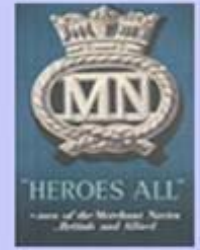




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# Anchors Aweigh

## 100 Year Sinking of the SS Otaki N.Z.S.C.O



My son Kelvin and I attended the 100 Anniversary of the sinking of the SS Otaki at the Otaki College in New Zealand on the 10th March 2017. Dignitaries attending for the unveiling were the NZ Governor-General the Right Hon Dame Patsey Reddy, Otaki College Principal, Andy Fraser (pictured) and many other dignitaries. Also Captain Roger Blake, Mike and Margaret Mabbatt.

At the National War Memorial in Wellington, among the original 49 bells is one which has inscribed upon it *“My name is the Seven Seas, cherish me as a tribute to the British mercantile marine 1914-18” (Kipling)*. Among the plaques in the hall of memories acknowledging the Navy, Army and Air Force is one paying the same homage

to the Merchant Navy - the “fourth service”.

So it is appropriate to let the words of the Prince of Wales in the final volume of the history of the Merchant Navy in the great war stand, as a fitting testament to the endeavours of the merchant navy and its men and women in that war. *“Let us who are land dwellers not mince words over this thing. It is the glory of our merchant navy, and will be so acclaimed by generations to come, that they faced without hesitation the tremendous odds and the frequent hazard of death undaunted in spirit to the bitter end. Let us not forget, also, that had it been otherwise this country of ours must have perished”.*

The Otaki’s complement of 72 included at least three New Zealanders, one being Captain Archibald Bisset Smith’s stepson 17 year old Alfred Broomfield Clulee of Port Chalmers. Two other New Zealanders aboard were fourth engineer Herbert Lionel Sommerville of Auckland and sixth engineer Leonard Charles Smart of Christchurch.

The engagement between the New Zealand shipping company’s SS Otaki and the German auxiliary cruiser SMS Moewe was one of World War 1 most heroic sea battles. It was an unequal fight between a lightly armed cargo ship and a disguised warship. However, the captain of the Otaki, Archibald Bisset Smith, was more than equal to the task. His heroism was recognised with posthumous Victoria Cross and the enduring admiration of his adversary, the Moewe’s Kapitan.



By Willie Fair

Note: The full story of the SS Otaki and Captain Archibald Bisset Smith was in the June 2017 edition of the SEQ newsletter. SEQ members Willie Fair his son Kelvin and Mike & Margaret Mabbatt recently went across the ditch to lay a wreath and have a plaque mounted for the 100th anniversary of the SS Otaki.

*Ōtaki College which is a year 7 to year 13 secondary school situated on the beautiful Kapiti Coast 74 km from Wellington, the capital city of New Zealand. The historic town of Ōtaki is close to rivers, sea, bush and mountains and is especially popular with outdoor enthusiasts.*

## Plaque Presentation of Len's Family



In a very moving tribute to Len Rouhan, the President of the Twin Towns sub branch of the RSL asked the President of the S E Qld Vindicatrix & MN Mariners Assoc to introduce Len Rouhans widow Jean and outline the service and bravery of Len in the Battle of the Arctic Convoys. These few remaining sailors so revered by Winston Churchill, are the only veterans in the world who are allowed to wear the white beret at official functions, obviously depicting the ice and snow. Such is the awe that these mariners are held that even last year Len received another medal from the Russian government.

Accompanying Jean to give support were his son, two daughters and two grandchildren, one of the daughters Michelle then spoke of her gratitude to the RSL for accepting the plaque and in memory of her father. After the presentation the RSL president Joe Russell thanked the family and

mentioned that as the plaque was slightly larger than anticipated, the original home would have to be rethought, at the conclusion the family were greeted with very generous applause and invited to stay for the balance of the meeting and at its conclusion enjoy some snacks and social chat. Len sadly crossed the Bar 13th February 2017 .

## The Point Danger Monument to all Merchant Seamen



It started as a thought, a good idea at the time and after years of hard graft is finally becoming a reality, just waiting for plaques to finish off the memorial and the grass to regenerate for the dedication by the Queensland Governor General Paul de Jersey AC on this year's International Merchant Navy Day, September 3rd.

The Memorial Committee has worked overtime to this endeavour with the backing and support of the South East Queensland Vindicatrix & MN Mariners Association, holding raffles and BBQs. Many letters sent out asking for support and much work done in the background of obtaining permission for such an endeavour, consulting with architects, builders and conservation of the main display the anchor. A salvaged bow anchor from the wreck of the SS Alberta that foundered in 1890 on the Southerland Reef just outside the Tweed River off Fingal Point. (The anchor was rescued in 1990 after 100 years underwater.)

Choosing a site and gaining permission was a major hurdle, but received the Gold Coast Council blessing in good time. The site estimated by the Gold Coast Council to have 2,000 visitors per day.

Now started the hard slog raising the funds, nobody at this stage having already gone through the planning stages difficulties envisaged the dramas to begin. Over 500 letters and emails were sent out during the campaign to raise funds and we only had the members donations to show for it. We managed one grant from the Qld Government which in layman's terms was the Jupiters Casino grant, this was what we called a ceding grant but gave us a little capitol to work with. Then through a friend of a friend came a "White Knight", he loaned us \$20,000 for 2 years interest free, this enabled us to apply for Federal and State grants on a 'Dollar for Dollar' basis. At last we managed to get a Federal grant for \$5,000 which was the beginning.

Around about now already 12 months behind our original schedule, the committee decided on taking drastic steps, reduce our costs or not make our target. It was decided to reduce the size of the Monument, move the site to a more level one nearer to the road and less costly to pour concrete etc. and we could erect a stationary flag pole as opposed to a costly removable one, in all we now had a more reasonable figure of \$25,000 to aim for. So re-armed and energized we were off again, slowly but surely with added expertise and great friend in a Council office with the knowledge and experience, the grants started to come in, a few "Guest Speaker" roles and the press beginning to get behind us, that resulted in some more favorable quotes and in the case of the refurbishment of the anchor by Neumann Metal Industries, a complete and most thankful donation.

In June of this year we at last had sufficient funds to go ahead sign a contract with the builder, all those raffles, "Escape to the Country" trips, "Bunnings Sausage Sizzles, "Bowls Carnivals" proved the difference, we are there, all bar the shouting.

## Captain's Gold Watch



Captain John Stevenson was born at Kings Barns, Fifeshire Scotland in 1779. During his life he was known as a man with enormous strength and vitality. Captain Stevenson married three times, he married May Batchelor in 1815 in Dundee Scotland, married Margaret Small, a widow on the 18th. December 1835, and Agnes Fairweather in 1865 at Bondi Station, NSW Australia.

Captain Stevenson died on the 28th March 1874 at the Bondi Station. Captain Stevenson's first wife, May Batchelor is believed to have died leaving Stevenson with the difficult task for a sea captain of raising his infant daughter Annie who was born in 1825, so he paid a widow, Mrs Margaret Small to care for her.

Manning the sailing ships and small whaling-boats in the cold Artic waters off Greenland was a job for strong and brave men. In the five years that Stevenson was Captain of the "Horn", owned by the "Dundee and Union Whale Fishing Company", he won a reputation as a skilled sailor and successful whaler and for his own integrity. Near disaster struck the Horn at the end of 1834 whaling season. The ship was "stove by ice". Only courage and skill saved the ship. Stevenson was awarded a gold watch and chain, a key and a seal by the insurers Lloyd's of London, with a message of thanks for the "care and attention" he gave the ship when it was stove by ice.

The gold watch was handed down through the generations, until more recently Graeme David Stevenson gave it to his son Mark Stevenson, as Mark had an affinity for shipping having spent 20 years in the Australian Navy.

The Captain's 3rd wife Agnes had a brother named Crichton Fairweather, he was a whaler in Dundee Scotland. By 1834 he became First Mate on the whaling ship "Horn", sailing under the command of Captain John Stevenson. The Fairweather's and Captain Stevenson decided to seek their fortune in Australia, perhaps it was on hearing stories of the whales being so easily taken in the bays of Tasmania and New South Wales.

On arriving in Australia Captain Stevenson befriended three brothers, the Imlay brothers, who had come to Two Fold Bay NSW. a few years earlier, they were fascinated with stories of how Aborigines could capture and kill Great Right Whales that came into the bay. The Imlay's welcomed Captain Stevenson's expert whaling knowledge. At the time whaling boat crews were almost entirely Aborigines, as they were the most skilled. Captain Stevenson and the Imlay brothers became very successful whalers, they melted the blubber down in big vats on the beach at Two Fold Bay. The vats are still there and are now a tourist attraction. Some years later Ben Boyd came to Australia and built a factory to melt down the blubber.

The Aborigines were very pleased of the good treatment they had received from Captain Stevenson and the Imlay's at Two Fold Bay. In 1844 Agnes gave birth to Creighton Fairweather Stevenson, the Captain was 65 years of age when he sired Creighton. Captain Stevenson left the sea to become a farmer, he took up land at Captains Point, where he founded the township of Mallacoota in Victoria near the NSW border.

Captain Stevenson became a large land holder controlling in excess of 100,000 acres. He owned Wog Wog Station in NSW. --- Wangrabelle. Station in Vic. --- Mila. Station in NSW. --- Linden Park in NSW--- and Bondi. Station in NSW. The captain died on Bondi Station and is buried on this magnificent property, his grave site now being a tourist attraction. It is said that the Captain was hard and tough but a very fair man to all.

The Captain's son Creighton, married Mary Ann Kearney in February 1876 at Bondi Station and they had seven children.

When on Bondi Station Mary Ann or "Annie" Stevenson told how bush rangers had crossed the border from Victoria into NSW and invaded Bondi Station, on this occasion all the men on the property were away mustering horses and there were only women on the property. She said the bush rangers treated the women in a gentlemanly way, they were friendly and polite, the women fed them, when they left they took food and other articles of use to them, they also took the prized horses and left their worn out hacks.

It has been confirmed that the bush rangers who visited Bondi Station were none other than the Kelly Gang --- NED KELLY. So in time Captain Stevenson's GOLD WATCH, was handed down through the family generations to Graeme David Stevenson, who has now passed it onto his eldest son Mark Stevenson.

There are many incredible true stories regarding Captain Stevenson and his family, far too many to write about. Hope you enjoy the enclosed bit written about them.

One of your Members Graeme David Stevenson, Merchant Navy & RAN and Honorary Member, Brian Erskine Stevenson National Service RAN are descendants of Captain Stevenson.

**Great Great Grandfather. Captain John Stevenson.**

**Great Grandfather. Creighton Fairweather Stevenson.**

**Grandfather. Harry John Stevenson.**

**Father. Linden Harris Stevenson.**

By Brian Erskine Stevenson.

## Madrid Maersk



Madrid Maersk is the largest container ship, surpassing the 20,000 TEU mark, built in April 2017 by South Korean yard Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering in their shipyard in Okpo, South Korea. The vessel is the flagship of Maersk Line, having maximum capacity for 20,568 TEU. The carrier is implementing the latest marine engineering developments and covers all the IMO standards for safety and environment. Madrid Maersk has overall length of 399.00 m, moulded beam of 58.60 m and maximum draft of 16.50 m. The

deadweight of the vessel is 206,000 DWT and the gross tonnage is 214,286 GRT.

The ship constructors increased the depth of the vessel, allowing her to carry 12 tiers stowed on the deck. Also the width is improved to accommodate 24 bays and 23 rows of containers across the weather deck. However, with the new generation vessel has the bridge moved two bays toward the bow, optimizing the cargo capacity and makes the vessel easier for stowage. Furthermore the engines are lighter, improving deadweight limitations, having been downsized from eight to seven cylinders.

The engineering and the propulsion system installed on board of the vessel is reliable and highly effective. Madrid Maersk is equipped with second generation MAN 7-cylinder engines, although smaller units for saving weight and space. The twin main engines has total output power of 70,604 hp. These lighter motors increases the load capacity of the vessel.

The main engine designs are optimized for IMO Tier II compliance, having electronic control for optimized fuel and lube-oil consumption, and improved low-load operation. The container carrier also incorporates shaft generator motors that act as variable electrical power generation and propulsion booster units. In the latest application, entailing a change of vendor, GE Marine Solutions has provided its PTO/PTI (power take-off/power take-in) technology.

The vessel is the first of Maersk's 2nd generation Triple-E's, known officially as the EEE Mark II. Maersk ordered 11 of the vessels in 2015 for a rumoured \$1.8 billion.

Low freight rates should be the best incentive for owners to take the bitter pill and scrap some of the outdated tonnage in order to bring the necessary ease to the heavily oversupplied market, according to analyst, Peter Sand. Freight rates have experienced a solid rebound from the 2016-lows, with rates for all trade routes being above last year's equivalents when they hit the floor.

However, the increase is still too low to profit from as numbers are still below the industry average. The short-lived rebound in charter rates has been attributed to the regrouping of major carrier alliances. The three alliances control 77% of global containership capacity and as much as 96% of all east-west trades. Still, it should be kept in mind that 57 % of all TEU-demand is generated by non-east-west trades, which have been particularly impacted by cascading. Nevertheless, experts expect the rates to drop somewhat again. "Get rid of the ships that are no longer economically viable" Sand insisted.

**The former captain of the Costa Concordia cruise liner** was sentenced to 16 years in prison on Friday 12th May 2017 by Italy's highest court for his role in the 2012 shipwreck, which killed 32 people off the Tuscan holiday island of Giglio. More than 4,000 people were aboard at the time and were forced into a chaotic evacuation.

Francesco Schettino was originally found guilty in 2015 of manslaughter, causing a shipwreck and abandoning his passengers. Friday's ruling marked the end of the appeals process, with the court upholding the initial verdict. He had been free during the prolonged legal battles.



**Today marks six months without drinking a drop** of juice, fizzy drink or alcohol. Six months without eating bread, pasta, cake or anything sweet. Sugar has been eliminated, as has caffeine. The change in my body has been fantastic, I feel great, I have lost weight and my way of thinking is very positive. No alcohol, eating extremely healthily and above all, a couple of hours of exercise daily!

**Editor:-** I received this as a spam email I don't know whose status this is, but I was happy for them, so I copied and pasted it here.

**As previously reported in the April SEQ newsletter** the discovery was made on the back of the March 31 disappearance of the ship Stellar Daisy, which prompted the South Korean ship operator to launch a special program for immediate inspection of all vessels currently operated.

The 266,100 dwt vessel went missing and is believed to have sunk some 1,700 miles east of the Port of Montevideo, Uruguay. The ship was sailing from the Port of Guaiba, Brazil, to China, carrying 260,003 tons of iron ore. The 1993-built Stellar Daisy was carrying eight South Korean and sixteen Filipino sailors.

Two of the sailors were rescued on April 2. The ship was converted from a crude carrier to an ore carrier, a process that has been put under spotlight as it is believed that a crack in the ship's hull caused the splitting in half and sinking of Stellar Daisy.

In mid-April, the company informed that one of the firm's vessels reported a crack on the outer hull of a tank while it was en route to the discharge port, near Cape Town. The vessel in question is the 1993-built bulk carrier Stellar Unicorn, which was carrying a cargo of 270,000 million tons iron ore bound for China at the time. The ship was also converted from a crude carrier to an ore carrier.

**Source: World Maritime News Staff.**

**Note:** Don't think this ships sinking is an isolated case as many other ship do sink and disappear all the time.

## The Rooswijk

### Sunk in 1739 off southeast England

Off the south eastern tip of England, just north of the Straits of Dover, the sea hides a most unusual feature known as the Goodwin Sands, where sandbanks appear and disappear unpredictably and move with the tides. Many ships over the centuries have sunk here and silted over, and occasionally one of the wrecks will surface and be discovered. Such is the case with the Rooswijk, a Dutch East Indiaman that foundered on the Goodwin Sands in a storm on December 19, 1739, with all hands and 30 chests of treasure, virtually gone without a trace.

By chance in December, 2004, the sands that had swallowed the wreck of the Rooswijk parted and allowed diver Ken Welling to retrieve two complete chests and hundreds of silver bars.

Operating in secrecy, salvage continued in 2005 under the direction of Rex Cowan and in agreement with the Dutch and British governments and is ongoing today. So far, several hundred Mexican silver cobs of the 1720s and early 1730s and transitional "klippes" of 1733-1734, as well as many more hundreds of "pillar dollars" and a smattering of cobs from other mints, have hit the market from this wreck, mostly through auction.



## ~ D' you remember ~

D 'you remember leaving the station?  
After crossing the country by train,  
D 'you recall your first sight of the 'Vindi'?  
Down the end of a West Country lane.

D 'you remember standing there thinking?  
With your suitcase heavy in hand,  
And the ribald jeers of the Gate Boys...  
That perhaps things are not as you planned.

D 'you remember your intro. to Angel?  
And Duguid, and all of that lot  
Being shown to your hut with it's number,  
Your locker and non-bouncy cot.

D 'you remember your first introduction  
To those that will share your next weeks?  
Those mates you'll respect for a lifetime  
and the bugger whose bed always squeaks...!

D 'you remember the clobber they gave you ?  
Black serge - and a beret an' all.  
And a curved smart badge on the shoulders,  
Reading - 'National Sea Training School'

And what of the morning ablutions?  
In the cold of a Gloucestershire dawn.  
Standing in line for the Karzi...  
And wishing you'd never been born,

D 'you remember the meals on the Vindi?  
Ah yes. well - I thought that you would...  
Bad memories are well best forgotten  
We never had one that was good...

D 'you recall the hours that you studied?  
The instructors (where-ever they are)  
(I had a personal favourite - who -  
For 'Lifeboat' gave me a star...)

D 'you recall the walks to the Mission?  
Young boys fast growing to men,  
Stuffing on penny bread slices  
Then 'Vindi-bound' back home again.

D 'you remember that one special moment?  
That knowledge that filled you with joy?  
Just twenty-one days left to serve now  
For now you're a Vindi 'Bridge-boy' ...

And that bridge that once spanned the Severn,  
A symbol for many a lad.  
Is no more (well. that's what they tell me)  
Like the Vindi - it's gone - and that's sad.

For you'll remember the realisation,  
That a watershed now has been crossed  
Your life, as you knew it, has changed now  
Soon on Life's stormy seas you'll be tossed.

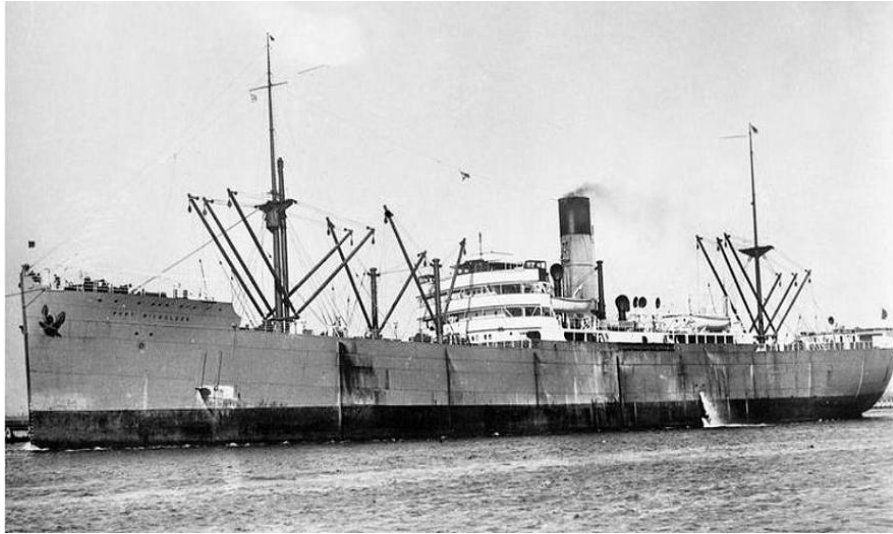
For the lessons we learned on the Vindi  
Were not only of knots and of ropes  
They taught us respect for others -  
They taught us to live with high hopes

I'm proud of my time on the Vindi  
So proud that I didn't 'give in'  
And proud of my mates at Reunion  
I reckon we all 'Had A Win'.....

Terry Docker, Vindi Boy - 1955

## The search for the £1.9bn Atlantic treasure lost at sea - which may not actually exist

For years, the UK has been fighting to claim the spoils from a huge shipwrecked cargo of platinum



Early in 2012, a former swimming pool installer turned treasure hunter called Greg Brooks made global headlines when he announced the discovery of the Port Line ship SS Port Nicholson – a British refrigerated cargo ship sunk off America in 1942, thought to be carrying £1.9bn of Russian platinum to pay for weaponry to help an increasingly desperate Stalin defeat Hitler.

Even by the swashbuckling standards of hunts for unusual shipwrecks, it was a compelling tale. The smoke-belching British vessel had left the Arctic port of Murmansk in the summer 1942 secretly laden with 71

tons of precious metal, safeguarded by two Soviet special envoys, before it was holed by two torpedoes fired by a Nazi U-boat and sank in 700ft of water off the Massachusetts coast. The two Russians escorting the consignment survived the sinking disappeared without trace.

Mr Brooks, a burly and moustachioed former amateur diver, said he had found documents, including a cargo list for the Port Nicholson, which, along with evidence from the seabed such as scattered wooden bullion boxes, proved he was within touching distance of the most valuable wreck in history. The Department for Transport (DfT) asserted Britain's ownership of the freighter and everything on board in the US courts on the basis that the Port Nicholson had been requisitioned by the state for war duties at the time of its loss.

The scene was set for a fresh Atlantic tussle between London, Moscow and American treasure hunters. However, it turns out that Mr Brooks' headline-grabbing claims were at least partially based on allegedly forged documentation, which has led many to conclude that the 71 tons of platinum worth \$3bn never existed. In addition, federal investigators are looking into possible fraud committed against investors who poured millions into Mr Brooks' company, Sub Sea Research.

The treasure hunter and his firm were recently stripped of their licence to salvage the ship by a US court, after it heard that repeated trips to the site of the sinking – some 50 miles off Cape Cod – had failed to secure a single bar of platinum despite costing \$6m (£3.8m) of investors cash.

The former swimming pool contractor sank his savings into founding Sub Sea Research in 1984 and has pursued a succession of shipwreck projects in the past 30 years, attracting investors' money for searches from Spanish galleons to wartime bullion vessels.

His detractors say none of these ventures has resulted in significant loot, despite promises of extravagant potential rewards. Sainly patience and super-human levels of determination are often cited as basic requirements for success in the ruthlessly competitive world of marine salvage. Mel Fisher, a former chicken farmer turned Florida salvor, spent 16 years searching for a Spanish galleon, Nuestra Senora de Atocha, before finding it in 1985. His reward was an 80 per cent share of the bullion on board – £250m.

In 2012, Mr Brooks thought he was on the brink of a pay-out that would dwarf even Mr Fisher's success. He had in fact discovered the Port Nicholson wreck in 2008 but kept it under wraps by claiming he had found a ship called the "Blue Baron" thousands of miles south of Guyana.

In the meantime, the treasure hunter paid an American researcher, Edward Michaud, to seek extra proof of the platinum cargo by looking through records relating to the Port Nicholson, a refrigerated cargo ship built on Tyneside in 1918, which had a chequered history of groundings and fires.

What Mr Michaud found appeared to confirm that the 500ft-long coal-fired freighter was indeed on a secret mission to deliver Soviet payments under America's Lend-Lease scheme to provide equipment to its allies,



including Britain. After the U-boat attack it sank slowly, allowing time to rescue all but six of the 91 crew. One of the two corroborating documents unearthed by the researcher, supposedly from a former US naval intelligence officer named Jack MacCann, was the passenger and cargo manifest carrying the word "bullion".

But in a submission to the American court last December, Mr Brooks was forced into a disastrous admission. He explained that Mr Michaud had asked to meet him a few days earlier, and admitted: "During that meeting, (Mr Michaud) disclosed to me for the first time that he had fabricated the two documents in question. I was stunned and extremely dismayed. I asked him 'what about Jack MacCann?'. He replied, 'I made him up'."

In reality, doubts had been raised about the likelihood of the Port Nicholson carrying vast amounts of platinum soon after Mr Brooks had made his announcement three years ago. Among the sceptics was the British Government, which said that as far as it was concerned the ship was carrying "mostly machinery and military stores" from Southampton to New Zealand.

Timothy Shusta, one of the lawyers representing the DfT, pointed out that between 1937 and 1941, annual global production of platinum had ranged between 14.5 tons and 16.9 tons. In order for the Port Nicholson to have been carrying the 71 tons claimed by Mr Brooks, the vessel would have been holding five years' of the entire global supply of the precious metal.

After successive trips to the wreck site ended with reports from Sub Sea Research that recovery efforts had been variously thwarted by bad weather or inadequate equipment, some investors became disenchanted and sued Mr Brooks for the return of their funds. The Office of Securities, a US financial watchdog, has said it is investigating Sub Sea Research following a complaint that investors may have been deliberately misled. Another group of investors has also said it wants to take over the Port Nicholson search.

But as yet no charges have been brought and Mr Brooks, though battered, remains unbowed. He insists his search was based on other documentation that predates any involvement of Mr Michaud, including a ledger of bullion shipwrecks, which it is claimed originates from the archives of the Bank of England.

The treasure hunter, who was forced to admit in court that his company "at present lacks the resources" to pursue the Port Nicholson project, questions why Britain has been so assiduous in its defence of its ownership of the freighter.

He said: "The UK has never litigated (over the ownership) of a freighter, except the Port Nicholson. Why? I 100 per cent believe there is something about the Port Nicholson. Why didn't (the British Government) just let us waste our money to see what's in her if they say there's nothing?"

With his search vessel, the MV Sea Hunter, up for sale and the coffers empty, Mr Brooks' search for the sunken billions would seem to be over.

**With the outbreak of the Second World War,** Port Nicholson remained in service, transporting cargoes around the globe. In another version of her last voyage, in 1942, was to take her from Avonmouth across the Atlantic to Halifax, via Barry. She was at Halifax on 14 June 1942, and departed bound for Wellington, with an intended call at New York and a transit of the Panama Canal. She formed part of convoy XB 25, one of the coastal convoy routes, that ran between Halifax Harbour and Boston. She was under the command of her master, Harold Charles Jeffrey, and was carrying a cargo of 1,600 tons of automobile parts and 4,000 tons of military stores (later thought also platinum, gold, and industrial diamonds?).

The convoy was tracked by the German U-boat U-87, commanded by Joachim Berger. At 4.17 hours on the morning of 16 June 1942 he fired a torpedo at the convoy, which was then 100 miles (160km) off Portland, Maine.

He fired a second torpedo a minute later, but the gale conditions at the time prevented him from observing the results accurately, and he recorded that while one torpedo had hit a ship, the other seemed to have missed. In fact, both torpedoes struck the Port Nicholson, the first in the engine room, the second in the stern. Two men in the engine room were killed immediately, and as the Port Nicholson began to settle by the stern, the remaining crew abandoned ship and were picked up by the Royal Canadian Navy corvette HMCS Nanaimo.

The Port Nicholson did not sink immediately, and by dawn was still afloat. Her master returned to the ship, accompanied by the chief engineer, and Lieutenant John Molson Walkley and three ratings from Nanaimo, to see if the ship could be salvaged.

While they were aboard, worsening weather caused the ship to suddenly start to sink. The party abandoned her, but their boat was overturned in the suction as Port Nicholson went down, drowning Jeffrey, Walkley, the chief engineer and a rating. The two surviving ratings were rescued by Nanaimo, which landed the survivors from the Port Nicholson at Boston .

**Everyone seems** to be in such a hurry to scream 'racism' these days. A customer asked, "In what aisle could I find the Guinness?" The shop assistant asks, "Are you Irish?" The guy, clearly offended, says, "Yes I am. But let me ask you something, if I had asked for Italian sausage, would you ask me if I was Italian? Or if I had asked for German Bratwurst, would you ask me if I was German? Or if I asked for a kosher hot dog would you ask me if I was Jewish? Or if I had asked for a Taco, would you ask if I was Mexican? Or if I asked for Polish sausage, would you ask if I was Polish?"



The shop assistant says, "No, I probably wouldn't." The guy says, "Well then, because I asked for Guinness, why did you ask me if I'm Irish?" The shop assistant replied, "Because you're in Bunnings Hardware."

## **Scotland & the Sea**

It is not an accident of history that Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, through its port of Leith and Glasgow are the principal Cities of Scotland. They owe much of their importance to their mercantile and seaborne connections bringing with them huge economic benefits.

Even prior to Roman times Scotland has a very rich history of maritime activity. Cramond was a harbour on the Firth of Forth where supplies were landed for the Roman garrisons on the Antonine Wall. It also served as a base for the advance of the Roman Legions into the rest of Scotland. Aberdeen may also have been used for similar purposes.

Little is recorded of other mercantile activity until the 12th and 13th Centuries. In 1136 King David 1st granted the Bishops of Aberdeen the rights to levy a tithe on all ships trading at the port. William Wallace wrote to the Hanseatic towns of Lübeck and Hamburg claiming that the trading links with Scotland should be restored. Until 1296 Berwick was the leading Scottish port when it was then taken by Edward I. By the late 1300s there were in excess of 70 ports, harbours and havens in Scotland and its principal islands. Leith, the seaport for Edinburgh, had the greatest trade of any Scottish port, followed by Aberdeen, Dundee and its rival Perth and the many harbours on the Firth of Forth and its estuary which extend from the tidal limit at Stirling to a line drawn from Fifeness to Dunbar, a length of 96 km.

Overseas trade was controlled by the Convention of Royal Burghs and in 1347 a Scottish base, or Staple, was set up in Bruges, but it was transferred to Veere near Middleburg in the Low Countries in the early 16th Century where it was controlled by the Conservator. By 1520 trade by Scottish ports with Hanseatic ports had virtually ceased.

The long east coastline of Scotland gave Scottish merchants a much shorter sea crossing to Scandinavia and the Baltic ports, which were seen as of great importance and followed the virtually terminal decline of the Hanseatic League in the late 15th century. The League had originally comprised over 100 towns, many of which were seaports. The East of Scotland trade with the Low Countries, France, Spain and Portugal also increased, unlike that of the various Burghs on the Clyde and the Border towns. Scots were well entrenched within all the principal foreign ports of more than 30 in number and with which trade had been established. Remnants of these relationships exist today.

In the late 1700s there were well over 100 ports in England, Wales and Scotland engaged in foreign trade. Of the Scottish ports, Leith had been established for over five hundred years. The seaborne trade to and from Scotland expanded right up to the late 19th Century.

By the 14th Century the harbour, which was then a mere expanse of open water with dangerous sandbanks, was protected by a bulwark. Shipbuilding was established as early as the 15th Century. During the depressed trading of the Middle Ages little was done to improve the harbour either in size or facilities. In the 18th and 19th Centuries there was significant development of the port, much of it seen as it is today. The trades were largely imports and mainly coastal but also from near Continental Europe, Scandinavia and the Baltic ports.

During the 18th and 19th Centuries Aberdeen was a principal port for whaling vessels venturing north to the Arctic and Greenlands waters. In the late 19th Century there was traffic in Canadian cattle shipped to Aberdeen from Montreal. During that period the herring and whitefish industry had almost reached its peak and was a principal trade in the harbour and very much an integral part of the commercial and social life of Aberdeen. The advent of the steam trawler had brought immense benefits to the industry and all who derived a living from it. As with Dundee, the City enjoyed a manufacturing base in sailcloth. In the days of wooden hulled ships the invention by Alexander Hall and Company of Aberdeen of the Aberdeen "Clipper bow" gave it an international reputation in shipbuilding which had lasted from the 15th Century down to the latter part of the 20th Century, over which period more than 3,000 ships were built in the City of which one of the most famous is the "Thermopylae" a great rival to the "Cutty Sark".

In World War II the harbour was an important naval base. During the late 1960's right down to the present day the off-shore oil and gas industry has resulted in Aberdeen harbour being one of the most modern ports in Europe, the benefits to the community echoing that of the almost bygone fishing era.

### **Dundee**

Dundee (now the City of "Discovery") was a significant seaport with Hanseatic connections long before 1500. By the late 18th and early 19th Centuries it was one of the finest, safest and most convenient harbours in Great Britain. It enjoyed immense international trade in many commodities such as flax and jute from which was manufactured the greater part of ships' canvas for the Royal Navy and British merchant vessels.

Although not quite of such antiquity as The Trinity House of Leith (1380), Dundee still enjoys the presence of the Fraternity of Masters and Seamen of Dundee which was first recognised in 1556 and King George III granted its Royal Charter on 17th September 1774. Many of its regulations and provisions are in force to this day.

Whaling and shipbuilding were very important maritime trades identified with Dundee but it suffered the same decline as a port, similar to the fortunes of its competitors. The entire maritime activities were strongly interwoven with the social and commercial life of the City as can be seen from the records of its housing and community buildings which were and, in some instances are, of considerable importance and great antiquity.

Glasgow emerged in the 19th Century as a significant centre of seaborne activity, particularly for the tobacco trade.



Port Glasgow and also Greenock were of great importance as safe harbours for the fast growing transatlantic trade and the vessels plying it.

Much activity was required to deepen and widen the river Clyde to meet the demands of merchants to bring their vessels upstream right into the heart of Glasgow, a distance of 35 km from the Tail of the Bank to Glasgow Bridge. Although some form of landing stage for ships seems to have existed at the foundation of Glasgow it was not until 1660 that the first substantial structure was built on the narrow river. The role of the Forth and Clyde canal (1790) cannot be overlooked in its linking of the East and West coast ports. Port Dundas on the canal was once a more important harbour to Glasgow than the Broomielaw.

The story of shipbuilding on the Clyde is a treatise in itself. It is worthy of record that by 1900 its shipyards built a quarter of the World's ships. During World War II the 37 shipyards carried out more than 27,000 main contracts within a six year period.

The Clyde reached the zenith of its seaborne trade between 1900 and the onset of World War I. The decline then set in and was to go on until the 1970's when many of the docks, riverside quays and shipyards were redundant and infilled for development. Apart from the Scottish Maritime Museum little has been kept alive to remind future generations of the greatness of the Clyde and its City and towns. In time the river could probably revert to its natural regime.

As of March 2010 there are 84 recognised ports in Scotland. However there are many other havens around this entire coastline still active in fishing. The fishing industry, which played such a very great role on both the East and West coasts of Scotland, is but a very pale shadow of its former self. Aberdeen, Peterhead and Fraserburgh continue to be the largest of all British fishing ports. This brief narrative cannot end without reference to the huge contribution of generations of Scots people and particularly those dedicated seafarers of the Highlands and the Northern and Western Isles to all aspects of international mercantile trade and the sacrifices made in war and peace.



**Sir Walter Raleigh (1554 - 1618)** was an adventurer, writer, courtier at the court of Elizabeth 1 and an explorer of the Americas. Born in 1554 at Hayes Barton in Devon he went to Oxford University, fought for the Huguenots in the French religious wars and studied law in London where he was able to become familiar with court life and the intellectual community. Raleigh's first venture to America was with his half brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and it may have been during this voyage that he conceived the plan to establish a colony there.

In 1585 he sponsored the first colony on Roanoke Island off present day North Carolina but this failed as did a second attempt in 1587. Further ventures to South America fared little better and a search, in 1595, for the legendary El Dorado, the city of gold, in present day Guyana achieved little. In 1580 Raleigh went to Ireland to help suppress a rebellion and using his experiences and posing as an expert on Irish affairs he won favour with Queen Elizabeth 1, was knighted and became one of the most powerful men in England.

He temporarily lost favour when the Queen discovered that he had married one of her maids. However, his return to power was short lived as James 1, who had succeeded the throne on the death of Elizabeth 1, disliked Raleigh. In 1603 Raleigh was accused of plotting against the king and sentenced to death but James 1 commuted the sentence to one of life imprisonment. Raleigh went to the Tower of London for 13 years during which time he penned the first volume of his History of the World and several poems including The Last Fight of the Revenge and The Discovery of Guiana.

These works impressed the Elizabethan intellectuals and he became the hero of the heir to the throne, Prince Henry, who tried to secure Raleigh's release from prison. Unfortunately, Prince Henry died in 1612 which frustrated Raleigh who then proposed to King James that he would give him a fortune in gold if he was allowed to return to Guiana. The king agreed on the condition that the Spanish were not offended in any way.

The 1616 expedition was a disaster. In Guiana Raleigh's son was killed when, with an aide, he was sent to find El Dorado and attacked a Spanish settlement. Sir Walter Raleigh then returned to England where James 1, invoking the 1603 death sentence, had him beheaded on 29th October, 1618.

## On the Beat

By SEQ member - Ron Kerr

### Boredom sets in

As I said in an earlier piece, working a beat as a Policeman could be, and more often than not, was a very, very boring experience. For eight hours, you walked a beat, rode a push bike or, on the outlying ones, rode a noddy bike. The sergeant would say, if you complained that you hadn't detected any crime, think of what you might have prevented. You'd shown the flag by being out there visible to the public in your uniform and I suppose that that at least made the ratepayers happy.



That was during the day. At night it was a different story. This, you remember, was in the days before security companies were in full swing so a copper on the beat did what they do now. We, as we used to say, shook hands with door handles, the door handles of all the commercial property on our patch. If a door or window was found insecure, the key holder was contacted and if found, was dragged from bed, and attended to fix the problem. It is amazing what property owners overlooked. I once found the front door of a bank unlocked.

At least all this sort of thing passed away the time. I also must say that, in summer, doing the 'backs' on a warm night gave you a new insight on places like some butcher shops. You crunched up to the back door at some of them on hordes of cockroaches. You made a mental note to warn your wife from shopping there. On the other hand, in winter, some butchers and fishmongers had smoke house out the back where they smoked fish or whatever. These were very good places to warm yourself on a bitterly cold night.

There were other things we did to pass away the time and that was, believe it or not, having a bit of fun with our colleagues. We had many a laugh while the law abiding population lay asleep in their beds. I think a few examples might be enough or you will lose any faith in those guardians of the law. I would add quickly that I can't honestly imagine it happens too much now adays as all policemen seem to ride around in cars and I just can't imagine any of them being out on foot or bike at night.

I was doing the back of the shops in Hamlet Court Road, Westcliff when I happen to find a shed open behind the Co-op. Shining my torch I saw that it was stacked with all sorts of groceries. My first thought was to contact the key holder as it seemed to be veritable Aladdin's Cave of goodies. For some reason, I picked up a packet of 'butter' and instantly realized that it was nothing but a wooden block in a butter wrapper, used for window displays. I had a nasty thought so pocketing it, I went around, back into the street. Just then, one of my colleagues from an adjoining beat came along and I told him what I had found and my naughty idea.

So he and I stepped back into one of the shop entrances after placing the packed of 'butter' on the footpath opposite. It took only 5 minutes when we heard the

footsteps echoing down street. It was, I would think, one of the railwaymen on his way to work. He sees the packet, stops, picks it up and continues on his way. Of course, my mate and I had visions of him going home, showing it to his wife and saying, 'It seems a bit hard. See if we can soften it' and what happened next. All very stupid but it was so boring that any childish joke lightened our day – sorry, night!

One of the funniest and most remembered antics some of the lads got up to was the time someone found a tailor's dummy. This time the joke was on one of the boys at Westcliff Police Station who rode a motorbike with one of those enclosed sidecars (you must remember them). Naturally, one night shift, the dummy was carefully placed in the sidecar and it was reported that Ken, the motorcyclist, tired after his shift, didn't notice until he was on his way home. He looked down and seeing a strange passenger in the sidecar nearly fell off his bike. On another occasion, every piece of scrap paper in the station was collected and was used to fill poor's Ken sidecar.

I heard about the copper in Southend High Street who, finding some wood shavings left by a carpenter at the rear of a shop, tucked them on his head under his helmet like a big wig. He then hid in a doorway and waited until he heard the sound of foot steps as his mate approached. Then he leapt out with a scream – and found that it wasn't only his mate, it was the sergeant too!

I have to say, that the boredom was also partly responsible for me being here in Australia, from trudging around in snow in the middle of the winter of 1965 night after night. There had to be something better than that, and there was.

### "Oop's"



After 14 years living in the tropical, Sun kissed city of Cairns our editor Bill Davis is on the move to the Rum capital of Bundaberg.

A move long time considered and painfully worked out pro's and con's. One being closer to the family on the Sunshine Coast and milder less humid summer weather. And so he jokes..... less crocodiles.

## 75th British Cemetery Ceremony

Every year on the Thursday and Friday closest to May 11th British and American armed forces meet on British soil in North Carolina. The reason is a memorial service honouring the British seamen buried in a piece of land deeded by the U S government to Britain on the island of Ocracoke in the Outer Banks. It's a story of heroism and gratitude that is little known outside of the tiny town.



This year Mike Westhead, the Prince of Wales Sea Training School (POWSTS) Standard Bearer was attending the commemoration service in Ocracoke

The story begins in May of 1942, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. United States has been pulled into World War II. We're fighting the Japanese in the Pacific, and Europe is being pummelled by German Luftwaffe. But the shores of the continental United States are far from safe. In fact, from January to May, 1942, German U-boats shadowed our coastlines and sunk our merchant ships. And the proof was in the debris which washed up nightly on the shores of the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

The German strategy was to batter the British, making it difficult for them to produce manufactured goods, and to destroy our shipping lanes, making it impossible for US manufacturing to supply our allies overseas with oil, iron, lumber, food stuffs and

more.

The United States was not well-prepared to defend against the German attack, especially given the 2,500- odd miles of coastline from Maine to New Orleans. As a result, attacking our merchant ships began to look like shooting fish in a barrel. "In the first months of the war we were losing more than a ship a day. Merchant ships went down in staggering numbers. From January to June, 1942, almost 400 ships were lost. So intense was the pounding taken by our merchant fleet that it was not uncommon to find bodies and remains of wrecks washed up on the beaches in the morning.

American military response was slow. So, protection, initially, came not from our own armed forces but from our British allies with the loan of deep-sea trawlers, refitted with minesweeping equipment, a device designed to detect submerged objects, like submarines, and depth-charges to be able to attack the German U-boats.

For the crews of the ships HMS Bedfordshire, and the British tanker San Delfino, and unnamed others, the ocean, and the tiny hamlets of Ocracoke and Buxton, on the Outer Banks, North Carolina would be their final resting place.

The HMT Bedfordshire started life as a commercial fishing vessel, crewed by men used to the dangerous waters of the North Sea. When England entered the war the Bedfordshire, among others, became part of the British Royal Navy. The trawler became the HMS Bedfordshire and joined a convoy of ships that made its way across the Atlantic to patrol the coastline of the mid-Atlantic states.

In early May the Bedfordshire's mission was to escort a small band of merchant ships to safe anchorage in Hatteras. Events, as they often do in wartime, grow murky after that. What is known is that on the morning of May 14, 1942 the bodies of two crewmen washed up on the shores of Ocracoke Island. They were identified as being from the Bedfordshire by a local, Aycok Brown, who had actually met one of the sailors by chance weeks earlier. Papers found on the body confirmed the identity as that of a crewman from the Bedfordshire.

Shortly thereafter, more bodies were found. Some of the men were identified as being from the Bedfordshire and were ultimately buried in a quiet corner of the cemetery in Ocracoke village. Although no official group had responsibility for the cemetery the cemetery was initially cared for by the local citizens of Ocracoke. Many had loved ones serving in the armed forces and felt kinship and gratitude to the sailors buried there.

Eventually, a lease for a tiny plot was given to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission for as long as the land remained a cemetery, and the plot officially became a British cemetery. Today the United States Coast Guard station at Ocracoke maintains the property. A British flag flies at all times over the graves of those British sailors.



The land is essentially British territory. It has been given to honour the men buried there so that they can rest in "home" soil. A plaque at the Ocracoke cemetery contains part of the poem by British poet Rupert Brooke: -

*If I should die think only this of me  
that there's some corner of a foreign field  
that is forever England  
And so it is.*

**“Good morning class,”** A university professor greets his brand new students. “Welcome to your first official day of training. But before we begin, I’d like to ask each student to quickly introduce themselves and give a little information on what led them to be interested in this particular field of work.”

The blond student in the first seat stands up. “Hello everyone!” The blond addresses, “Probably like many of you, I grew up in a small town. My dad was a farmer, of course. I remember as a little kid, I used to love helping him out with the land and the animals. I would assist him any chance I got. Even our neighbours, when they would let me! So, like many of you probably, I thought to myself why not do it for a living?”



After brief silence, the professor replies “And that’s why you’ve chosen this profession? Because of your love of assisting farmers?”

“That’s right!” The Blonde student replies proudly. “I want to be a pharmacist.”

**One morning** a man comes into the church on crutches. He stops in front of the holy water and splashes some of it on both of his legs, then throws away his crutches. An altar boy witnessed the scene and runs into the rectory to tell the priest what he’d just seen.

Without batting an eye, the priest says, “Son, you’ve just witnessed a miracle. Tell me, where is this man?” “Over by the font, Father flat on his back.” replies the alter boy.



**A man was driving** when he saw the flash of a traffic camera. He figured that his picture had been taken for exceeding the limit, even though he knew that he was not speeding. Just to be sure, he went around the block and passed the same spot, driving even more slowly, but again the camera flashed. Now he began to think that this was quite funny, so he drove even slower as he passed the area again, but the traffic camera again flashed. He tried a fourth time with the same result. He did this a fifth time and was now laughing when the camera flashed as he rolled past, this time at a snail’s pace.

Two weeks later, he got five tickets in the mail for driving without a seat belt !

**President, Brian Hunt BEM JP**  
241/2 Falcon Way  
TWEED HEAD SOUTH NSW 2486  
Ph: (07) 5513-0178  
Email: [brian.hunt8@bigpond.com](mailto:brian.hunt8@bigpond.com)

**Secretary, Terry Docker**  
96/22 Handsford Road  
COOMBABAH QLD 4216  
Ph: 0415 145 311  
Email: [lamsur@virginbroadband.com.au](mailto:lamsur@virginbroadband.com.au)



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Brian Hunt on 07 5513 0178

Preferably email at [brian.hunt8@bigpond.com](mailto:brian.hunt8@bigpond.com)

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