody man below me was telling me to sit on it, but I ignored him. I could think of no emergency that would make it necessary. So I slid down the royal halliard to the yard again.

‘You can come down now, ‘ shouted the Mate ... (and) when I reached the deck: ‘Now can you learn to clean the lavatories.’

(It must be noted that Newby’s descriptions above of things nautical were written many years after the event and benefitted from later hard-earned knowledge.)

Newby soon learns after joining Moshula that the commands and names of fixtures, ropes, sails and the rest will be in Swedish (although many of the crew are Finnish, complicating the situation even more). So Newby who has no idea of what (say) futtock shrouds look like, nor what their function is, nor any knowledge of the Swedish language and how it applies to a ship’s fit-out, nor the bewildering and numerous names of a ship’s working gear is, understandably, all at sea, so to speak.

His first day at sea begins with a series of orders delivered to his watch, which are almost meaningless to him, but it is obvious he has to learn this new language.

Later:

Between six o’clock and midnight, we tacked the ship three times; at least I think we did. It was pitch black and I had no idea how we were heading. The order to tack ship was ‘Stagvanda’, which meant putting the vessel about by bring her head across the wind, a tricky thing to do at night with a green crew. For all I knew we could have done a ‘Kovlander’, that is to say wearing her head away from the wind before putting on the new course, an operation which required much more sea room. On the first night it made little difference to Kroner or myself whether we were tacking or wearing ship; neither of us could understand the orders.

## Patrick O’Brian

We’ll leave Newby to continue his new life at sea and move on to another noted writer - Patrick O’Brian, renowned author of the best-selling series

set in the time of Nelson and the Napoleonic wars that features the contrasting personalities of Jack Aubrey, a dedicated and heroic Royal Navy officer of mixed fortunes and his best friend Stephen Maturin, his ship’s surgeon, a naturalist and a spy to boot.

Like Newby, Maturin is introduced to life at sea with absolutely no understanding of how a ship works and zero knowledge of its terminology. Maturin gets to spend years at sea with Aubrey, but even with that long experience he remains steadfastly a nautical novice. This is forecast by O’Brian in the early part of *Master & Commander*, his first book in the series. Seeking his first glimpse of Sophie, the naval vessel he is to join, Maturin asks help from a ‘nautical gentleman’ on the wharf for information about the *Sophia*. The short discourse sets the scene on Maturin’s attempts at mastering naval mysteries over another 19 books.

‘Between six o’clock and midnight, we tacked the ship three times; at least I think we did.’

In response to Maturin enquiring about the *Sophia*, the nautical gentleman explains: ‘A man-of-war? There is no ship of that name – but

perhaps you refer to the sloop, sir? The sloop Sophie?’

‘That may well be the case, sir. No man could surpass me in ignorance of naval terms...’

‘Just so: the sloop, the 14-gun sloop...’

(The gentleman points out the *Sophia*)

‘The ship with triangular sails?’

‘No that is a polacre-settee...’

Soon after Maturin joins the *Sophie*, Mowett, an enthusiastic junior officer, guides him aloft intent on educating the new ship’s doctor about his new surroundings.

Maturin, as he climbs clumsily upwards is introduced to stays, shrouds, ratlines and futtock-shrouds before he is hauled through the lubber’s hole by Mowett.

Maturin is very much aware of Mowett’s enthusiasm for this lofty domain as Mowett names sails, masts, yards, stays, halliards and the rest, detailing their

functions and even measurements to the nearest inch.

The over-whelmed Maturin at one stage asks:

‘You could not explain this maze of ropes and wood and canvas without using sea-terms I suppose?’...

‘Using no sea-terms? I should be puzzled to do that sir; but I will try if you wish it.’

‘No, for it is by those names alone that they are known in nearly every case I imagine.’



After further instruction and detailed commentary from Mowett, Maturin, with help, finally regains the deck.

‘By God,’ said Stephen, dusting his hands. ‘I am glad to be down.’... ‘Now should we look downstairs?’

Mowett’s response to that is not recorded.

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## Inexpensive and Useful Addition to the Tool Box

**STEVE BATCHELDOR** shows how

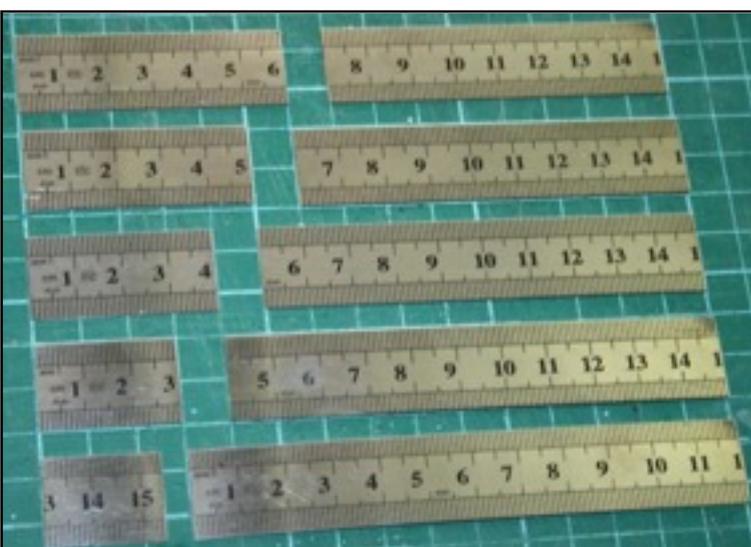
A tool or set of tools that I have found useful when building my wooden model ships is some small steel rules. These tools assist when you have to mark or cut a straight line with a knife in an enclosed area and can be useful to measure items in small spaces such as on a deck etc.

I made a set of small rules from some cheap 150mm steel rules purchased on Ebay. I obtained five rules for about \$15 out of China and cut them up with a pair of tin snips then cleaned up the edges on a disc sander. This left me with a set of 10 rules from 25mm to 120mm.

I am always finding a use for these items now that I have them. Not expensive and a useful addition to the tool box.



Left- Five cheap 150mm rules purchased on Ebay.  
Above- Each length of rule was cut a little oversize.  
Below- The ends of each rule were finished to size on a disc sander.



# RICH MARITIME HISTORY ON NORFOLK ISLAND

Peter Hateley  
tells the story



Rosemary and I visited Norfolk from the 28<sup>th</sup> May to the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> birthdays.

The above map shows all the roads and the island is quite small - 3855ha, 8km x 5km. It is a volcanic outcrop 1670kms ENE of Sydney. The flight we took from Sydney was about 2 ½ hours.

Norfolk is quite infamous as a cruel penal colony, as a destination for recidivists and for convicts who had re-offended in the original settlement of Sydney Cove.

We had a self-contained one bedroom cottage at Burnt Pine, about 1 kilometre from the centre of the only “town” on Norfolk . The name obviously has a basis , but I couldn’t ascertain where the burnt pine was. The accommodation we had, as does most on Norfolk, includes the use of a car for the duration of our stay as there is no public transport on the island. We had a view of the Pacific Ocean to the south.

Aptly the group of 12 self-contained units was called Ocean Breeze and as it was at the top of a ridge the name was appropriate!

The lifestyle there is very laid back and the island mainly relies on tourism for the greater percentage of income. The population is about 1800 residents, a mixture of Pitcairn Islanders (Bounty Mutineer based) descendants , expat Aussies and New Zealanders

The weather while we were there was quite windy for most of the 10 days we were there. This of course plays havoc with the unloading of supplies from ships which bring cargo from Australia or NZ. This is not common today as in other places nearly all cargo is containerised, but as the Island does not

have any container handling facilities authorities find it hard to charter suitable ships for bulk cargoes.

There are two landing sites on the island - at Kingston on the south coast and at Cascade Bay on the north coast, used according to the prevailing wind and sea conditions, and even today the ships that do visit are off-loaded using the lighters developed and built on Norfolk (more about these later). This of course causes problems with the importing of bulk building materials, vehicles etc. Liquid fuel , including LPG, is unloaded at Ball Bay on the east coast via a floating pipeline towed out to the tanker anchored in the bay.

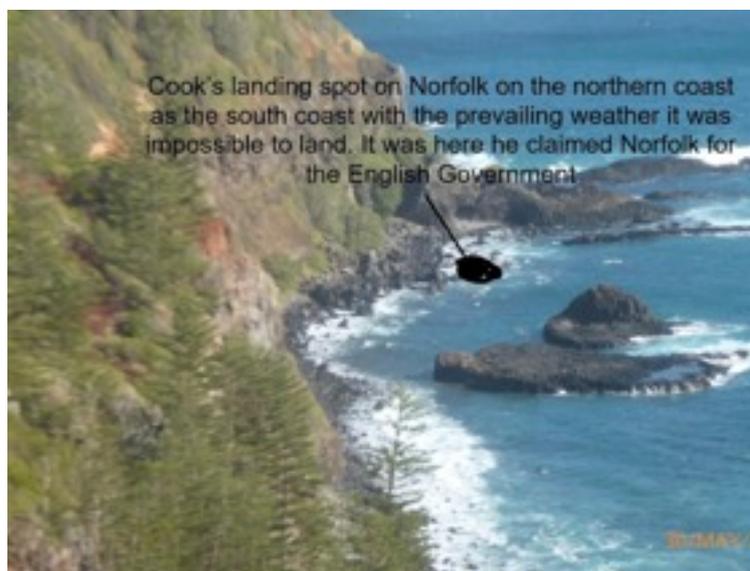
Since the Island lost “self-administration” in 2016, Norfolk has been incorporated into the Australian Tax system. This has had caused a far bit of consternation with the locals. Due to the difficulty of getting goods to Norfolk the Australian government is now providing a weekly air cargo service to provide essential goods, although at times the shelves can be a bit bare, and if goods are available, quite expensive. Fresh fruit and vegetables are mainly sourced locally and are very seasonal. One report I heard while we were there was that one litre of fresh milk and two imported apples cost \$20!

Fresh meat of all sorts is produced on the island in small quantities. but what we had was very tasty and tender. Since the loss of self-administration a lot of the shops which were quite active have closed and there is a subdued atmosphere on the island.

But enough of the negativity. Norfolk is a scenically beautiful place to visit and there is enough to see and do to keep one entertained for a week to 10 days. There are at least two active tour operators on the island with plenty of diverse tours, depending upon your interests.

Of interest to the maritime historians is the following:

Lieutenant James Cook, commanding officer of HMS Resolution, discovered Norfolk Island in 1774 and his landing point is shown in the photo below. The other major maritime event which occurred in the early period of Norfolk Island was the initial



settlement of the Kingston Area with a small number of convicts to farm the island for produce to feed the Colony at Sydney Cove. HMS Sirius, the flagship of the first Fleet, commanded by Post Captain John Hunter after a 1789 refit in Mosman Bay sailed for Norfolk

Island, but while at anchor off Slaughter Bay to unload stores was wrecked on the reef of this bay. There was little loss of life and most of the stores were recovered as were a lot of items from the ship. The crew of the Sirius was isolated on Norfolk for about nine months before being rescued and returned to Sydney.

Right - Siriu plaque The wreck site has been subjected to extensive maritime archaeological study over the years with more artefacts being recovered. Some are in the



HMS Sirius Museum located in the one building remaining from the convict prison of the second settlement 1825 to 1855. While there are reasonable artefacts recovered from the Sirius in the museum, I felt that a lot had been removed to other locations within Australia and more should have been done to retain them on the Island. The main focus of the museum, would appear to me to be the tracing of the members of the first fleet for descendants.



Carronades recovered from the wreck

One interesting fact of the convict era on Norfolk Island is that there was only one ship built on the Island and that was the sloop Norfolk. This was due to the fear that the convicts would steal any boat built on the Island to escape, although most would not have had the ability to sail and survive any time at sea. The Norfolk, 16 tons, was built in 1798 and it was in this vessel that Bass and Flinders discovered Bass Strait and circumnavigated Tasmania and proved that it was in fact an island



Left - Inside the museum.  
Below - Models of  
HMS Sirius and the Sloop Norfolk.

**‘well known for other  
boat building expertise’**



(1798-99). The vessel was later wrecked off Stockton beach near Newcastle after it had been stolen by convicts.

I was able to talk to a local saw miller, Howard Christian, on the island about the story that the majority of trees were unsuitable for ships' masts. There was in fact a small number of trees that would have been suitable for this task, but if they had been found then most of the Norfolk Pines would have been harvested and the island would have ended up denuded.

Norfolk is also well known for other boat building expertise, principally of the lighters that are used to ferry cargo from visiting merchant ships to the island. They were based on the double-ended whaling dories. Norfolk had whalers visit on a regular basis and for a while a whaling facility was in operation on the island.

The lighters are built from locally sourced timber, and like the Scandinavian boat builders, are built without drawings. The original lighters were 27 feet long with a 9 foot beam, but now any that are built (the last one in 2016) are 30 feet long. There are a few old boats located at Kingston and a couple of individuals around the Island, but the current fleet is maintained on trailers at the depot not far from where we were staying. Apart from the photos below of the Kingston lighters and one other found in a yard while driving around, I wasn't able to capture any photos of the current fleet. The construction would appear to follow normal boat building practices. The following photos show some retired lighters and some details of their construction.





The original lighters were 27 feet long with a 9-foot beam.

Left - This is how lighters and boats are launched and recovered at both Kingston and Cascade.

Below - Last view of Norfolk Island as the Hateleys flew out



Anyhow, enough of my ramblings for now as there is another much larger story of the four settlements on Norfolk Island over the centuries and the convict years (maybe later). - Peter Hateley

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