

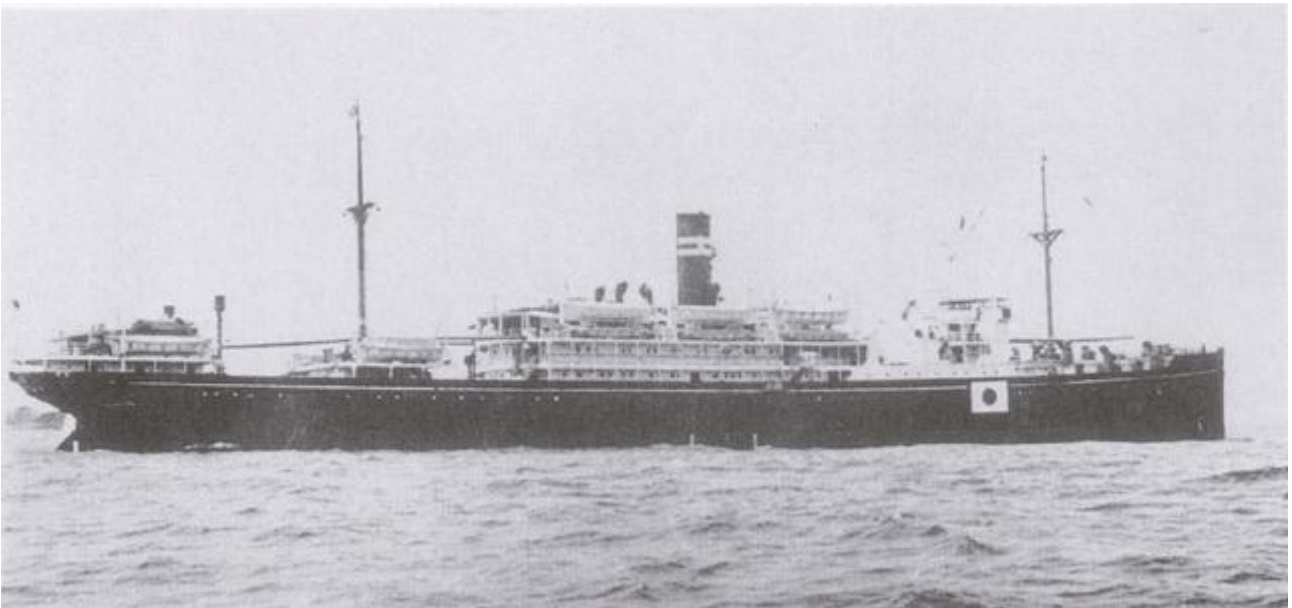


Under the Clock



Issue 56 - June 2008

The Montevideo Maru



The **Montevideo Maru** was a Japanese auxiliary vessel. Prior to the Second World War, it operated as a passenger and cargo vessel, traveling mainly between Asia and South America.

On the 23rd January 1942 Japanese forces invaded Rabaul, on the island of New Britain and quickly defeated the small Australian Garrison - Lark Force.

About 160 of the Australian soldiers who surrendered were massacred in February at Tol Plantation.

On 22nd June 1942, the Japanese ordered 852 Australian Prisoners of War and 208 civilian internees to board the Japanese ship, Montevideo Maru, for transport to Japan. The ship bore no markings to indicate that it carried Prisoners of War.

The Prisoners of War included members of the 2/22nd Battalion, 1st Independent Company, Fortress Artillery, Engineers, Signal Units, No. 17 Anti/Tank Battery, Anti/Aircraft Battery, No. 19 Special Dental Unit; detachments from New Guinea Volunteer Rifles, 2/10 Field Ambulance, Ordinance Corps, 8 Division Supply Column, Canteen Services HQ NG area, Royal Australian Airforce and the Royal Australian Navy. The 2/22 Battalion Bandsmen were all members of Salvation Army Bands.

On 1st July 1942 an American submarine, the USS Sturgeon, attacked and sank the Montevideo Maru unaware that more than 1000 Prisoners of War were locked in the holds.

There were no survivors - No indication of the sinking, nor of the tragic loss of life, was given by the Japanese Government.

The sinking of the Montevideo Maru is the largest maritime disaster in Australian History.

Presidents Report

As we approach yet another end of financial year – our 12th - it is intriguing to look back and marvel at the evolution of our Association over that period. From a core of 16 Vindi Boys at an inaugural meeting in 1996 to a membership of 75 in 2008 is remarkable as statistics tell us that we should be on the decline – Vindi Boys refuse to go away!

Since having to abandon the “Mission” at Hamilton to developers, our new meeting place at Golden Years Seniors Centre, Nundah, has proven popular with attendees at our bi-monthly meetings, mainly for its location close to the rail station, but particularly for the courteous and helpful staff led by manager Don Rudd.

Thanks are due to our Social Convenor Pauline, for organising a number of well attended social outings during the year – not an easy job as it is difficult to please everybody all of the time. The Christmas dinner at Yeronga RSL was an outstanding success and my thanks to all who pitched in to make it so.

A record number of Vindi Boys and Girls turned out for the ANZAC DAY parade and it was noted that the Merchant Navy Association (marching ahead of us) were keen for our contingent to augment their dwindling numbers.

A controversial issue was raised some time after our normal bi-monthly meeting in April. It raised the issue of who shall, and shall not be eligible to join the Vindicatrix Association. Your committee met and decided that the time had come for a set of Guidelines be drafted for the consideration of all members at a Special General meeting which was held on May 29th; my thanks to our new Treasurer, Rob Buxton for taking on this task.

The ‘Draft’ was presented and debated at length. As a result of this debate a number of changes were put forward and agreed to and as a result the new ‘Draft’ will be printed out and sent to all financial members prior to the AGM. It is hoped that if accepted by the majority, these Guidelines will assist future committees in their decision making.

My thanks on your behalf to Rob Buxton for stepping into the breach when Alan Piper had to relinquish the job suddenly for personal reasons. My thanks also to our hard-working Secretary Kim for the great job she does on our behalf – most of which goes un-noticed. To Vice President Roger Wilson; bon voyage to you and Margaret for your forthcoming trip to the UK. Hurry back we need you.

Doug Duxbury, President

Life is all about arses

*You're either covering it,
Laughing it off,
Kicking it,
Busting it, trying to get a piece of it,
or behaving like one*



Vindi Boys

by Doug Duxbury

They arrived at the gates, looking lost and forlorn;
Some with a suitcase, all battered and torn,
Some came adorned with the very latest fashion,
Some came with nought but a dream and a passion.

From all parts of Blighty they travelled express,
To a little backwater then known as Sharpness.
There were Cockneys and Geordies, Scousers and Jocks,
Welsh and Irish from the school of hard knocks.

Their Mother tongue was English, but it was difficult to guess,
By the manner it was spoken, Understood, more or less.

Conditions were made deliberately tough;
As for the food, there was never enough.
They weren't to know then, if ever at all,
That the plan was for them to stumble and fall.

At the end of the Course those still standing,
Could look forward to a happy landing
After three months of learning and being cut down to size,
To join their first ship was the ultimate prize.

To all points of the Compass they travelled and scattered,
And a shocking World War left many bruised and battered.
But in spite of the elements and every adversity,
Many thousands won through to graduate at Lifes University.

So when the question crops up on anyone's lips,
What is so special about this Vindicatrix?
The Vindi boy smiles, remembering back when,
Twas an old ship where younger boys were taught to be men.

A seafood restaurant had a sign in the window that read, “Big Lobster Tales, \$5 each.” Amazed at the great value, a man stopped in and asked the waitress, “Five dollars each for lobster tails -- is that correct?” “Yes,” she said. “It's our special just for today.” “Well,” he said, “they must be little lobster tails.” “No,” she replied, “it's the really big lobster.” “Big red lobster tails, \$5 each?” he said, amazed. “They must be old lobster tails!” “No, they're definitely today's.” “Today's big red lobster tails -- \$5 each?” he repeated, astounded. “Yes,” she insisted. “Well, here's my five dollars,” he said. “I'll take one.”

She took the money and led him to a table where she invited him to sit down. She then sat down next to him, put her hand on his shoulder, leaned over close to him, and said, “Once upon a time there was a really big, red lobster.....”



Hi Lads, Please return any books and tapes, which you may have borrowed from our Vindi Library since our last meeting at the Seamen's Mission, Hamilton a year ago. You must have read your books and viewed your tapes by now.

Does any one have a Video copy of:-
**The Great Liners No 4 - The Cunards
ours has been recorded over!!!!!!!**



Thanks, Kim Cohen



Anzac Day Parade Thursday 25th March 2008

In spite of weather forecasts to the contrary, we had a beautiful sunny day in Brisbane for our Anzac Day Parade. Your roving reporter is very pleased to say that we had a good turn out of our Lads and Lasses to represent the Queensland Vindatrix Association. At this point, I will say a special thank you to Tom Edgar, who, although in Brisbane for a different reason, attending to family business, actually took time out to march with us on the day. Tom came all the way from Glen Aplin and it was really good to see him and enjoy a couple of beers with him after the march.

The march down through the streets of central Brisbane, was, as usual, something to be remembered. The clapping, cheering, flag waving crowds certainly make you feel that it is a *worthwhile* effort. The men and women, past and present, of the British Merchant Navy are being accorded their right of place in the Grand Parade of the forces involved in ALL WARS. The recognition that the crews of the many ships that sank do deserve a place amongst the armed forces is being shown by the people that line the roads and warmly greet the marchers as they go by.

There were also some very welcome attention, from some of the other services personnel, to our group in the after march hotel, and indeed before the marching began. For instance, this reporter was twice approached, before the march. The first time by an elderly Royal Australian Navy officer, (2 and a half striper) who was happy to shake my hand and tell me that he was proud to meet some of the men of the Merchant Marine. (his words) The next man was a young RAAF man and his words were basically the same, but on behalf of his grand father who had been in the military 1939 – 1945 in England and the European fronts.

It is great to see that our Merchant Navy groups are getting some recognition from those men as well. After the marching was finished, and we had all gathered at the watering hole, which I might add, was almost taken over by a host of RAAF men and women. On another two occasions we were offered sustenance by a young airman, and shortly after that, by a young airwoman. They were all happy to join in the general talk with us, and some of them were very interested in any happenings any of us were involved in during the war. Ray Morton's escapade (Malta convoy) had some very avid listeners. They had to listen to it on a third or fourth hand basis, as Ray was quite busy fighting his 'bangers and mash' lunch. All in all, I think everyone had a great day.

We had a very good turn out for the march, and thanks to all those that partook of the opportunity to put ourselves, as reps of the British Merchant Navy, on show to the people of Brisbane. They were, Jack Secker, Ron Wells, {banner bearers} Roger Wilson {flag bearer} Doug Duxbury, Allan Kelly, Terry Creasey, Gordi Cohen, George Shepherd-Ashby, Arthur Renforth, Ray Hollis, Vic Rother, Ray Morton, Robert Buxton, Tom Edgar and Frank Blacow. Our Ladies were represented by, Kim Cohen, Liz Rother, Lily Shepherd-Ashby, May Wells, Alice Buxton, thank you Ladies.

Thank you too, to Commander Forbes Peters, R.A.N. who took the salute from the dias mid Adelaide Street for the special sign of recognition of our group. It helped to make our day. Next year, perhaps we can make an even better showing. Once again, we also thank Black and White cabs for their generous use of the cab to drive our people around the course.

Safe Sailing to you all. Jack Secker. (More photos on our webpage).

Liberty ships

The **Liberty ships** were cargo ships built in the United States during World War II. They were British in conception but adapted by the USA, cheap and quick to build, and came to symbolize U.S. wartime industrial output. Based on vessels ordered by Britain to replace ships torpedoed by German U-boats, they were purchased for the U.S. fleet and for lend-lease provision to Britain. Eighteen American shipyards built 2,751 Liberties between 1941 and 1945, easily the largest number of ships produced to a single design.

The production of these vessels mirrored, on a much larger scale, the manufacture of the *Hog Island* ship and similar standardized types during the First World War. The immense effort to build Liberty ships, the sheer number of ships built, and the fact that some of the ships survived far longer than the original design life of five years, make them the subject of much study.

History and service

In 1936, the American Merchant Marine Act was passed to subsidize the annual construction of 50 commercial merchant vessels to be used in wartime by the United States Navy as naval auxiliaries. The number was doubled in 1939 and again in 1940 to 200 ships a year. Ship types included a tanker and three types of merchant vessel, all to be powered by steam turbines. Limited industrial capacity, especially for turbine construction, meant that relatively few of these ships were built.

In 1940, the British Government ordered 60 tramp steamships from American yards to replace war losses and boost the merchant fleet. This *Ocean* class were simple but fairly large (for the time) with a single coal-fired, 2,500 horsepower (1.9 MW) reciprocating engine of obsolete but reliable design. Britain specified coal plants because it had plenty of coal mines but no indigenous oil fields. The predecessor designs, including the *Northeast Coast*, *Open Shelter Deck Steamer*, were based on a simple ship originally produced in Sunderland by J.L. Thompson & Sons (see Silver Line) in 1879, and widely manufactured until the *SS Dorrington Court* of the 1930s. The order specified an 18 inch (457 mm) increase in draught to boost displacement by 800 tons to 10,100 tons. The accommodation, bridge and main engine of these vessels were located amidships, with a long tunnel to connect the main engine shaft to its aft extension to the propeller. The first *Ocean*-class ship, *Ocean Vanguard* was launched on 16 August 1941.

The design was modified by the United States Maritime Commission to conform to American construction practices and to make it even quicker and cheaper to build. The U.S. version was designated EC2-S-C1 — Emergency Cargo, 2 = large ship. The new design replaced much riveting, which accounted for one-third of the labour costs, with welding and featured oil-fired boilers. The order was given to a conglomerate of West Coast engineering and construction companies known as the Six Companies, headed by Henry J. Kaiser, and was also adopted as the Merchant Marine Act design.

On 27 March 1941, the number of lend-lease ships was increased to 200 by the Defense Aid Supplemental Appropriations Act, and increased again in April to 306, of

which 117 would be Liberty ships.

The ships were constructed of welded sections that were then welded together. This is similar to the technique used by Palmer's at Jarrow but substitutes welding for riveting. Riveted ships took several months to construct. The work force was newly trained - no one previously built welded ships. As America entered the war the shipbuilding yards employed women to replace enlisted men.

The ships initially had a poor public image because of their looks. In a speech announcing the emergency shipbuilding program, President Roosevelt had referred to the ship as "a dreadful looking object," and *Time* magazine called it an "Ugly Duckling." To try to assuage public opinion, 27 September 1941 was designated *Liberty Fleet Day*, and the first 14 "Emergency" vessels were launched that day. The first of these was *SS Patrick Henry*, launched by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In remarks at the launch ceremony, FDR cited Patrick Henry's 1775 speech that finished "Give me liberty or give me death". Roosevelt said that this new class of ships would bring liberty to Europe, which gave rise to the name Liberty Ship.

Early on, each ship took about 230 days to build (*Patrick Henry* took 244 days), but the average eventually dropped to 42 days. The record was set by *Robert E. Peary*, which was launched 4 days and 15 1/2 hours after the keel was laid, although this publicity stunt was not repeated. The ships were made assembly-line style, from prefabricated sections. In 1943, three new Liberty ships were being completed every day. They were mainly named after famous Americans, starting with the signatories of the Declaration of Independence.

Any group which raised War bonds worth \$2 million could propose a name. Most were named for deceased people. The only living namesake was Francis J. O'Gara, the purser of the *SS Jean Nicolet*, who was thought to have been killed in a submarine attack but in fact survived the war in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. Other exceptions to the naming rule were the *SS Stage Door Canteen*, named for the USO club in New York, and the *SS U.S.O.*, named after the organization itself

Another notable Liberty ship was *SS Stephen Hopkins*, which sank the German commerce raider *Stier* in a ship-to-ship gun battle in 1942 and became the first American ship to sink a German surface combatant.

SS Richard Montgomery is also notable, though in a less positive way; the wreck of the ship lies off the coast of Kent with 1,500 tons of explosives still on board, enough to match a small nuclear weapon should they ever go off.

Problems

Early Liberty ships suffered hull and deck cracks, and a few were lost to such structural defects. During WWII, there were nearly 1,500 instances of significant brittle fractures. Nineteen ships broke in half without warning, including the *SS John P. Gaines*, which sank on 24 November 1943 with the loss of 10 lives. Suspicion fell on the shipyards who had often used inexperienced workers and new welding techniques to produce large numbers of ships in great haste. Constance Tipper of Cambridge University demonstrated that the fractures were not initiated by welding, but instead by the grade of steel used which suffered from embrittlement. She discovered that the

ships in the North Atlantic were exposed to temperatures that could fall below a critical point when the mechanism of cracking changed from ductile to brittle, and thus the hull could fracture relatively easily. The predominantly welded (as opposed to riveted) hull construction then allowed cracks to run for large distances unimpeded. One common type of crack nucleated at the square corner of a hatch which coincided with a welded seam, both the corner and the weld acting as stress concentrators

Furthermore, the ships were frequently grossly overloaded and some of the problems occurred during or after severe storms at sea that would have placed any ship at risk. Various reinforcements were applied to the Liberty Ships to arrest the crack problems, and the successor design, the Victory ship, was built stronger and less stiff.

Several designs of mass-produced petroleum tankers were also produced, the most numerous being the T2 tanker series, with about 490 built between 1942 and the end of 1945.

The last Liberty ship constructed was the SS *Albert M. Boe*, launched on 26 September 1945 and delivered on 30 October 1945. She was named after the chief engineer of a United States Army freighter who had stayed below decks to shut down his engines after a 13 April 1945 explosion, an act that won him a posthumous Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal

Many Liberty ships survived the war, and made up a large percentage of the postwar cargo fleet. Many were bought by Greek ship-owners at very low prices. Shipping magnates like Theodoracopoulos were known to have started their fleets by buying many Liberties. The term "Liberty-size cargo" for 10,000 tons may still be heard in the shipping business.

As of 2005, two operational Liberty ships survive: the SS *John W. Brown* (following a long career as a school ship and many internal modifications) and the *Jeremiah O'Brien*, largely in original condition. Both museum ships, they still put out to sea regularly. In 1994, the "O'Brien steamed from San Francisco to England and France, the only large ship that participated in the WW II D-Day invasion to return for the 50th anniversary. The SS *Albert M. Boe* survives as *Star of Kodiak*, a floating cannery, docked in Kodiak Harbor.

In the 1960s three Liberty ships were reactivated and converted to technical research ships by the U.S. Navy with the hull type AGTR. SS *Samuel R. Ailken* became the USS *Oxford* (AGTR-1), SS *Robert W. Hart* became the USS *Georgetown* (AGTR-2), and SS *J. Howland Gardner* became the USS *Jamestown* (AGTR-3). All of these ships were decommissioned and stricken from the Naval Register in 1969 and 1970.

U.S. shipyards

Liberty ships were built at eighteen shipyards located along the Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf Coasts.

Many Vindi lads have had experiences sailing on Liberty ships in their MN Career, how about sharing your story with your mates. I know there are some good stories out there.

More on 'riveted' Liberty Ships next issue.....

The Merchant Navy

The sea is full of dead men; their spittle is the spray.
Their cold breath is the vapour that blows silently away.
Their laughter is the frenzy of the surf upon the sand.
But their sadness is in parting so, without a waving hand

They lie so quiet; sleeping for their bed is cool and wide
Their fame comes home to landsmen on the flooding of the tide.
We are ringed around with heroes who were common men and kind
Their stones are seaweed covered, their names are hard to find.

We know them all in England, for they are kin of ours,
They are the more remembered - They had no wreaths of flowers.
No funeral processions in the muffled mourning air.
No carriages, no horses, no silent throngs were there.

Just the sea upon their eyelids that will do for tears unshed
While our hearts are filled with gladness and with thankfulness instead.
That there will be so many who did not begrudge the cost
Of the gift they gave in serving us, who live the lives they lost



Author Unknown

A group of junior-level executives were participating in a management training program. The seminar leader pounded home his point about the need to make decisions and take action on these decisions. "For instance," he said, "if you had five frogs on a log and three of them decided to jump, how many frogs would you have left on the log?"

The answers from the group were unanimous: "Two." "Wrong," replied the speaker, "there would still be five because there is a difference between deciding to jump and jumping."

"We used to play spin the bottle when I was a kid. A girl would spin the bottle and if it pointed to you when it stopped, the girl could either kiss you or give you a thrupence. By the time I was 14 years, I owned my first home."



Allan Kelly

A New Zealand Find

Early in 2008, my wife and I took ourselves off for a holiday in the South Island of New Zealand. This was late March until mid April. We took a flight from Brisbane to Christchurch. These early, cheaper flights I soon realised are strictly for the birds, not humans. A 6am flight from Brisbane means that you need to arise about 2am to get yourself ready to leave home at 3am, why so early? Because 'sir' says we must be checking in for the flight at 4am. Be late, and you could be locked off of the plane. People, we are being conned. We duly arrived in time to not be denied access to the plane, and found that the desks were open to receive our bags and to book us on to the plane. We had barely sat down by our egress terminal when it was announced that our flight would be delayed, for 20 minutes, as our plane had not yet arrived.

At 5.45am our plane still had not arrived, and we were told we would not be leaving now until 9am. Word went round that the pilot had overslept and delayed their departure from Sydney. That rumour was neither confirmed nor denied by management. When I asked the usherette (oops, sorry, Stewardess, oooooops again, Flight Attendant) she just smiled sweetly and suggested I ask the pilot. Anyway we eventually got off the ground at 9.10am. So much for being at the airport 2 hours before take off, and don't be late. Perhaps they were talking to the wrong people. Anyway so much for the excitement of our departure.

We duly arrived at Christchurch some 2 hours late, and no hire car waiting for us. Still, that was only a phone call away. We stayed in Christchurch over night, and found our way to The Woolston Club, where our Vindi Re-union is to be hosted this year. We did arrive on a very auspicious occasion, apparently. The club was absolutely jam packed with people. I thought it was possibly a practice welcoming committee for our forthcoming reunion. That idea was soon scotched when I was politely requested, by a rather solid looking 'usher', to please remove my Vindicatrix head covering. Hats were not allowed on the head within the confines of the club.

You Queensland Vindi Boys, take note!!! It turned out, that the extra large gathering was not for my benefit at all. The mainly male crowd was there because the club has an extra large TV and there was a Rugby match being televised between, of course, Australia and New Zealand. I couldn't have a good look around the place, as it was too crowded, but it appears to be an acceptable venue for our reunion. The food was pretty good, and the selection of ales was well within my choice range. A pleasant, if somewhat noisy evening. (PS. I think the All Blacks won) Next morning we left Christchurch to drive down to Queenstown. That was good fun, getting out of Christchurch I mean. We left at a reasonable time, 9am with instructions on how to get on the main road south. Right, Yeahhhhh.

When a Kiwian person tells you to turn on to route "7", at the next set of lights, remember to ask him/her, is that left or right? Because for sure, the "7" goes in both directions and it never fails that the place you hope to go to is not mentioned on the boards. An hour later, after traversing, I think, every suburb in the city, somehow we found ourselves driving along a road with the number 1 on it. We took a chance, and stopped at the next petrol station we could find and asked, hopefully, is this the part of route 1 that is taking us southwards? That guy gave us a really bright smile and said "yes", all the way to Dunedin, but of course the number changes now and then. We didn't mind that, because at the next highway pit stop, we pulled in and had a coffee and studied the maps and wow, we only had another 400kms to go. Do you want a wheelturn by wheelturn nah, suffice to say, we arrived at our proper destination at 6pm that evening. After a brief settling in time, we dined and showered and slept, in that order. Sleep comes easy in New Zealand. It must be the air. I slept from around 9.30pm until almost 8am next morning.

After ablutions and a lazy easy breakfast, we started out for a look around our area and the surrounding places. We had maps galore and even a better supply of adverts to entice us into our exploring ways. The nearest pub was easy to get to, with its ales and tucker box. What easy??? It was just the other side of the wall of our motel unit. If it had been any closer, it would have been in our lounge room.

I will not bore you with the delights of our sightseeing escapades, but I am going to tell you about a sea/lake trip we took on the "SS Earnslaw". This ship sails from Queenstown wharf about 3 times



daily. So there we were, waiting patiently with a crowd of people for our embarkation orders. Now I knew this vessel served cooked meals and snacks etc, so was not too surprised to see a small truck turn up at the wharf and commence loading a whole tray full of coal in to what I presumed were some sort of galley bunkers. It turned out that the little truck carried 7 tons of coal. As the cargo was ingested by the bunker system, she ship took on a quite noticeable list to port. AH well thought I, the crew will transfer fuel oil from tank to tank to adjust the trim. I then took a stroll along the wharf, while still awaiting an order to walk up the gangplank.

On her foredeck was a good old mast, with a derrick attached and a lovely old steam winch. The crew of two were actually trimming the ship by the use of the said winch and derrick. There, attached to the runner was a very large slab of concrete. The winch and derrick lifted the concrete and settled it right in the middle of the hatch. Low and behold, ship trimmed. My complaint about that exercise really was about the handling of that flamin' great lump of ballast. The derrick was controlled by the usual guys one being slacked off and then the other being pulled to make the derrick swing round. Both guys were being controlled by one person, who had to race from one side of the deck to the other. Not a long hike true, but had to be done at speed. The necessary speed was achieved, but the power needed to stop the derrick from swinging too wildly had to be supplied by a GIRL. The Mate was driving the winch. I'm not really a sexist, but I think those roles should be reversed. Excellent, no walking sideways along the decks.

We were at last encouraged to board the Earnslaw and was even welcomed aboard by the Captain. Up on to the main deck and there were the food dispensers, already busy by the time we got on deck. We found seats and made ourselves comfortable. When the crush subsided from around the foodery we went and got a drink and a snack each. From what I could see, the galley must be somewhere else as I couldn't see any form of cooking apparatus anywhere.

After a quick snack and drink I decided to look around the ship. I had glimpsed the lifeboats, outside our window and wondered how the heck they could be swung out in an emergency. They were hung on a pair of radial davits. OK, I still remember how they were used, but how were these crew members going to cope with this sort of thing. My memory was of the crew standing in two parties, one at each end of the lifeboat, and how we swung that boat back and forth to get it swung out and ready for use, am I right? The previous sentence holds the basis of my dilemma. ONE word, "standing", under these lifeboats, there was NO DECK to stand on. Logic says, that the ship will settle in the upright position and the paying customers would just sit on the roof until the rescue boats arrived. No problemo. (Except, the average depth of the lake, apart from at the very edges, is 350metres) that for the non metric mob is 1000 + deep. Somehow, I don't think the upper deck would be very far above the surface. Well I decided to worry about that if worry were needed. The trip continued and so did my look around.

I had previously noted that centrally located in the main deck was a rather large hole. It had a barriers around it and at first I thought it was a ladder-way down to the next deck and possibly the toilets. Upon looking over the barrier, I saw no gangway, but I did see the engine room. Also I could see the engineer and the oiler and the stoker. Wow, hold on, Stoker? Yep, there was a real life 'stoker', complete with coal, a shovel and a real stoker's belt, one of those with the buckle at the back remember them? And what's more, he had two fires to stoke. Two engines and two screws, right then I realised, I was on a "coal burning ship" and it didn't have a coal burning galley. She is a fine looking ship and at the age she is, is in very good condition. If I am in that good a condition when I get to her age, I would be well content. She is well looked after and

treated.

TSS Earnslaw (twin screw steamer) was built in 1912 to service the remote farming communities around Lake Wakatipu, including Walter Peak. Not only the grandest ship to have graced Lake Wakatipu, she is also the largest.

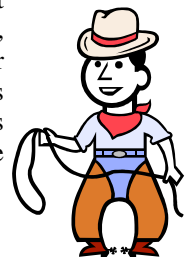
J McGregor & Co, who won the government tender to construct the vessel for £20,850, built the vintage steamship in Dunedin 280kms away. After assembly she was dismantled and railed to Kingston at the southern tip of Lake Wakatipu for reassembly. There she passed into the hands of her new owners, the New Zealand Railways.

The TSS Earnslaw was one of many steamers that plied the Lake from 1860 onwards. The vessels were the main transport link between Queenstown and the outside world and all were operated privately until steamer services were taken over by the Government in 1902. The New Zealand Railways was responsible for their operation for 66 years.

The TSS Earnslaw worked primarily as a cargo ship servicing farming communities and was capable of carrying 1,500 sheep and 30 cattle on her decks. Currently she carries a max of 350 passengers on daily scheduled excursions. Now the only surviving vessel of the original fleet of steamers also the last remaining coal fired passenger carrying vessel in the Southern Hemisphere.

Jack Secker

A Sheriff ambles in to the local saloon and says. "I'm looking frrr the Brown Paper Bandit". The saloon owner asks "What does he look like?" "He's got a brown paper hat, brown paper boots, brown paper clothes and a brown paper horse." The Saloon owner asks "What's he wanted frrr?" The Sherrif replies "Rustling" and when we catch him we're going to hang him.



You and the Com...puter!!!!

Having trouble with your computer or have you not got one? Well, here is a message received from Vindi lad, Alan Glasson.

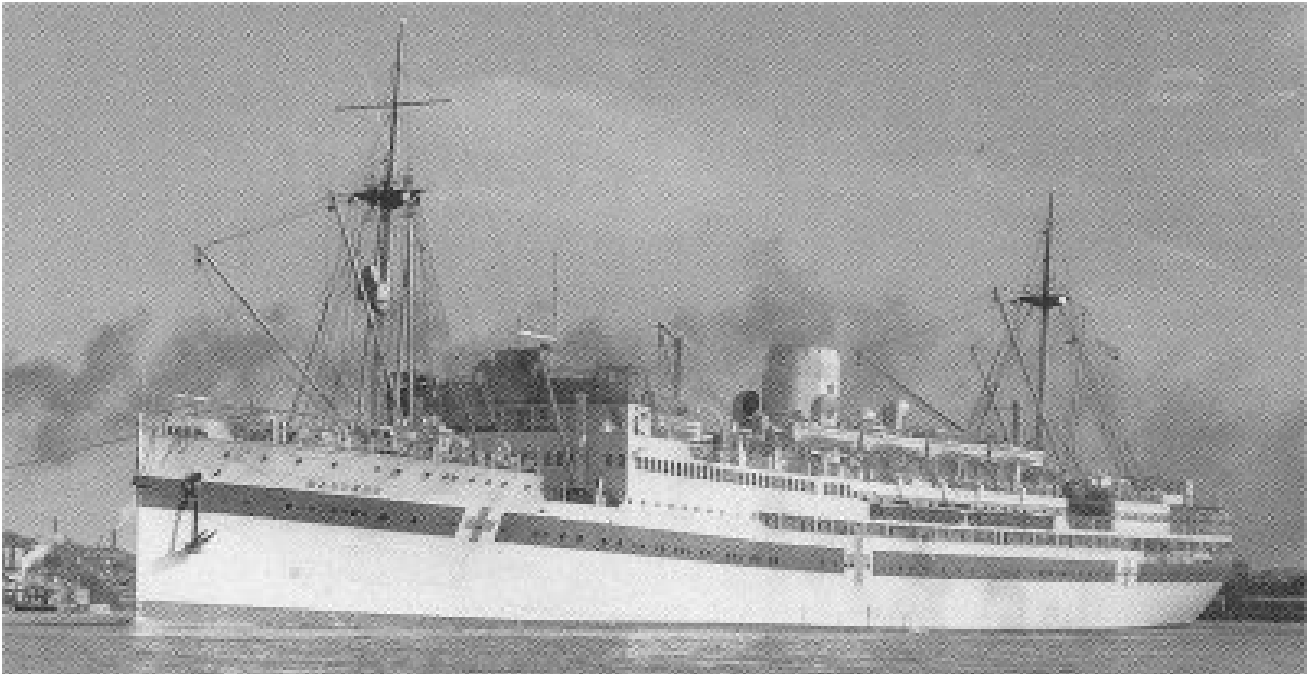
Alan heard on the radio one day in early April about a company with an address at
www.workventures.com.au/connectit

where pensioners could buy a computer for an affordable price.

He has investigated into the website and the free phone number is **1800 112 205**. He found that this Company refurbish computers and sell them to people in need for a handsome sum of only \$250.00 plus postage.

And they deliver all over Australia. Computers can be very expensive and if you have never had one, you may like to try this before you invest further.





HMAHS Manunda

The Passenger Vessel Manunda was built by Wm. Beardmores of Glasgow for the Adelaide Steamship Coy. She arrived in Australia in June 1929 and was engaged on the Australian Coast Trade running passengers and cargo Sydney, Fremantle, Melbourne, & Cairns. Manunda and her sister ship Manoora were very popular on the Sydney Cairns Fremantle routes until May 1940

Manunda was converted to a Hospital Ship at Sydney 25/5/40 taken over by the Authorities and complied with Geneva Convention Regulations as HMAHS (His Majesty's Australian Hospital Ship) commissioned 22nd July 1940 and made four trips to the Middle East between November 1940 and September 1941 before being dispatched to Darwin.

The "Manunda" sailed from Darling Harbour in Sydney on 7 January 1942 and arrived in Darwin on 14 January 1942. Over the following 5 weeks the ship undertook normal routine tasks and practised evacuation procedures. Medical staff visited military hospitals in the Darwin area. They watched the build-up of activities in and around Darwin and were shocked at the news of the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942.

At about 10.00am on Thursday 19 February 1942, the nursing orderlies on board "Manunda" were undergoing an examination of their practical nursing skills in the wards onboard the ship. They heard the air raid siren and as they raced to collect their helmets and respirators, they could hear the first Japanese bombs dropping on Darwin. There were some 55 ships in the harbour at the time of the attack. Six large ships and two smaller ones were sunk. There were about 176 people killed and about 200 seriously wounded on board ships in and around Darwin Harbour. "Manunda" received a near miss which sprayed shrapnel across its decks killing four people. 76 holes were peppered in her plates from this near miss. Another bomb which just missed the bridge, exploded on B and C decks., It caused extensive injuries amongst the staff and damaged the navigational instruments.

One of the aid-posts was hit. By this time there were many fires on board the "Manunda". The medical and nursing staff quarters were totally destroyed. Some of the life-boats were manned by the hospital crew to rescue seriously injured men from the water. There were 11 members of the ships crew killed on the Hospital Ship "Manunda." 18 others were seriously wounded and another 40 or so received minor wounds.

Sister Lorraine S. Blow was one of the seriously wounded crew members. Matron Schumack was badly shaken as a result of the Japanese attack, but remained calm and supervised the nursing of the wounded and dying. She was awarded the Royal Red Cross in recognition of her courageous conduct following the Japanese attack.

The official Log Book of the "Manunda" indicates that 19 bodies were prepared for burial ashore.

3 from HMAS Swan
1 Darwin Boom Defence
2 USS Peary
1 USS Navy
1 HMAS Kara Kara

The Australian War Graves Commission states that Army casualties were buried at sea,. The Northern Territory Memorial and the Sydney Memorial show them as having "no known graves". One source, who was filling sandbags on the shore remembers quite clearly that there was a long trench dug in the area between the current Darwin Casino and Kahlin Beach. The Manager of the Mindil Beach Caravan Park sold the land in 1978 for the development of the Darwin Casino. During

earth works for the project many human remains were found in a deep trench. The Northern Territory News on 3 October 1981 claimed they were aboriginal remains. Later reports claimed they were remains of Mocassin fishermen?

The "Manunda" berthed in Fremantle eight days after the Japanese attack. First Mate, Tom Minto heard Prime Minister Curtin's announcement that 35 people had been injured during the two raids on Darwin. "Funny thing, that," Tom Minto thought. "We had 260 wounded on board the Manunda." Curtin also said "the results of the raid were not such as to give any satisfaction to the enemy". "Well, the enemy must have been very hard to please", Tom Minto mused.

Dave Smith, the ship in the bottle master craftsman, and benefactor advises that another ship the "Arranmore" is on the slipway and will be ready to sail to New Zealand in time for the next reunion – Oct 31st, Nov 1st & Nov 2nd.

He asks that the model be raffled and that all monies raised be donated to helping to save the Hector's dolphin, which is only found in New Zealand waters and which is now an endangered species down from around 26,000 in 1970 to about 7,000 at this present time. You may be well aware the dolphin is a creature that is dear to the hearts of all merchant seamen and all effort must be made to help this cause.

Dave has made a commitment, now it's our turn. To win this model that you may proudly display you need to purchase a ticket in the raffle to be held in Christchurch at the Down-under Reunion 2008.

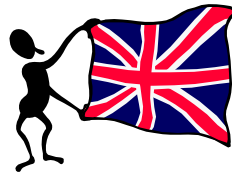


Photo of 2007 winners trophy - Tony Harben, WA

Another prize donated for raffle is a superbly crafted "Marlinspike" of stainless steel and timber handle 12 inches long, making for a fine display on your wall or mantelpiece or even a letter opener on your desk. The benefactor Jim Fulerton, Qld is unable to attend this reunion, but am sure he will be at the next. Jim has worked as a seaman all his life and just retired as AB on tug boats at Hay Point. His hobby is big boy toys in his workshop (inventing and designing) that would put many commercial manufacturers to shame, what he hasn't got is the easiest question to ask. Thanks Jim.....



Britain Today



British is about driving in a German car to an Irish pub for a Belgian beer, then travelling home, grabbing an Indian curry or a Turkish kebab on the way, to sit on Swedish furniture and watch American shows on a

Japanese TV. And the most British thing of all, suspicion of anything foreign.

Only in Britain can a pizza get to a house faster than an ambulance.

Only in Britain do supermarkets make sick people walk all the way to the back of the shop to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.

Only in Britain do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries and a DIET coke.

Only in Britain do banks leave both doors open and chain the pens to the counters.

Only in Britain are cars worth thousands of pounds left on the road or driveways and junk and cheap lawn mower are locked in the garage.

Only in Britain are answering machines used to screen calls and then have call waiting so not missing a call from someone they didn't want to talk to in the first place.

Only in Britain are there disabled parking places in front of a skating rink.

NOT TO MENTION

3 Brits die each year testing if a 9v battery works on their tongue.

142 Brits were injured in 1999 by not removing all pins from new shirts.

58 Brits are injured each year by using sharp knives instead of screwdrivers.

31 Brits have died since 1996 by watering their Christmas tree while the fairy lights were plugged in.

19 Brits have died in the last 3 years believing that Christmas decorations were chocolate.

British Hospitals reported 4 broken arms last year after cracker pulling accidents.

101 people since 1999 have had broken parts of plastic toys pulled out of the soles of their feet.

18 Brits had serious burns in 2000 trying on a new jumper (sweater) with a lit cigarette in their mouth.

A massive 543 Brits were admitted to A&E in the last two years after opening bottles of beer with their teeth.

5 Brits were injured last year in accidents involving out of control Scalextric cars. And finally..... In 2000 eight Brits cracked their skull whilst throwing up into the toilet.

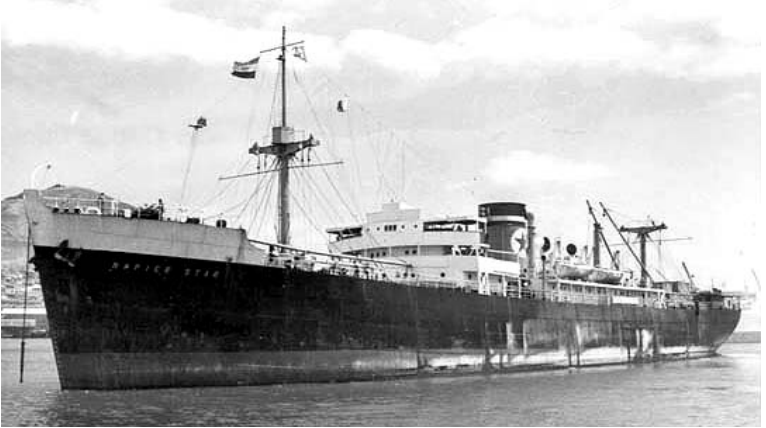


I'm proud to be Australian

The Napier Star was famous throughout the company in the 50's and early 60's as being the slowest vessel in the fleet, recording some of the slowest passages on record across the Pacific. This was not helped by her service speed of 10 kts, which in reality was nearer 8½ kts. She was also notorious for scavenge fires which occurred with monotonous regularity. It is reputed that on one occasion, the Panama Canal Pilot on reaching the bridge asked the Master; "What's your full sea speed Captain?" On learning it was 8½ knots, he placed his baseball cap back to front, gripped the dodger and said;" Let her rip Captain!"

Ah the Napier Star.....

Editor: In early 1963 on a Home Trade run from Black Water, Essex to Middlesbrough up in Geordie Land, sailing the Napier Star I first met my now very good mate, NSW poet laureate David Partridge Pilot Boat Captain extraordinaire. And to discover this took a few glasses of wine, swinging the lamp after a Vindi reunion in Tweed Heads back at our accommodation. We were sitting out under the stars and I was telling David about a roughish trip with only running lights (nil cabin lights or heat) and skeleton crew when all hands were called on deck to chip ice due to sea water freezing on deck, having little ballast and in danger of foundering. *As if we would have made much difference!!!!!!!!!!!!*



David saying "that's un-real as he was on that ship too" The ship had been laid up just off Maldon, Essex in the Black Water for some time and our first job had been to haul up the side of the ship (by rope and wicker baskets) stores of necessities and creature comforts such as food, bedding etc. on board for the trip, the ship being of course completely emptied when laid up. Ha - for lights we had kerosene lamps and can tell you they don't give out much heat in minus temps.

For the first few days preparing the ship for the short haul to Middlesbrough we were bused to Colchester and billeted in hotels, with early starts to Maldon and taken out to the ship via a launch/tender (the ship, one of hundreds swinging on anchors and buoys with gangways down to take on watchmen, resembled a graveyard).

Our biggest problem was the engine/s, which refused to start, giving the engineers a hard time as time-frames were putting the pressure on. Hence when sailing, no heating or sufficient power to light the ship. We hit foul weather just off the Essex coast at dusk and did we have fun in the absence of lighting or heating in a gale. Gale, snow storm, hurricane call it what you like, it was no place to be playing silly buggers on deck, clipped and hanging on to life lines, shoveling snow and heaving ice over the side, but that was the order "all hands on deck". The lads wearing a mish mash of clothing from sou'-westers to balaclavas and donkey jackets was not sufficient I can tell you. My hands numb with cold and body near frozen, hearing the words shouted down from the bridge to "**stand down**", came as a blessed relief.

Myself signed on as a steward never played that role, as although having a 2nd Steward (glorified tally clerk) and Chef with no mains power in the galley, all we ate was sandwiches and looked after ourselves. I was 18 years young, fit, bullet proof and scared of nothing, though exhausted, battered, bruised, wet, cold and miserable. 36 odd hours later we paid off in Middlesbrough after docking, though would add the storm had abated and foundering fears had long gone. After descending the gangway never looked back. Catching an express train, slept all the way home vowing to steer clear of H/T runs in the future. I did say "fit, bullet proof and scared of nothing." If only that were true today? Ha.

David's comment on the trip was: "The blooming coldest winter ever known, my most vivid memory is of tipping buckets of snow into the tea urn for a cuppa."

As it turned out that was my last trip to sea (little did I know that the time was nearing for the end of the British MN) as under my own recognance I obtained a late apprenticeship as a motor mechanic. This meant going back to school one day a week and two nights schooling for my City and Guilds qualification, but to me well worth the effort as I had left school early. Mechanic's blood must have flowed through me as at the time I had 3 cars (old bangers) and a Lambretta scooter.

I slowly worked my way up the ladder at my work, but at 21 years advised that my schooling would not be further funded by the company, leaving me in a conundrum of what to do also with a now fiancé to think about. The solution came to me with further thoughts of migration to Australia, a country I really liked when visiting (many times) and a country of many opportunities.

Well that's how the seed was sown of my coming to OZ, though the execution was in some way off beat as Shirley my fiancé was under a contract which could not be broken other than her father having to pay as guarantor a huge fine. So I came to Australia (aboard the P&O ship Himalaya) 12 months before Shirley to make my fortune. We did finally meet up again, got married and settled down in Perth, WA and I gained my trade papers via the WA, Victoria Park TAFE.

With the lure of "big money" as a mechanic/fitter/welder in the North -West iron ore mines, we rented our house (never to return), purchased a caravan and headed off to adventure..... now with 2 kiddies. And would you believe now still traveling, though now as a grey nomads.

Bill Davis

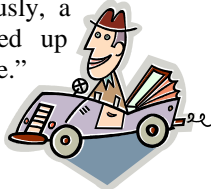
Bill and Sam, two elderly friends, met in the park every day to feed the pigeons, watch the squirrels and discuss world problems. One day Bill didn't show up. Sam didn't think much about it and figured maybe he had a cold or something. But after Bill hadn't shown up for a week or so, Sam really got worried. However, since the only time they ever got together was at the park, Sam didn't know where Bill lived, so he was unable to find out what had happened to him.

A month had passed, and Sam figured he had seen the last of Bill, but one day, Sam approached the park and - lo and behold! - there sat Bill!

Sam was very excited and happy to see him and told him so. Then he said, "For crying out loud Bill, what in the world happened to you?" Bill replied, "I have been in jail." "Jail?" cried Sam. "What in the world for?" "Well," Bill said, "you know Sue, that cute little blonde waitress at the coffee shop where I sometimes go?" "Yeah," said Sam, "I remember her. What about her?" "Well, one day she filed rape charges against me; and, at 89 years old, I was so proud that when I got into court, I pleaded 'guilty' and the judge gave me 30 days for perjury!"



Paddy was driving down the street in a sweat because he couldn't find a parking place. Looking up to heaven he said, "God take pity on me. If you find me a parking place, I will go to Mass every Sunday for the rest of me life and give up me Irish Whiskey" Miraculously, a parking place appeared. Paddy looked up again and said, "Never mind, I found one."



Is beer good for me?

The keyword here is 'moderation'. Yes, in moderation, beer can be good for you. We've all seen local newspaper stories of these 90- and 100-year-olds who've lived a healthy life that includes a pint of beer a day.

The moderate drinker — and this applies to red wine drinkers, for instance, as well — can expect to have a reduced risk of heart disease, less chance of a stroke, and low blood pressure. Compounds in hops called flavinoids have been found to help fight cancer, while a regular tippie has also been shown to aid resistance to osteoporosis, dementia and type II diabetes.

In May 2007, Italian research discovered that patients who drank one alcoholic drink a day — in most cases a glass of wine — developed dementia at a rate 85% slower than people who never drank alcohol.

And, of course, if you're drinking moderate amounts of real ale, as against a pasteurised keg product, you're getting the goodness of natural ingredients too.

Straight from the Horses Mouth

In a recent email from Chef extraordinaire and old friend Bill MacPherson in Harrogate, Bill tells me a yarn about some guests.....

Gordi and Kim like the others had made the pilgrimage to Harrogate whilst touring the UK. This seems to be a pilgrimage enjoyed from boys around the globe to test the rumours that Bill was the best Ships Cook afloat in his day. And his Yorkshire Puddings and Buttered Carrots were a must on all the menus that he produced and his breakfasts of Double Sausage, Bacon, Fried Eggs, Tomatoes, Beans and a Fried Slice, Toast and Marmalade, was something that put you in good stead for the rest of the day.

I have had as many as five sleeping in my two bedrooms Bungalow. Rick Shaw on a blow up mattress on the hearth, Edd Pollard, USA on the couch with my wee Westie, Polly. Tony Scott in the computer room on a bed settee and Jo and myself in our own bed. We have in fact in the past even handed our bed over to a Vindi lad and his wife and I slept on the settee and Jo in the computer room.



One day I had prepared the usual delicacies for an evening meal and Gordi Cohen said "that we should get a nice bottle of wine" to go with it, so off we both trotted to the wine store and Gordi asked if they had a nice bottle of Australian wine. On producing a bottle of Australian Wine, Gordi took a A\$10 Australian dollar note from his wallet and placed it on the counter. The assistant looked at Gordi and then at the note and said "What is that" Gordi's response was "What is that" as he pointed at the bottle. The assistant said "a bottle of wine that you asked for" and Gordi said "this is an Australian \$10 dollar note for Australian wine" Eventually the assistant saw the funny side of it and we paid up in UK money and toddled off to enjoy our meal, wine and excellent company.

I noticed an old man sitting on a park bench, so walked up to him and said, "I couldn't help noticing how happy you look! What is your secret?" "I smoke ten cigars a day," he said. "Before I go to bed, I smoke a nice big joint. Apart from that, I drink a bottle of Whiskey a day and eat only junk food. On week-ends, I pop pills, have sex and do no other exercise at all." "That is absolutely amazing! How old are you?" "Twenty-four," he replied.



Once upon a time, in a village, a man appeared and announced to the villagers that he would buy monkeys for \$10 each. The villagers seeing that there were many monkeys around, went out to the forest, and started catching them.

The man bought thousands at \$10 and as supply started to diminish, the villagers stopped their effort. He further announced that he would now buy at \$20 for a monkey. This renewed the efforts of the villagers and they started catching monkeys again. Soon the supply diminished even further and people started going back to their farms. The offer increased to \$25 each and the supply of monkeys became so small that it was an effort to even find a monkey, let alone catch it!

The man now announced that he would buy monkeys at \$50 ! However, since he had to go to the city on some business, his assistant would now buy on behalf of him. In the absence of the man, the assistant told the villagers. 'Look at all these monkeys in the big cage that the man has collected. I will sell them to you at \$35 and when the man returns from the city, you can sell them to him for \$50 each.' The villagers rounded up all their savings and bought all the monkeys. Then they never saw the man nor his assistant again, only monkeys everywhere!

Now you know how the stock market works.



Alec the Gumdale Kid and his missus are lying in bed listening to the next door neighbour's dog barking. It had been barking for hours and hours.

Suddenly Alec jumps up out of bed and says "I've had enough of this" and angrily goes downstairs.

He finally comes back up to bed and his wife says, "The dog is still barking, what have you been doing?" Alec says grumpily "I've put the dog in our yard, lets see how THEY like it !"



What if there were no hypothetical questions?

If a deaf person swears, does his mother wash his hands with soap?

Is there another word for synonym?

What do you do when you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?

If the police arrest a mime, do they tell him he has the right to remain silent?

What was the best thing before sliced bread?

One nice thing about egotists: they don't talk about other people.

If one synchronized swimmer drowns, do the rest drown, too?

Why are hemorrhoids called "hemorrhoids" instead of "asteroids"?

Why is the alphabet in that order? Is it because of that song?



Quiz Time

Ok, quiz time - who can tell me the name of the two ships (left & centre) and in what port, it's quite easy. First correct answer gets a drink on me, but will only be allowed to collect your prize in Christchurch at the next reunion 2008. *Editor*

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