



Under the Clock

Issue 73 – April 2011

~ Patron: Doug Duxbury ~

‘Blame it on the super moon!’ Five ships run aground off British coast as lunar phenomenon lowers tide

The super moon was today 21/3/2011 blamed for causing five ships to run aground within hours in one of the world’s busiest shipping lanes. Vessels hit sandbanks that are not normally exposed in the Solent, between the Isle of Wight and Hampshire coast, as the phenomenon led to lower tides. The moon was at its closest to the earth for 19 years and some believe it may also have triggered Japan’s tsunami, although astronomers have dismissed the claims as pure nonsense. The pull of the moon is known to affect tides, however.



Coastguards at the Needles, on the western side of the Isle of Wight, dealt with five ships in distress at the same time. Among them was the 2,900 tonne cargo ship Paula-C, on its way to Cowes with a crew of nine. They were forced to wait for a high tide to lift them clear of a shingle bank. A coastguard spokesman said a 25 foot yacht had also run aground and three other vessels were also marooned by the unexpected turn of events. He said: ‘We checked them all and there were no injuries, just some surprise at being caught out like this. Blame it on the Moon.’

On Saturday night, the moon was closer to Earth than at any time since 1992 - just 221,567 miles away. It meant it was around 14 per cent bigger and 30 per cent brighter than typical full moons. The reason for this is a phenomenon called the ‘lunar perigee’. The moon’s orbit around Earth is not a circle, but an ellipse. At its closest approach - the perigee - the moon appears brighter and larger in the sky. When it is furthest away - the apogee - it is smaller and dimmer. A lunar perigee occurs once a month. However, next week’s perigee coincides with a full moon - a combination of events that happen just once every two or three years.

Although supermoons usually lower tides by just an inch or so, some seas can lose more than six inches in depth – a particular problem in the sandbank-strewn Solent. Tides are produced by the gravitational attraction of the moon. Like a magnet, it tries to pull at anything on the Earth to bring it closer. Tides are also affected by the moon’s comparative alignment with the sun. Especially strong – or spring – tides also occur when the Earth, the Sun, and the Moon are in a line.

Previous supermoons took place in 1955, 1974, 1992 and 2005 - all years that had extreme weather events, the conspiracy theorists say. There are numerous myths that claim full-moons cause an outbreak of strange behaviour among people and animals. Indeed the term lunacy is derived from the name of Luna, the Roman moon goddess.

The Daily Mail

From the Secretary – April

Just before our February meeting a disaster as we all know had stricken Christchurch, New Zealand whom we are closely connected as we have many Vindi friends in New Zealand. During this period and as we watched the TV on those horrific scenes, I was in contact with Vic Gray of Timaru/Christchurch who said that most Vindi boys and families were safe, but some had damages to their homes while one lad had his home completely destroyed and his wife a broken leg. It was a relief that no lives were lost but still very sad as it would take months or even years for all victims to put their lives together and also having to rebuild their homes as most Vindi boys are retirees and may not find that to be an easy task. The same goes for all our Queensland flood and cyclone victims. Our President Fred requested Robert to lead us in prayers for Christchurch Vindi families and also Queensland flood and cyclone victims.

On 28th February a group of some 22 members attended a Concert by Terry Scott at the Yeronga RSL Club. This being our first social activity this year. We have actually been planning for a picnic somewhere but the weather during January/February was not favourable.

Our next big event is our Vindi 15th Anniversary on Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd June 2011 at the South Tweeds Sports Club. All the motel rooms, which we had booked have been taken up, but we could still obtain more rooms if required. Many have already booked for this event and if you have not done so, we are hoping that you would consider booking for a good and happy fellowship together. Please speak to the committee. So lads, we look forward to your company.

At the last meeting there was a suggestion that those of us who are regulars to the Golden Years Seniors Centre to **join this centre as members**. This will assist our association being member of the Golden Years Seniors Centre so that we would be able to continue with the rent of the premises for meetings in years to come. This is the only premises that we can find which does not require us to have our own liability insurance; elsewhere we have to pay liability insurance, which will cripple our funds as it is very expensive. The fee is \$5.50 each per year and you could go to the centre at anytime for any activities that they may have with a fee of \$3.00 which includes morning tea and biscuits. Ray Morton has been a member of the centre for many years and plays snooker there every Monday. We have some application forms from the centre at the last meeting and Ray is happy to nominate us as members.

Next meeting is Thursday 30th June which is our AGM.

See you at the 15th Anniversary!

Kim Cohen
Secretary/Treasurer



NZ Earthquake: *There is good news and bad news I'm afraid. Terry Knight's wife Anne has a broken leg due to their house collapsing around them at 12:55pm on Tuesday 22 Feb 2011. Dick Hodge is OK and was seen shovelling liquefaction sand into a wheelbarrow at the bottom of his driveway, the wheelbarrow had a flat tyre I might add, but John Lammiman (our new Secretary) who is a member of Civil Defence has organised the Student Army to help him. (Bell Rope - Dick lives in the city).*

The Student army from the University of CH-CH have organised themselves to go out into the city suburbs and help where they can, around 8000 of the young heroes, they are being joined today by students from Dunedin to swell the numbers to around 15000.

There are Rescue teams from 8 countries going flat out to find anyone still left alive and trapped, although I have doubts that they will find anyone as it has been unseasonably cold since the quake especially at night, but of course we all cling to the hope of a miracle even if it were a single person it would lift the spirits of Everyone in the country.

We also have 400 Aussie Police on the ground in CH-CH for which we will be eternally grateful, to keep the ratbags out, and they have surfaced, (the ratbags), looting and burglary, and unfortunately they are stealing from private homes while they are in distress, bloody lowlifes should be hung.

Australian Surgeons doctors nurses are here in field hospitals set up in the parks, We just can't thank everyone enough for coming to the aid of NZ, it is good to know that we can ask for help and receive it from all the world and especially from Australia.

Most of our Vindi boys have sustained damage to their homes but all apart from Anne Knight are unhurt physically, all minor damage apart from Terry Knight who has a demolished house.

Thank you all in Queensland for your thoughts and prayers
Thank you all of Australia

On behalf of Vindicatrix Mainland Branch NZ, Vic Gray 26/2/2011

~ CONVOYS ~

**Our lads that sailed in convoys - officers and ranks,
Deserve a special mention and our heartfelt thanks,
Most vessels were quite sound - manned by crews well trained.
Others were the opposite, most scrap and rusty stained.**

**These doughty merchant seamen knew their cruel fate,
When struck by cunning sea wolves lurking there in wait,
If they lived to tell the story and strived to stay afloat,
They struggled then with hardships aboard an open boat.**

**Still they served our country sailing there and back,
Hauling vital cargoes in times that looked so black,
A dangerous job in peacetime they continued just the same,
During war at sea my friends - through the shock and flame.**

**Course it was the ammo ships that were blown to smithereens.
While plodding past the periscopes of hidden submarines,
Also on the tankers - one hardly had a chance,
When spotted by the enemy re-armed out of France.**

**The mines were pretty lethal, lurking God knows where,
Happenstance to strike one - turmoil then and there,
The bombers stretched to reach 'em had a bit of fun,
Dropping tons of dynamite against a paltry gun.**

**Then there was the weather, with storm and hurricanes,
Very near impossible to steer intended lanes,
Especially wild Atlantic and freezing Russian run,
Casualties horrendous 'till the job was done.**

Joe Earl

The Salvage of the Century

HMS Edinburgh was built in Newcastle-upon-Tyne by Swan Hunter and Wigham Richardson, her keel laid down on 30 December 1936. She was a fast cruiser, displacing 10,635 tonnes, and reaching a maximum speed of thirty-three knots. The ship was heavily armed for a light cruiser, with twelve 6inch guns, twelve 4inch AA guns, sixteen 2 pounder pom pom guns, sixteen Vickers anti-aircraft machine guns. Also, she carried six 21inch torpedoes in a pair of triple racks, giving her an added punch. Edinburgh was designed as a very modern vessel, equipped with an impressive radar array and fire-control systems, and the ability to carry up to three Supermarine Walrus seaplanes for reconnaissance, though she usually carried only two.

The Edinburgh served her country well during WW2 with distinction in many areas, but this story relates to her later days. Edinburgh's final journey was to be escorting the return convoy QP-11 of 17 ships, which left Kola Peninsula on 28 April, On 30 April, the German submarine U-456 fired a torpedo into the starboard side of the cruiser. The U-boat, on her fifth patrol, had been alerted to the convoy by German aerial reconnaissance. The ship began to list heavily, but the crew reacted quickly and competently by closing watertight bulkheads, which prevented the ship from sinking immediately. Soon after, U-456 launched a second torpedo, which struck the ship's stern wrecking her steering equipment and effectively crippling her.

Taken in tow, she attempted to limp back to Murmansk with another destroyer, HMS Foresight, and three minesweepers, HMS Gossamer, HMS Harrier, and HMS Hussar. Along the way she was hounded constantly by German torpedo-bombers. On 2 May, as she progressed at a snail's pace under her own steam, off Bear Island (Norway) she was attacked by three German destroyers. Casting off the tow, so that she started to sail in circles, and although the Edinburgh's guns were in studied disarray, when the Germans attacked the cruiser's main batteries aimed at them and opened fire. While the small ships with the Edinburgh drove off the attackers, she was struck by a torpedo that had missed another ship. The torpedo struck the ship amidships exactly opposite the first torpedo hit from U-456. As the ship was only being prevented from breaking in two by the deck plating and keel, which was likely to fail at any time, the crew abandoned the ship. They transferred to fleet minesweepers escorting the convoy, 440 men to HMS Gossamer and about 400 to HMS Harrier. Fifty-six ratings and two officers had been killed in the attacks. The vigorous action of the minesweepers led the Germans to mistake the power of the force they were facing.


To encourage the ship to sink, HMS Harrier was ordered to fire her 4 inch gun at the ship, but after 20 shells the ship failed to sink. An attempt to sink the vessel using depth charges dropped alongside also failed. Finally, the destroyer HMS Foresight fired her last torpedo at the ship, which sank the wreck. At the time of Edinburgh's sinking she was carrying a 4.5-long-ton (4,570 kg) consignment of gold bullion, which formed part of Stalin's payment for the supplies that the Allies were shipping to the USSR. The 465 gold ingots, carried in ninety-three wooden boxes, were being transported in the armoured bomb-rooms situated on the starboard side of the vessel, not far from the original torpedo's impact point. At the time, the estimated worth of the bullion was somewhere in the region of £1,547,080 sterling. Now 127,960,000.

In 1954, the British Government offered the salvage rights to the Edinburgh to Risdon Beazley Ltd., a salvage company operating out of the UK, but the project was put on hold, due to strained political relations between the West and the Soviet Union. In 1957, the wreck was designated as a war grave, which complicated any salvage attempts still further.

In the late 1970s, interest in the Edinburgh was reawakened, and the British Government was becoming increasingly anxious to recover the gold. This was not only because it would provide further valuable revenue for the Exchequer, but because there was also a growing fear of the wreck being pirated by unscrupulous salvagers, or, worse, salvaged by the Soviet Union, in whose waters it lay.

In the early 1980s, a company called Jessop Marine, run by seasoned diver Keith Jessop, won the contract for the salvage rights to the wreck of the Edinburgh. Jessop won the contract because his methods, involving complex cutting machinery and divers, were deemed more appropriate for a war grave, compared to the explosives-oriented methods of other companies.

In April 1981, the survey ship Dammtor began searching for the wreck in the Barents Sea, on behalf of Jessop Marine. After only ten days, they discovered the ship's final resting place at an approximate position of 72N 35E at a depth of 245 metres (800 ft). Using specialist camera equipment, the Dammtor took detailed film of the wreck, which allowed Jessop and his divers to carefully plan the salvage operation. Later that year, on 30 August, the dive-support vessel Stephaniturm journeyed to the site, and salvage operations began in earnest. Several divers were injured during the operation, but on 15 September 1981, a diver finally penetrated the bomb room and recovered a bar of gold. On 7 October, bad weather finally forced the suspension of diving operations, but by that time, 431 of 465 ingots had been recovered, then worth in excess of £43,000,000 sterling. A further 29 bars were recovered in a subsequent operation in 1986, bringing the total to 460, leaving five unaccounted for. (Nov 2010 value approximately A\$275,000,000 million)

 Dear Bill, An old mate of mine Dave Helyar (Ex Vindi boy) in UK. has sent me a copy of your Christmas Newsletter in which there is an article on the T.S. Mercury. Me being an OLD Mercury boy (1950/52) I was wondering where you got the information from, our website or is there an ex Mercury lad among your numbers?

I notice that your "President of Vice" is called Terry Creasey, with a surname like that he must have originated from either Kent or West Sussex?

It is the first time that I have seen your "Under The Clock" and it is a great read, congratulations on the work that you must put into it.

Best wishes, Chas Creasey.

In the South China Sea area, an ethnic group named **Orang Laut**, which literally means "the sea people" in Malay.

These peoples of Southeast Asia trace their forbears to Yunnan (now a province of China) some 5000 - 10,000 years ago. They were seafarers that migrated along rivers such as Mekong and Irrawady to the Andaman Sea, South China Sea and various locations in the Malay archipelago.

SS Yongala

As the sun set over north Queensland on the 11/3/2011, related families and prominent Cairns tourism identities were moored above the site of the SS Yongala shipwreck, scattering 122 orchids during a poignant memorial service.



The passenger ship SS Yongala sank off Cape Bowling Green, Queensland, Australia on 23 March 1911. En route from Melbourne to Cairns she steamed into a cyclone and sank south of Townsville. Traces of the ship were found days later as cargo and pieces of wreckage washed ashore at the Cape and at Cleveland Bay, and suggested that the bottom of the ship had been ripped by a hidden rock. All one hundred and twenty-two people on board perished in what is considered one of the most tragic incidents in Australian maritime history. It was only in 1958 that the wreck of the Yongala was discovered lying in waters south of Townsville, and it has since become renowned as an internationally regarded diving and tourist destination.

SS Yongala was a steel passenger and freight steamer built in Newcastle upon Tyne, England to special survey for the Adelaide Steamship Company, at a cost of £102,000. She was launched on 29 April 1903, was registered in Adelaide, and took up the busy passenger route linking the gold fields of Western Australia with the eastern ports of Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Following company tradition, the vessel was named after the small town of Yongala in South Australia, a word from the Nadjuri language which meant “good water”.

The vessel was propelled by a large triple expansion steam engine driving a single propeller. The engine was built by Wallsend Shipway and Engineering Co. and she could attain an official top speed of 15.8 knots (29 km/h). However, in her previous 98 trips, it was recorded that Yongala often reached 17 knots (31 km/h). Five single ended steel boilers working under natural draught supplied steam of 180 pounds-force per square inch pressure. At 15 knots, Yongala’s engines burned approximately 67 tonnes of coal per day. A powerful direct acting steam windlass and capstan was fitted on the forecastle head, and seven winches with derricks and derrick-posts, and two steam cranes were provided for efficient cargo handling. Electric lighting was fitted throughout the ship with a duplicate generating plant. It was also provided with refrigeration facilities for the carriage of frozen cargo. A specially arranged steam and hand steering gear was fitted in a house at the after end of the poop and controlled from the bridge.

In 1906, Yongala was transferred to the Brisbane – Fremantle route and during that time, Yongala was the first vessel to complete a direct trip of 5,000 kilometres (2,700 miles) between Fremantle and Brisbane, the longest interstate trip at that time. During the winter months from 1907 to early 1911, Yongala was operated on the east coast run from Melbourne to Cairns, as the Fremantle–Brisbane route became quieter at that time of year.

On 14 March 1911, under the command of Captain William Knight, Yongala embarked on its 99th voyage in Australian waters. It left Melbourne with 72 passengers, including the only two passengers who were to remain on board after reaching Brisbane, intending to travel to Cairns. The vessel arrived at the Municipal Wharf in Brisbane on the morning of 20 March. Captain William Knight, aged 62, was one of the company’s most capable men, who had served the Adelaide Steamship Company for 14 years without mishap or incident. After loading passengers and a large general cargo, including a race horse known as ‘Moonshine’ destined for Townsville and a red Lincoln bull for Cairns, Yongala passed inspection, was found to be in excellent order, and finally left the wharf.

Although Yongala was delayed in its departure from Brisbane, it was in no hurry to reach Mackay. Captain Gerrit Smith of the Cooma overtook Yongala the following day and later commented that the Yongala was steaming easily as it was not necessary to arrive at Mackay until 23 March. On the morning of 23 March, Yongala steamed into Mackay to drop off and receive passengers and discharge 50 tons of cargo, leaving 617 tons in the lower hold properly stowed. By 1:40pm she departed, carrying 49 passengers and 73 crew, making a total of 122 people. Yongala was still in sight of land when the signal station at Flat Top (Mackay) received a telegram warning of a cyclone in the area between Townsville and Mackay. Although the first Australian shore-based wireless station capable of maintaining communication with ships had been established in Sydney in 1910, few ships carried wireless in 1911. Unfortunately, a wireless destined for installation in Yongala had only recently been dispatched from the Marconi Company in England. Five hours later, the lighthouse keeper on Dent Island in the Whitsunday Passage watched Yongala steam past into the worsening weather. It was the last known sighting.

Meanwhile, the Cooma lost time during the previous night and arrived late at Mackay. Seeing the signal from Flat Top about the approaching cyclone, the vessel was able to find shelter until the following day. Further north the wind was swinging from the

south east to the north west, and was coming from the north east when it would have hit Yongala, travelling at right angles to the full force. It is possible that the diameter of the storm did not exceed 30 kilometres although it left a trail of devastation at Cape Upstart. The late arrival of Yongala in Townsville caused little immediate concern. However, when three other ships that sheltered from the storm finally arrived, among them the Cooma the alarm was raised. Yongala was posted as missing on 26 March although it was thought to have been lost on or about 23 March. The Premier for Queensland, the Hon. Digby Denham, turned all the resources of the state over to the search, including the public service, the police force and shipping, which included seven search vessels.

News of wreckage found washed up on beaches gradually trickled in from Hinchinbrook Island to Bowen, but there was no sign of the vessel or of those on board. Hope was abandoned by the following Wednesday after scores of vessels scoured the coast and found no trace. The only body ever found was that of the racehorse Moonshine, washed up at the mouth of Gordon Creek, not far from Ross Creek, Townsville. Many theories were put forward regarding the ship's possible location and reason for loss. Some speculated that it had been rendered helpless due to some unknown mishap between Whitsunday Passage and Cape Bowling Green or been overpowered by the extreme force of the wind; perhaps the anchors had been dropped causing the boat to slew broadside into the wind; others thought it had hit a submerged reef between Flinders Passage and Keeper Reef or run into Nares Rock, or even struck Cape Upstart.

The Queensland government offered a £1,000 reward for information leading to the discovery of the ship. This was eventually withdrawn, as nothing of the vessel was ever heard. Communities throughout eastern and Southern Australia commemorated the tragedy in churches and village halls. Donations were offered to the "Yongala distress" fund, begun in March 1911 for the relief of families in distress. It ended on 30 September 1914, with an amount of £900 which had not been disbursed and which was credited to the Queensland Shipwreck Society.

On 20 June 1911, the Marine Board of Queensland met in Brisbane to finalise the inquiry into the loss of Yongala that began on 8 June 1911. It was agreed that the task of determining the cause of the tragedy through eyewitness evidence was not possible, and so the Inquiry would chiefly lie in the direction of the ship's stability, equipment, and seaworthiness, together with the question of Captain Knight's carefulness and general efficiency as a ship's master.

According to evidence given by Mr Adamson, the superintendent engineer, the tests carried out on the vessel after it was built all complied with the standards and specifications supplied by the Adelaide Steamship Company, and the seaworthiness and stability of the vessel was proven during seven years continuous running on the coast without accident. The Board were satisfied that the vessel in construction, stability, seaworthiness was equal to any in her class. The competency of Captain Knight was scrutinised, as were the sailing decisions he may have taken on that night. Witnesses called to give testimony as to the ability and character of the captain unanimously described him as a careful and experienced master. The Board found the ability of the captain to be unimpeachable, and "with no desire to indulge in idle speculation, simply find that after becoming

lost to view by the light keeper at Dent Island, the fate of the Yongala passes beyond human ken into the realms of conjecture, to add one more to the mysteries of the sea".

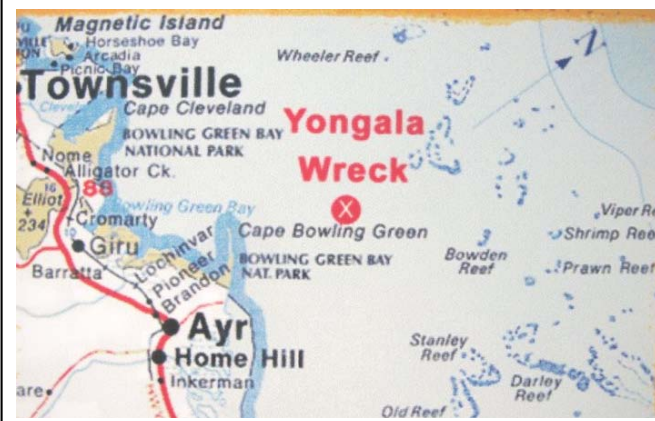
The Board were confirmed in their opinion that "the risk of navigating the Queensland coast is considerably enhanced during the hurricane months, from December to April", and "although with plenty of sea room and a well-found ship the observant master can, by heaving to on the right tack, or keeping out of the path of the storm, invariably avert disaster". "But when caught inside the Barrier Reef, with the number of islands and reefs intervening, the Board think it will be generally conceded that the only element of safety is to be found in securing the best anchorage available".

In the years that followed the disappearance of the Yongala, stories began to surface about a ghost ship, exactly resembling the Yongala, being frequently seen moving in the distance in seas between Bowen and Townsville. By the time of World War II, the loss of Yongala was almost forgotten. In 1943, a minesweeper fouled on what was then thought to be a shoal eleven miles east of Cape Bowling Green. The Captain marked on his chart an obstruction in about thirteen fathoms (24m), dead on the track of vessels bound for Townsville.

After the end of the war, the obstruction was investigated by the survey ship HMAS Lachlan. She arrived over the area in June 1947 and after several runs in the locality using anti-submarine instruments and echo sounder found what appeared to be a patch of shoal water at six fathoms (11m) surrounded by soundings from twelve to fourteen fathoms (22 to 26m). Lachlan steamed over the area several times and found that the object was about 300feet (90m) long and probably the wreck of a fair sized steamer, possibly lying on her side. The only ship that had been reported missing in those waters was Yongala. The Navy did nothing to follow up the find.

In 1958, two skindivers from Townsville, Don Macmillan and Noel Cook, located the wreck and brought to the surface a barnacle-encrusted steel safe which they found in a cabin. When broken open with a pinch bar, hammer and chisel, the safe was found to contain nothing but black sludge. The only thing that offered a clue to its identification was part of the safe's serial number9825W. It was subsequently established that it was a Chubb strongbox and the number was sent to the manufacturers in London for tracing. In 1961, the reply came back that the safe was one supplied to the purser's cabin of the SS Yongala during her construction in 1903.

Today, the wreck is one of Australia's most popular dives, attracting more than 10,000 divers each year. It is widely considered one of the best wreck dives in the world.



A Short History of Vindicatrix Queensland

By Doug Duxbury

When I was asked by a new member at one of our recent meetings: 'Are you a new boy?' my first reaction was surprise, but on reflection I realised that new members joining us should be given some background on how, and when, this Association came into being, and it's history. The following will not be a complete history but is intended to give newcomers a broad outline of our beginnings.

Prior to 1996, the organisation that exists today was non-existent. Since graduating from that old Training ship berthed on the canal at Sharpness in Gloucestershire; thousands of merchant seamen who had endured the rough conditions and discipline of that Maritime Institution, eventually shipped-out as Deck Boys or Cabin Boys on ocean-going ships.

Very few, if any, bothered to keep in touch with fellow-trainees; just to qualify and leave behind the hardest three months of their young lives was paramount. Great adventures lay ahead and many exotic lands to be visited before the novelty wore off and sooner or later, they opted for the life of a 'land-lubber'.

Choose any country on this Planet and it's a good bet that you would find a 'beached' British seaman in residence. Whether they jumped ship or migrated seeking a better life is immaterial; they had the opportunity to visit these countries and recognised the chance of a better future. I recall showing off my bi-lingual skills to my shipmates on entering a "Cantina" in Montivideo. "Dos Servasia" I said to the bar-tender. "You want a couple of beers mate!" was his reply. That bar-tender was a big Cockney ex - AB and he owned the Cantina.

Australia and New Zealand have always been the countries of choice for British seamen seeking a better life ashore - and why not! Strong ties still exist with the 'Old Country' (although some people are hell-bent on cutting those ties) and the spoken language is English. How we came here is irrelevant, we found our own way here to become proud Australian citizens and make a new life. We have put down roots and raised families on the other side of the world from where we began our lives.

'How did you hear about the Vindi Association?' is a frequently asked question amongst our members when we get together at our bi-monthly meetings. Everyone has his own story (and I have heard plenty) but a common thread seems to link them all.

A chance remark by a friend, neighbour, or sometimes a complete stranger, has steered most of us to seek out the company of other Vindi Boys. Very strange when you remember how keen we were to leave that place behind us and join our first ship. The Vindicatrix Queensland website is also being discovered by Vindi Boys.

Harking back to 1996.... a letter arrived out of the blue from a Vindi Boy who had recently relocated to live in Brisbane and was trying to contact others with a view to forming an Association. Dave had come to Brisbane for health reasons and was only with us a short while. Sadly his illness was worse than he let on and after attending a few meetings Dave 'Crossed the Bar'. He had supplied me with a list of Vindi Boys living in Queensland - a number living in my own suburb; the onus was now on me to do something about it,

which I did by letter and phone.

Our Inaugural meeting took place at The Missions To Seamen, Hamilton, on May 18, 1996. I have in my possession a photo of the FIFTEEN lads who attended that meeting. It was decided that we meet on a regular basis at these premises to 'swing the lamp' and get to know each other. Of those original fifteen, only six remain as financial members. Sadly, some have 'Crossed the Bar' and we remember them on our Honour Board. Others, for reasons known only to themselves, have drifted away.

There was a period of apathy when I reluctantly decided that sufficient interest was lacking for us to continue as a viable organisation. It was then I hit on the idea of returning all the subs paid in together with a letter advising that we should wind up through lack of interest. The reaction was immediate; and at this point I should give credit to a small group who decided that what we had started should continue. Resulting from this, a Committee of three was formed to steer our organisation back onto an even keel. The membership decided on a bi-monthly meeting, and where possible, on the last Thursday of that month.

From that memorable day we have never looked back. Vindi Boys were coming out of the woodwork - North, South, East and West. Our meetings at the 'Mission' were well attended as the numbers increased and we were well supported by our lady wives and partners. At present we have a number of ladies acting as a 'Social Committee' whose job is to seek out suitable venues for us to get together and socialise. The 'Sausage Sizzle' which follows after our regular meeting is well patronised.

Sadly, our meeting place at the Mission is no more. The land was sold to developers who no doubt will build expensive multi-storey units on the site where thousands of merchant seamen would have found a friendly welcome and a free 'cuppa' after a hectic night on the town in the 'Big Smoke'.

Presently our bi-monthly meetings are held at the Golden Years Senior Citizens Centre, Nundah. This venue has proven to be a winner as the Rail Station is within walking distance, and the facilities are adequate for our needs. At the same time, we are always on the look-out for an alternative venue for our meetings which must be suitable for our diverse membership.

"From tiny acorns mighty oaks do grow!" How true is that statement! For an organisation that is supposed to be terminal, we show no signs of dying; in fact, we continue to grow as more Vindi Boys hear of our existence and swell the membership numbers. Was it something they put in the cocoa??

Finally, I would make the point that having regular sit-down meetings is not the 'be all and end all' of our Vindi Association. It is, and always was, mate-ship and enjoying each others company in a social atmosphere. Let's not forget, we are unique; Vindi Boys - first - last - and always!



Royston Grange

The STV Royston Grange was a British cargo liner which was destroyed by fire after a collision in the Rio de la Plata on 11 May 1972. She had been built in 1959 and was owned by the Houlder Line.



The 7,113 ton Royston Grange, carrying 61 crew, twelve passengers (including six women and a 5-year old child), and an Argentinian harbour pilot, was bound from Buenos Aires to London with a cargo of chilled and frozen beef and butter. As she traversed the Punta Indio Channel, 35 miles from Montevideo, Uruguay, in dense fog at 5.40 am. she collided with the Liberian-registered tanker *Tien Chee*, carrying 20,000 tons of crude oil.

The *Tien Chee* immediately burst into flames and a series of explosions rapidly carried the flames to the Royston Grange, which burned particularly hot due to the cargo of butter and the oil escaping from the *Tien Chee*. Most of the crew and passengers were asleep. Although the Royston Grange did not sink, every person on board was killed in the fire, most of them probably by carbon monoxide fumes emanating from the refrigeration tanks, which burst in the collision. However, the refrigeration system on the Royston Grange was a modern electrical powered Freon system situated in a separate refrigeration room at the starboard side of the engine room. The freon gas was compressed and then cooled and injected in to a large evaporation cylinder which then supercooled brine that was circulated through the evaporator.

The supercooled brine was pumped at three temperature levels to the various cargo holds where the brine circulated through fan blown radiators to cool the cargo. The ship was also an unusual design in that the bridge section, which contained the navigating officers and passengers accommodation, had no direct connection with the engine room, and was separated by a cargo hold from the aft engineer officers and crew accommodation above the main engine room. It would appear more probable that the crew and passengers were killed by the initial fierce fire caused by the crude oil leaking from the tanker and igniting after the collision, causing a very sudden high temperature with the fire consuming most of the oxygen. If the Freon refrigerant containers and evaporation tanks had burst, it would have needed a very high temperature which would have probably been reached after the death of all persons on board.

The *Tien Chee* also caught fire and ran aground, blocking all traffic in and out of the port of Buenos Aires. Eight of her forty crew, who were mostly Chinese, also died, but the remainder along with the Argentinian pilot managed to abandon ship and were picked up by cutters of the Argentine Naval Prefecture.

The remains of the victims, mostly little more than ashes and charred bones (much of the flesh having been stripped from the bones by the hoses used by Uruguayan tugs to put out the fire), were buried in six urns in two communal graves in the British cemetery in Montevideo on 20 May 1972 by the Rt. Reverend Jonas Ewing White, O.B.E, in the presence of 130 relatives who had been flown out to Uruguay by the ship's owners. A memorial service was held at All Hallows-by-the-Tower in London on 8th June.

The memorial window in the church commemorating the loss of this British Merchantman and all aboard her. (Is shown)



The report of the Liberian enquiry into the disaster concluded that the master and pilot of the *Tien Chee*, in an attempt to get enough water for her deep draught, had probably been navigating too far to the south of the channel and had pushed the Royston Grange onto the shelf that bordered it. The British ship had bounced off and into the tanker. The officers of the Royston Grange, it concluded, were probably not to blame, although there may have

been some human error in attempting to avoid the collision. The master and pilot of the *Tien Chee* probably should not have entered the channel in the first place in the tidal conditions prevailing at the time. The report also criticised the lack of maintenance of the channel.

The Royston Grange was towed to Montevideo, and then to Spain, where her hulk was scrapped at Barcelona on 20 May 1979. The *Tien Chee* was also scrapped at Buenos Aires in August 1976.

S.T.V. Royston Grange

Worse things happen at sea they say, worse things happen at sea,
In '72 this came true with the tanker 'Tien Chee',
Within dense fog near the River Plate, she collided with a freighter,
Crude Oil gushed from shattered tanks exploding seconds later.

The other ship the 'Royston Grange' in fatal rendezvous,
Lost seventy four razed on her - all passengers and crew,
Full cargo holds of butter ignited overall,
Fused in mighty fireball that left no chance at all.

Ten thousand tons of vessel went up in lethal blaze,
No time then for rescue or warning sound to raise,
Montevideo close at hand, bodies still entrapped,
The Houlder's ship towed away and later on just scrapped.

By the Tower of London in All Hallows Church,
There is a stained glass window - if carrying out research,
In commemoration colour with burning red repands,
Depicting Royston Grange in memory of all hands.

Worse things happen at sea they say,
Worse things happen at sea.

Capt J S Earl 2005

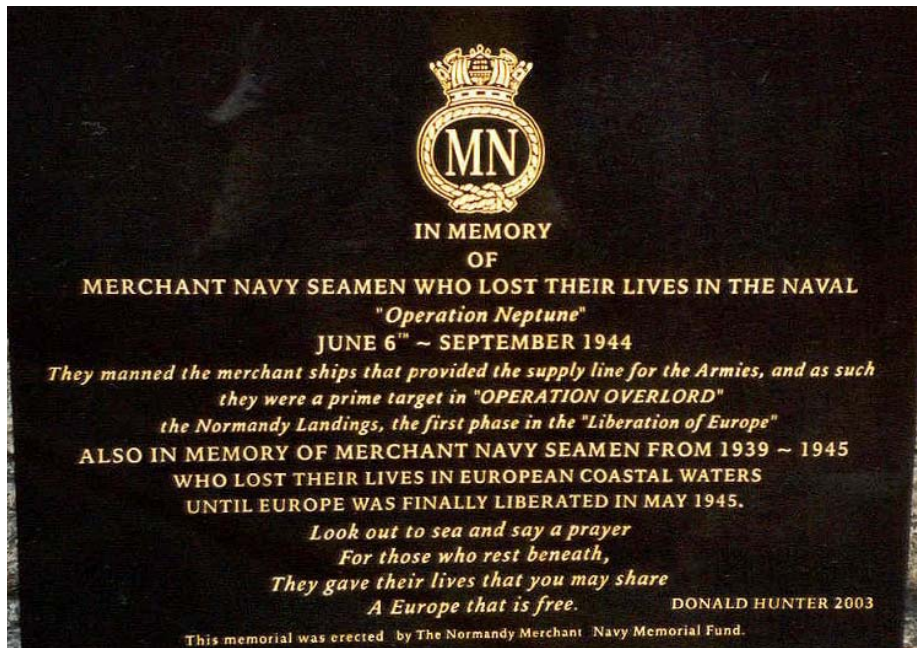
On ANZAC Day we can reflect on - The Normandy landings

In an operation codenamed Neptune, the Allied liberation of Western Europe began with a series of landings on 6 June 1944 - D-Day. The "D" stood for day and resulted from the practice of ordering events on operational planning timelines in which days prior to the first day of an operation were listed as "D minus", and days after as "D plus". Neptune was part of larger operation codenamed Overlord which entailed the capture of the Normandy region as a start point for a broad-front advance through north-western Europe towards Germany.

On D-Day 75,215 British and Canadian, and 57,500 United States troops were landed along the Normandy coast of France. 23,400 were paratroopers and the remainder were landed on five codenamed beaches - the Americans on Utah and Omaha, the British on Gold and Sword, and the Canadians on Juno. The success of the landings was ensured by meticulous planning that had begun in mid-1943. German attention was diverted from the intended landing beaches by a detailed and convincing deception plan, sea front defences were subdued by intensive naval fire, and the Allied air forces enjoyed air superiority over much of France, and almost total supremacy over the landing areas. Apart from at Omaha, where a German division had unexpectedly moved for training, the Allied landing forces had little difficulty establishing beachheads ashore, allowing the build-up of supplies and reinforcements for the coming campaign. The landings resulted in over 10,000 Allied casualties.

By the time Neptune was declared at an end on 30 June, 850,279 troops, 148,803 vehicles and 570,505 tons of supplies had been landed and the five separate beachheads linked. By this time, however, bad weather and increasingly well-co-ordinated German resistance had sapped the momentum of the Allied drive inland, which had bogged down about thirty kilometres from the beach heads. Much hard fighting would ensue before the larger objectives of Overlord were attained.

Yes the Merchant Navy was there in the thick of it and prime targets in the shipping and landing of supplies and rescuing wounded soldiers in amongst the strafing, bombing, air torpedo attacks and the ever threat of mines.



Merchant Navy War Memorial Arromanches, Normandy, France.

This Merchant Navy War Memorial, funded by the Normandy Merchant Navy Memorial Trust was unveiled on the 6th June 2003.

In Remembrance of the Merchant Navy sailors who were killed in the D-Day Landings in Normandy during 'Operation Neptune' which started on 6th June 1944 and lasted for a further 3 months.

This memorial is visited by MN, Vindi groups and individuals each year on June 6th for a wreath laying service, and am sure other times of the year as well.

Submitted by Ray Morton

Donald Hunter, the driving force behind the Arromanches M.N. Memorial.



Merchant Seamen in War.

*“The Merchant Navy is our lifeline”
“Our merchant seamen are heroes”*

These are but two of the many slogans that graced bill-boards in many an English town during the early dark days of World War 2. Many of us remember the pictures that accompanied the slogans....a square-jawed Captain; raised binoculars scanning the horizon, and beside him, an equally rugged-looking Chief Mate. As a morale booster, these posters had the desired effect; particularly in seaports where seamen would be recognized by the MN badge they wore in the lapel of their jacket.

Merchant seamen wore no uniform - unlike the three armed services. This often resulted in many unpleasant confrontations with “busybodies” who imagined it was their duty to accost young fit-looking men not in uniform and ask; “Why aren’t you in the army?”. One can imagine the reception these self-appointed recruiters got from a seaman not long home from a hazardous Atlantic crossing. In the pubs where seamen would gather, many a pint was offered – and accepted – from patrons to show their gratitude to the brave men of Britain’s Merchant Navy.

Such was the euphoria in those times - but what was the reality? Although the war-time government had created a Ministry of War Transport encompassing shipping; when a seaman signed on a ship, the Articles of Agreement he signed were with the owners of that ship. Hardly any seamen – if any – would read through and understand every Clause in that Agreement, much to his detriment if he had the bad luck to have that ship sunk from under him. Just how that particular Clause worked is best illustrated in the following factual story of a typical [then] young merchant seaman.

His name is Ray Morton, now well into his eighties, and lucky to be still around to share this experience with those of us who chose a sea career in more peaceful times.

The year was 1942. Britain had been at war with Germany for almost three years. The Americans had only recently entered the war following the bombing of Pearl Harbour; however, the Allies were yet to benefit from the massive American military strength which followed. Prior to the debacle of pearl Harbour – and much to their credit - a number of American pilots had found their way to Britain and flew with the RAF. Also; help was forthcoming from other sources, such as ships on loan from American Shipping Lines.

One of these ships on loan was the tanker, SS Ohio; the very ship on which a young Ray Morton was to sign Articles as Assistant Steward. He was not to know then what was in store for this ship – himself - and his crew-mates.

The Island of Malta had endured on-going day and night bombardment from German and Italian aircraft, while watching their reserves of food and oil dwindle to the extent that starvation or surrender were their only two options.

With only two weeks supplies left, the Governor of Malta cabled London outlining the dire consequences to the Allied cause if the Island fell to the enemy. This cable was passed to Prime Minister Winston Churchill who recognized the importance of Malta to the supply lines for military operations in North Africa. He immediately ordered a relief convoy of merchant ships to be assembled. Churchill’s orders were that this supply convoy was to get through to Malta “at

all costs!”- and ‘cost’ it did!

‘Operation Pedestal’ as it came to be known, consisted of fourteen fully-laden merchant ships including one Oil Tanker – SS Ohio. The Royal Navy supplied a flotilla of escort ships including Aircraft Carriers, Cruisers, Destroyers and Frigates. In spite of this massive defensive ‘umbrella’ the German submarines caused havoc sinking many ships, while the German and Italian Air forces hammered the convoy day and night. Of the fourteen merchant ships, only five limped into Valetta Harbour; most badly damaged but with enough supplies to head off the impending surrender. *Nine fully-laden merchant ships and their crews sent to a watery grave; mostly by torpedoes from the U-Boat pack which had lain in wait. These slow ships were sitting ducks for an attack from above and below.*

During all this carnage, the Ohio had suffered extensive damage, being a prime target as the only tanker in the convoy. A lot has been written about how she was towed into Valetta harbour by two RN Destroyers; a noteworthy piece of seamanship considering that bombs had destroyed Ohio’s engine room, as well as the steering gear.

However, before all these happenings; Assistant Steward Ray Morton was at his station on the after deck as part of the gun crew. All he can remember of that day was being aware of a gigantic explosion – and nothing else until he regained consciousness in the water beside the Scottish cabin boy. Apparently a bomb had struck the after Hold containing Diesel fuel. Luckily, Ray and his shipmate were plucked from the water by a royal Navy Destroyer which deposited them - not in Malta - but Gibraltar, where a number of survivors were accommodated at the Seamens Mission.

And this is where the injustice of certain Clauses in Ships Articles became a nightmare to those trusting seamen. It stated quite categorically that if a seaman was parted from the ship – *for whatever reason* – all pay is stopped. Apparently the Ship - owners used this to include a seaman being parted from his ship by a torpedo or bomb. If the ship is sinking the seaman has no option but to *part from his ship!* The injustice did not stop there however; having lost everything except the clothes they stood up in; when a survivor eventually found his way back home it was to discover that the time between the ship sinking, and setting foot on their homeland, was counted as *Survivor’s leave*; he was then expected to report to the ‘Seamen’s Pool’ to sign on another ship.

All the worldly possessions of these seamen had gone to the ocean floor with their ship. In Ray Morton’s case, his belongings rested in the tangled ruins of what was once his accommodation on the crippled SS Ohio. As these men had no money, a number of them sought casual work at the nearby Naval Docks and were informed that they would collect their pay at the end of the month. Ray and his survivor mates worked at the Dockyard for three and a half weeks when suddenly they were told to report to a ship bound for England. There was no system in place for the survivors to claim the money owed; a ‘casual’ worker had to be on the spot on pay day to claim his money. *“It must have been in the small print”!*

Just one more insult for those gallant “heroes” of the propaganda posters, and further proof that Fiction and Reality can be poles apart.

Doug Duxbury
(Vindi Boy 1946)

Life Boat “Friend to all Nations”

God bless the men and women of RNLI



The *Friend to all Nations* was the second surfboat stationed at Margate for maritime rescue. She entered service on 6 July 1878 and was retired after being damaged in a storm on 30

November 1898. She became famous for a failed rescue in the great storm of 1897, during which 9 of her 13 crew were lost.

After the loss of the first Margate surfboat, the *Friend of all Nations*, funds were raised by local boatmen for a replacement. The new boat could still be launched by four men without the need of horses. Its arrival in Margate on 6 July 1878, was attended with the traditional procession, and at her naming ceremony she was christened with the slightly altered name the *Friend to all Nations*.

In December 1890 she rescued 6 crewmen from the tankship *Ville de Calais* in a blizzard off the Nayland Rock. The great storm of 1897 blew up into a cyclone and all but destroyed the town, its harbour, sea front and main roads. Yet still at daybreak the men of the *Friend to all Nations* surfboat remained undaunted, and responded to a distress flag put out by the crew of a passing barge. After some difficulty finding a safe launch, the surfboat was maneuvered into position. The rescued crew were taken to the Arcadian Hotel and placed into the care of Mr. and Mrs. Lilley who for many years had acted on behalf of the Shipwrecked Mariners Society.

Conditions that night could not be matched to any other natural disaster known of in local history from living memory. Such was the suddenness and ferocity of that storm that not only did it wreck the Surfboat, it also caused considerable damage to the little town of Margate nestled beside the sea, and stands as an exceptional occasion, with the sea breaching the town causing considerable flooding of shops and homes.

The storm raged throughout the night and allowed so little of an ebb tide when it was due, that when the heavy seas came in again they flowed some eight feet above the normal sea level and thundering against the sea front shops, inns and houses reduced the substantial sea wall to a mass of tangled wreckage, broken timber and confused heaps of stone.

“Huge slabs of masonry were hurled along the torn up surface of the promenade as waves cut six feet into the structure. Chaos reigned and ruin was rampant as coastal defenses, buildings and roadways were washed away. Dense volumes of seawater flooded the streets and locals rowed boats along King Street (behind the Harbour) under the spray from masses of water being thrown as high as the lighthouse. The decking of the jetty was torn away, its iron piles dislodged and thrown, as if by giants hands, on to the shore.”

Droit House, the headquarters of the Pier and Harbour Company which was situated above a restaurant suffered considerable damage and the Switchback railway was completely destroyed. Work on the Lifeboat Station had previously been underway, with the intended construction of a much needed slipway incomplete, during the storm blocks weighing 10 tons were lifted out of their positions and ‘thrown about like pebbles’. The beach itself, renowned for its golden sands was a carpet of seaweed ripped up off the

murky ocean bed and thrown upon the shore by the hundreds of tons.

On the fateful morning of 2 December 1897 the distress flares and rockets of ‘The Persian Empire’ were seen off Margate, and thirteen boatmen on the ‘Friend’ launched into the surf at 5:20am, a full ten minutes ahead of the larger Margate R.N.L.I. Lifeboat ‘Quiver’.

The weather having been described as dark and dirty with sudden and severe squalls of rain and hail was nothing exceptional for these men to have to endure, between them having made hundreds of perilous excursions against the angry seas. It was however under these conditions, just as they had come by the Nayland Rock, an inshore low water obstruction that a decision was taken to lower the sail.

It was during this fateful action that the boatmen were caught in one of those sudden squalls and which ‘struck them all of a heap’, seawater quickly filling the boat and it’s bulging sailcloth, causing serious listing under the captured weight and momentum of the water. The boat, not having time to right itself was then hit by a further wave causing the ‘Friend’ to turn over onto its keel, trapping one man inside and throwing those that had not jumped with all their strength, including men that had been knocked unconscious in the boat, into the freezing water, beneath which hid many jagged and seaweed covered rocks. The capsized Surfboat was later to drift ashore and beached on the tide, it came to rest beneath the Nayland Rock.

First on the scene was the lamplighter, who had been going about his dawn duty of extinguishing the night lamps along the Promenade when he heard distressed voices calling out from the direction of the Nayland Rock, where in the dim morning light he was able to make out four men clinging to an upturned boat. He was no doubt unaware that another man was still trapped inside and underneath who until, at some length and later, was freed, having been trapped, and pinned down by the thwarts.

Putting aside his task the unnamed lamplighter rushed down to the shore too the assistance of two men he then noticed, who were crawling exhausted to safety. He guided them to a wall near the Royal Sea bathing Infirmary and soon with help from people out of nearby houses a third man was saved, with the fourth having disappeared out of sight. The locally respected medic had attempted the swim to shore but was overcome by shock and exhaustion he made the short distance as an able swimmer and was initially spotted by the lamplighter but then collapsed, to be found having died upon reaching land.

Of these intrepid adventurers, the remaining nine men were not found in the search that followed, although aided by daylight the efforts of some 20 men were required to turn over the surfboat and only then found a man they thought must be dead, but was just barely alive and was a survivor.

The sea gradually released the missing boatmen from its grip over the course of the following days, as the bodies, many of which had become virtually unrecognisable on account of impacts made against the men’s heads and faces from repeated contact with the sharp rocks, were washed ashore.

The Surfboat itself, having been well built emerged relatively unscathed from the ordeal of that winters morning, damage being chiefly limited to the masts and rigging. During that day the boat was shipped onto its carriage and placed on the promenade where many people gathered in the bitter cold to

see the Surfboat and its badly broken mast.

On the day of the funeral all the shops were closed and black curtains hung in the windows, no one went to work, for the whole town, and much of East Kent was in mourning. At the Cortège over 33 groups assembled, amongst them mounted police and combined bands, with muffled drums led the Lifeboat trolley which bore the eight boatmen who were attended by the four survivors. The crew of the 'Quiver' and boatmen from the ancient town of Deal and from Broadstairs and Ramsgate. The entire route was lined with crowds of grief stricken people and all Margate mourned their passing.

On the night of 30 November 1898 a steamship was reported as being in difficulty on the Long Sand. The Surfboat managed to obtain a tow from a passing tug, the *Harold*, but near the Kentish Knock the small boat became rapidly swamped to the extent that the men were fearful of being washed away, although the tugmen as soon as they realised what had happened brought the boatmen onto the tug and proceeded to calmer waters.

Whilst proceeding inshore they were struck by a very large sea, after which they found only the bow post of the *Friend* at the other end of the tow rope.

The damaged craft having broken away drifted right across the estuary as far as Great Yarmouth where it was recovered. Although she was repaired and returned to Margate her days as a surfboat were over and a new surfboat was constructed despite the many advances achieved by the RNLI, much reducing the real need for the boatmen to put themselves to such inordinate risks.

Caribbean: Divers recover Cannons



Archaeologists have revealed that six cannons that belonged to the bloodthirsty British pirate Henry Morgan have been recovered from a river in Panama.

Swashbuckling adventurer Morgan sent three ships and a crew of 470 men to capture the Castillo de San Lorenzo el Real de Chagres, a fort

that guarded the approach to Panama City, the capital, in 1671. But the notorious buccaneer and his men were sailing up the Chagres River to join them when his flagship, *The Satisfaction*, and at least three other vessels crashed on Lajas Reef, sinking in shallow water. Members of Morgan's force paddled upriver and walked overland to reach Panama City, leaving their wrecked ships to looters.

Now a group of Panamanian and foreign archaeologists say that cannons found at the mouth of Panama's Chagres River, the site where Morgan's flagship was wrecked, may have belonged to the pirate.

Henry Morgan was born in the small village of Llanrumney in south Wales and went on to become legendary buccaneer who battled the Spanish for control of the Caribbean. Although he is said to be a pirate he was actually working for the English Commonwealth to secure trade routes to the New World. The wreckage in Panama in 1671 proved a personal setback as the city was later burned down and looted in violation of a peace treaty between England and Spain.

Morgan was forgiven by King Charles II and was later sent

to Jamaica where he became a planter and respected member of the ruling class before he fell ill and died in 1688. But in Panama, the legend of the swashbuckling buccaneer has lived on and he has become one of the best known pirates in the region.

Divers led by top archaeologists have mapped the site of the wreckage on the banks of the Rio Chagres since 2008. The cannons were measured and photographed in 2008 and studied by Dr. Ruth Brown, formerly with the Royal Armouries in the UK and an internationally renowned early cannon expert. Weapons: Experts said the size and shape of the cannons appear to be a close match with the characteristics of small iron cannon of the Seventeenth Century. The size and shape of the cannons appear to be a close match with the characteristics of small iron cannon of the Seventeenth Century. A more detailed identification of the cannons will take place after they are treated and years of encrustation and corrosion are removed in the laboratory.

Last week they finally confirmed that they had recovered the cannons from a shallow reef damaged by treasure hunters, whose blasting and dredging had exposed the fragile iron cannons to possible damage and loss. This led to the decision to recover the cannons. The archaeological survey was coordinated by the Waitt Institute with collaboration with Panama's National Culture Institute. Mr. Raul Castro Zachrisson, Secretary General of Panama's Instituto Nacional de Cultura said: 'Panama's National Institute of Culture (INAC) is committed to the preservation of our cultural heritage. We strive to maintain it in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.'



Big Alan Glasson said to me the other day that he had a photographic memory, which was never developed adding that he recently fell onto an upholstery machine and was now fully recovered. See you in Adelaide he says.....

Editor: Qld Vindi lads I plea with you to send in some stories. A story of a trip at sea, at the Vindi. Send me a story of your life as a landlubber, it does not have to be extra long and if it needs editing for spelling or punctuation no problems we can even dress it up a bit with your approval.

I'm running on empty and don't like it, I cannot simply fill our newsletter with stories of interest off the internet. How about a profile from those interested. I will ask a series of questions and write up the story.

PLEASE PUT YOUR HANDS UP.

**Some Interesting
NUMBERS**

**Get Those
Calculators OUT**

$1 \times 9 + 2 = 11$
 $12 \times 9 + 3 = 111$
 $123 \times 9 + 4 = 1111$
 $1234 \times 9 + 5 = 11111$
 $12345 \times 9 + 6 = 111111$
 $123456 \times 9 + 7 = 1111111$
 $1234567 \times 9 + 8 = 11111111$
 $12345678 \times 9 + 9 = 111111111$
 $123456789 \times 9 + 10 = 1111111111$

Mate Doug recently admitted to being addicted to brake fluid. When I quizzed him on it, he reckoned he could stop any time.....



29th April 2010

*The Secretary
Tweed Heads & Coolangatta Sub Branch
Returned Services League*

*Subject: 11 am ANZAC Service at Tweed heads 25th.April
2010.*

*Dear Sir,
I would like to congratulate you on a very special, well
attended service; but I have a point of concern which I wish
to make you aware of, in the hope that you may be able to
rectify the matter.*

*Throughout the service I did not hear any mention of the
efforts and sacrifices of the Merchant Navy personnel in
times of war.*

*It was merchant seamen who took allied troops to theatres of
war in troopships around the world. They delivered
ammunition, food, supplies and equipment to these locations
as their war effort. Many ships were lost due to enemy fire,
resulting in many seamen paying the ultimate sacrifice; I
believe the British merchant marine lost some 70,000 seamen
in this way.*

*The tragic loss of the 'Centaur' was mentioned in the service,
but no reference made to the merchant seamen who operated
the vessel, and the number who were lost; only the military
service personnel were referred to. It also sounded as though
the 'Centaur' was the only ship lost off our coast. In fact
there were 24 ships (including 'Centaur') lost or damaged by
Japanese attack with Merchant Navy personnel lost off the
NSW coast.*

*All I ask is that some mention be made in future ANZAC
services of the vital contribution and sacrifices made for
their country by Australian and allied merchant seamen, if
not, why not.*

Norm Standage (not ex MN)

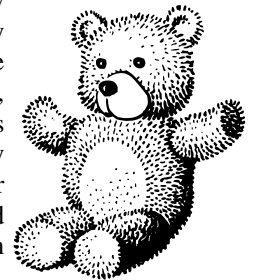
PS: Norm is still waiting for a written response.....

A woman meets a man in a bar. They talk; they connect; they end up leaving together. They get back to his place and as he shows her around his apartment she notices that one wall of his bedroom is completely filled with soft, sweet, cuddly teddy bears. There are three shelves in the bedroom with hundreds and hundreds of cute cuddly teddy bears carefully placed in rows, covering the entire wall!

It was obvious that he had taken quite some time to lovingly arrange them and she was immediately touched by the amount of thought he had put into organizing the display. There were small bears all along the bottom shelf, medium-sized bears covering the length of the middle shelf, and huge, enormous bears running all the way along the top shelf. She found it strange for an obviously masculine guy to have such a large collection of Teddy Bears. She is quite impressed by his sensitive side, but doesn't mention this to him.

They share a bottle of wine and continue talking and, after a while, she finds herself thinking, 'Oh my God! Maybe, this guy could be the one! Maybe he could be the father of my children?' She turns to him and kisses him lightly on the lips. He responds warmly. They continue to kiss, the passion builds and he romantically lifts her in his arms and carries her into his bedroom where they rip off each other's clothes and make hot, steamy love.

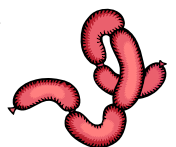
She is so overwhelmed that she responds with more passion, more creativity, more heat than she has ever known. After an intense, explosive night of raw passion with this sensitive guy, they are lying there together in the afterglow. The woman rolls over, gently strokes his chest and asks coyly, "Well, how was it?" The guy gently smiles at her, strokes her cheek, looks deeply into her eyes and says: "Help yourself to any prize from the middle shelf"



A customer asked, "In what aisle could I find the Irish sausage?" The storeman 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 storeman says, "No, I probably wouldn't."

The guy says, "Well then, because I asked for Irish sausage, why did you ask me if I'm Irish?" The storeman replied, "Because you're in **Bunnings Hardware**."



**ALL MONIES, for whatever reason to be paid to the Treasurer
(Cheques & PO's made payable to Vindicatrix Association Queensland - ONLY)**

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