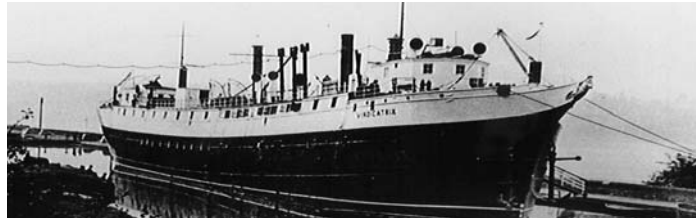


# T.S. VINDICATRIX ASSOCIATION NSW-ACT

*A part of the world wide Vindi family*



*Yet though her splendour may have ceased to be she played her sovereign part in making me. -John Masefield*

**Branch newsletter May 2006 number 51**

## **COMING SOON TO A STATE NEAR YOU THE 2006 VINDICATRIX DOWNUNDER REUNION AT UMINA ON THE NSW CENTRAL COAST Friday Oct 27 to Sun Oct 29**

**LOOKING FOR  
A Couple of couples  
Who are reasonable  
at  
OLD TIME DANCING  
To help  
Organise the dance on  
Saturday night.  
Dance competitions  
Keeping everyone  
'Happy & Partaking'  
Prizes Galore  
For the Best & Worst  
Dancers  
And those  
in-between**



**WANTED  
Your ideas & your help  
your  
enthusiasm.  
For example ;  
Home made Raffle  
prizes.  
Room decorations  
Nautical Flags, Post-  
ers .  
Wall hanging world  
maps etc.  
Table decorations.  
Shipping videos  
& Old photos  
Memorabilia**

**Registrations are coming in well especially from interstate plus we have a couple of overseas visitors .**

**NSW/ACT association members are running second, no doubt thinking as usual "there's plenty of time"**

**Early bookings especially from our own people will be a help to the organisers who need to know numbers as soon as possible and to call for re-union helpers from our ranks.**

**There will be plenty to do for everyone nearer and during the reunion.**

**So don't put off your registration—put pen to paper now!**

**And have a hand in making the 2006 DOWNUNDER A GOOD ONE!**

**For more details please refer to the info enclosed with the last Newsletter  
Or telephone any of the committee members listed inside.**

**For those with internet**

**<http://www.vindicatrix-originalnswact.org/pages/2006downunder.php>**

*Editor Terry Hales Tel 02 4237 5736 email [kiamavindi@dodo.com.au](mailto:kiamavindi@dodo.com.au)*

***TS VINDICATRIX ASSOCIATION INC***  
***NSW & ACT***  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The twelve members attending the annual general meeting that was held at the City of Sydney RSL club on Saturday 8th of December were unanimous in saying that a good time was had by all and that we had a very successful meeting, followed by a nice little session in the Bar & Bistro afterwards.

In accordance with the rules of Incorporation last year's committee was stood down and all positions declared vacant, which was followed by the election of office bearers and committee members.

The new committee members are-  
Office bearers

President -Terry Hales - Vice President - John Mears -Secretary Bill King -Treasurer Mick Wilkinson  
Committee Members:

Peter Bearman   Mike Siegle   Roy Tuffrey   Kevin Bedford   Barry Akers

Among the many things discussed was the 2006 ANZ Vindi Reunion in October of this year at Umina, bookings are going well and it all points to a great reunion.

The yearly calendar of events was also discussed, in addition to our summer picnics and joining in the Red Ensign club events the committee set 4 branch Bi-Monthly Get-Togethers at Monty's pub on Pymont Bridge (The Pymont Bridge Hotel now (Sacrilege!) where the beer (and Guinness) (drool) and food is really good and one of the cheapest in town!

Starting at 1130

**THE BI -MONTHLY SOCIAL GET-TOGETHERS DATES ARE**

Saturday the 13th. May 2006

Saturday the 8th. July 2006

Saturday the 9th. Sept. 2006

Starting time 1130

**A committee meeting will commence at 1030** – everyone is welcome to come along to the committee meetings.

The Christmas Party has yet to be fixed but it will most likely be on Saturday the 9th. Dec. 2006

Last year's Christmas party was a real delight so watch for the final date!

(Don't forget to bring your lady into town with you –Great shopping nearby, don't mention the Casino just around the corner)

**BRANCH CONTACT NUMBERS**

For any information re our branch or the 2006DOWNUDER REUNION at Umina in October– or just for a chat

Please speak to the following -

Mick Wilkinson –02 9905 3161

Bill king—02 9476 3251

John Mears—02 9874 5640

Peter Bearman—02 9311 2782

*I will be in overseas from June 1 to 30 Sept.*

**BRANCH SLOP CHEST**

As part of the organising for the 2006 'DOWNUNDER' the committee decided to order 100 white Polo necked shirts the Vindi Logo embroidered on the pocket. And 25 caps with the Vindi badge on them.

The white Vindi polo shirts were a popular sale item at the Tanunda DOWNUNDER.

The shirts are \$30 ea and the Caps \$15ea.

Also for sale are the replica Vindi & Gravesend Sea school badges.

Cost \$10 ea.



## **SURVIVORS OF A SHIPWRECK REMEMBER**

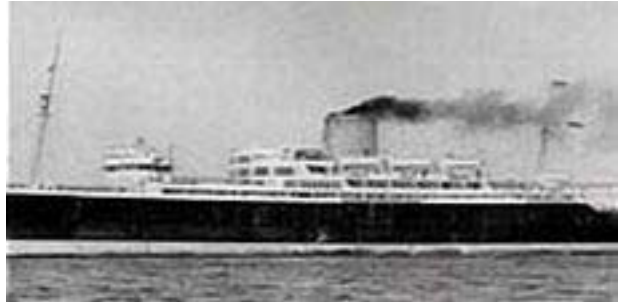
*Clicking a Google.com link about a shipwreck to the BBC North West (Belfast) Website I was very surprised to see a photo of our Lennox Head Vindi Boy Neville Strangward looking at me. – Here is the story.*

**Most people by now know about the Titanic, but not so many realise it was just one of three Harland and Wolff ships to sink on their maiden voyage.**

The last was the Magdalena which sank in 1949 after hitting rocks off the coast of Brazil. No-one was killed or seriously injured, but the drama left a lasting mark on its crew, including Belfast man Bill Harkness.

This week Bill helped organise a reunion with three of his shipmates in the east Belfast shipyard where the Magdalena was built. Almost 60 years ago, all four were shipmates on the Magdalena's maiden voyage, but despite a shared history, they never really knew each other.

For the four men the ship was, for a brief period, both workplace and home - until the night in 1949 when she struck rocks and sank off Rio de Janeiro.



It was only when the men came together in Belfast that they were able to pool their memories.

Former seaman Neville Strangward travelled from Australia for the reunion. He said he was about 18 when the Magdalena met her end. No-one, he said, felt particularly heroic at the time.

"None of us wanted to get the VC, all we wanted to do was get off.

**Left-Reuben Griffiths and Neville Strangward share old memories**

Bill Harkness, the ship's refrigeration engineer, remembers the fateful night well. Bill laughed as he recalled: "I had one leg in my pyjamas and one leg out, balanced in my cabin, when the ship struck.

"The second time I got the big crunch, it was so severe, it threw me across against my bunk."

While Belfast's maritime history is dominated by another, more famous ship, the Magdalena's sinking is just as important to these men and to those who try to preserve that heritage.

Charlie Warmington of the Lagan Legacy heritage organisation said he had managed to contact seven of Magdalena's "old seadogs" from all over the world.

"They survived the wreck. No-one actually went down with the ship because the ship initially didn't go down," Charlie said. "She crashed onto rocks."



The Magdalena is also important to the Belfast shipyard employees who built her.

Former crewmen and shipyard workers toast the Magdalena Bob Bankhead, a former Harland and Wolff welder who worked on the building of the Magdalena, said it was a big order at the time.

"It was indeed, because that was the first passenger ship built in Harland and Wolff after the war," he said.

"In fact, it was the third-biggest ship built in a British yard at that particular time."

But signs of shipbuilding are gradually disappearing along the Lagan and Reuben Griffiths, the Magdalena's lift boy, feels it is vital to capture that part of his and other people's history before it is lost forever.

The shipyard, he said, should be developed as a tourist attraction.

"But where are the tourists? This is a wonderful, wonderful opportunity for Belfast to show this off to the world," Reuben said.

"The world knows about the Titanic and they should be here seeing the shipyard. It's not a dump, it's a wonderful thing."

Plans of the Magdalena have been kept for posterity and seeing the paperwork and documents again brought memories flooding back to her former crewmen.

Reuben Griffiths remembers rowing towards land after leaving the stricken vessel.

"As we were pulling away, we heard the cracking and creaking and saw the ship as it broke in half," he said.

"We finished up landing ourselves on Copacabana Beach - everybody's dream, but not in a lifeboat."

## Three Ships that shook the world

The stories of 3 ships that exploded in port with devastating consequences

### Chapter 1 the "SS FORT STIKINE"

*There is a wealth of info about these explosions on the internet, indeed the three explosions and their aftermaths are still studied by in those academes around the world whose job it is to keep us safe from things that go*

#### **BANG!**

The 'Fort Stikine' 7,142 tons was built in 1942 at Prince Rupert BC. one of 90 Canadian, North Sands class ships The US handed her to the UK Ministry of War who gave her to Port Line to manage.

She sailed on her fifth and final voyage on Feb 24 1944 after loading in Birkenhead for Karachi and Bombay. In her lower holds were 1,395 tons of explosives including shells, torpedoes, mines, all bound for Bombay. Above these lay twelve crated Spitfires and more explosives for discharge at Karachi and finally gliders were stacked on the upper decks.



SS Fort Stikine, North Sands Class freighter.

The Tweendecks of Number 2 held more explosives, some 250 tons of highly sensitive Category A explosives! Also in number 2 Tweendecks a steel container 5ft x 4ft x 4ft had been lashed down. Inside gold ingots, the gold was to help stabilise the Indian Rupee that was failing due to the war effort and the threat of a Japanese invasion.

The estimated value of the gold was around 2 million pounds.

Fort Stikine sailed from Birkenhead on the 24th of February and joined a convoy of 50 ships from the Mersey, Belfast and Glasgow. The Escorts included two "Woolworths" Carriers, one of them was the Shell Tanker 'Amastra'.



Left "Amastra"

At Gibraltar the convoy then met up with ships from America for the voyage out to India and Pakistan.

When off Algiers the convoy was attacked by four Focke-Wulf Condors, fortunately passing over Stikine's line and opening fire on the second. The rest of the trip to Karachi via the Suez, Port Tewfik for Bunkers then Aden for stores went without attacks or alarms.

Fort Stikine arrived in Karachi on the 30th of March. After discharging the crated gliders and Spitfires she commenced loading 8,700 bales of raw cotton, drums of lube oil, timber, scrap iron, sulphur, fish manure, rice and resin. Captain Naismith worried about the dangers caused by this mixed cargo, the shippers answer was in effect 'Didn't he know that there was a War on?'

All the Deck Officers voiced their concerns over the stowage of cotton with lube oil in the same hold as explosives but couldn't find any reference books on the ship or ashore and so it was with a great deal of misgivings that the cargo was loaded.

Fort Stikine docked in Victoria dock Bombay at midday on the 12th of April No-one within the dock area was aware of her dangerous cargo because the flying of the 'Red Flag' had been discontinued for the duration as the ships flying the flag were quite well aware of being 'The Target Ship' in the event of an air raid.

At 1230 smoke was seen emitting from the ventilators of No 2 hold by the Chief Officer & 2 crew members of the 'Fort Crevier' across the dock. Sub Inspector Critchell of the Bombay Police remembered seeing it at 1330 but like many other witnesses thought that those onboard would have had the situation in hand.

It wasn't until about 1400 that the smoke was spotted by Mohamed Taqi a Foreman whose gang had recommenced work in No 2 hold. As the smoke thickened the Stevedores scrambled out of the hold shouting warnings.

At the same time members of the 'Fort Stikines' crew spotted the smoke and raised the alarm.

Chief engineer Alex Gow, working on the immobilised main engine, heard the shouts of fire and started the fire pump, the 2nd mate and crew got fire hoses playing water into No 2 hold, they were soon joined by the Bombay fire service emergency trailer pump crew that had been standing by for emergencies.

The Fire crew tried but were unable to get through to Fire brigade HQ by telephone so they activated a Fire alarm box which alerted the Fire Brigade HQ to a fire but not how serious the situation was. The remainder of the brigade & Chief officer Norman Coombs arrived at 1440.

The army, fire brigade and fire salvage corps personnel attempted to remove explosives and ammunition from the superheated hold but where soon forced out. Radiating heat from the ship set the dockside sheds ablaze.

At 1550, Coombs gave orders to abandon the ship.

Some brave and daring men however did not leave their posts and continued to fight the growing flames.

At 1606 a tremendous explosion occurred.

Molten metal and raining debris killed the crew still at their posts and showered down over a vast area, starting numerous fires in sheds and other ships berthed at the Victoria and Prince's Docks.

The explosion was so loud that windows rattled and shattered 8 miles away. Buildings shook as if in an earthquake. People ran out only to be showered with deadly slivers of shattered window glass and lethal chunks of metal torn from ships, dock installations and other solid structures.

The destruction in the docks and surrounding area was immense, several hundred-dock workers were killed instantly, 300 acres of the dock was devastated, 12 other ships in the vicinity perished.

At 1640, a second and much more powerful explosion occurred.

The S.S. Stikine blew to bits, the mushroom cloud went up in the air, rising an estimated 3000 feet. In the explosion 68 Bombay Fire Brigade and Bombay Fire Salvage Corps men on scene lost their lives and 87 were injured. The fire service infrastructure was devastated.

Molten metal, un-burned ammunition, barrels of burning oil and bales of burning cotton rained down over an area in excess of one square mile.

The force generated by the second blast started a tidal wave that lifted the 400 feet, 4000 ton S.S. 'Jalpadma' clear off the water 50 feet high and slammed her down.

The number of persons killed and injured by the explosions is impossible to determine because the class of slum dwellers, 'the Untouchables' living in nearby slums who were most severely affected by the disaster, were uncounted.

Estimates of the number believed to have been killed range between 336 and 1,376, but some writers assert the number killed was more likely 6,000.

500 persons are reported to have been hospitalized, but the impoverished residents of the Bombay slums who were injured in the explosion would not have sought medical treatment at public facilities; they were cared for by family and friends and most were not counted among the reported casualties.



**Bombay Fort Stikine Memorial for firemen killed**

Captain Naismith after ordering Abandon ship followed his men ashore then decided to return onboard to ensure everyone had left, having reassured himself he returned ashore and was walking past the stern of the ship with two other men, the chief officer Henderson & Mr Stevens when the first explosion occurred, Stevens woke up bruised and totally naked many yards along the quay, nothing was ever found of Naismith and Henderson, amazingly the only other crewman killed was Alexander Jopp, second cook.

In all 27 ships were destroyed in Victoria and Princess Docks, including the Baroda whose Chief Engineer Mr James Stewart, was lost with the ship, Captain S.A.Kiely Captain of Shirala at the time also died in the explosion.

Also killed was John Walsh 3rd engineer on the 'Fort Crevier' a sister ship that was burnt to a wreck, the blast picked him up a drove him into a bulkhead.

In amongst the debris falling from the sky were the 12kg ingots of gold, one of the first to be found was picked up by Burjorji Motiwala a retired Parsee Civil Engineer. The ingot had crashed through the building's corrugated roof, penetrated the floor of the balcony above and come to rest on his balcony in the corner. The bar was stamped Z13256 and was worth 90,000 Rupee's, Mr Motiwala received a reward of 999 Rupees which he donated to the relief fund.

Most of the other ingots were quickly recovered, later one ingot was found in the 60s and two ingots were found in 1979 during dredging. They were returned to the bank of England

Flying debris included sections of the 'Stikine's' anchor chain that wrapped itself around the masts of other ships!

The main fires burned for another week, and it was estimated that up to 8,000 men had been involved removing 500 000 tons of debris in the clean up & repair project including troops from Britain, West Africa and India itself, it was seven months before the docks reopened.



**Left in photo**

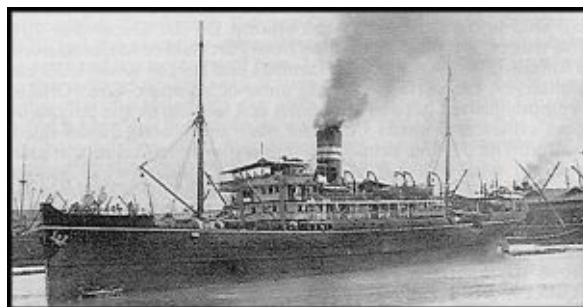
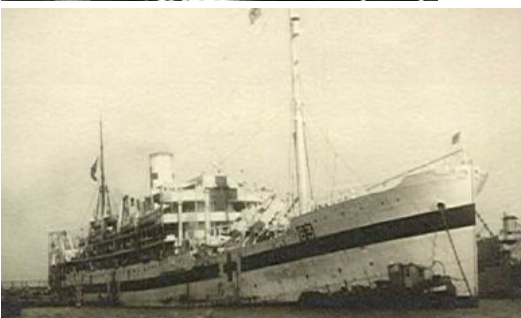
**John Walsh Killed on 'Fort Crevier'-which was destroyed by fire.**

**Below left**

**Bombay based hospital ship 'Chantilly'—damaged in blast**

**Below right**

**British India's 'Baroda' totally wrecked by blast & fire**



Next issue—Liberty ship 'E. A. Bryan'  
Explodes & devastates Port Chicago - July 17, 1944:

## **OUT & ABOUT**

### **NEWS & PHOTOS FROM RECENT HAPPENINGS**



Left– Starting the best part of our AGM on the 8th of April at the City of Sydney RSL.  
 Left to right– standing Kevin Bedford–Mick Wilkinson–Barry Akers–Bill King. Sitting–Peter Bearman–Mike Siegle–  
 John Mears–yours truly–Alex Dilworth– Eric Wright –Don Jenkins

**Right**

A visit to Sydney by Victorian Vindi Boy John McLelland & his lovely wife Betty was the reason for a BEAUT day out to Darling harbour for most of the c/mittee.



**Below**

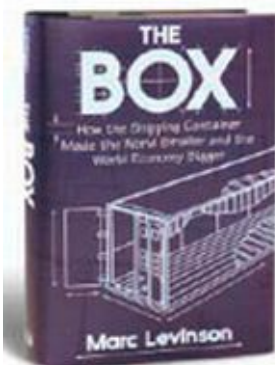
The Southern area Picnic at Minnamurra Rain forest –Standing L-R Tom Hodgson  
 Richard Brown–Wilko–John Mears.  
 Front row–Yours truly–Kevin Bedford.



**Ron Howell** one of our long time WA Vindi boys rang this week to say the Docs just told him that he needs a triple Bypass—he goes in for it on May 9th. We all wish him well soon.  
 Ron has just returned from a trip to Europe as well as visiting his old haunts in UK he visited his son who lives with his family in Majorca.

Ron's son is a marine engineer on the big super dooper yacht that belongs to a Saudi, who is reported to be the second richest man in the world!

I wonder which pool he got that job from?



May 20th was the 50th Anniversary of that major event that shook and changed the world of ships and seamen forever.

The "BOX" was invented.

Containers now rule the oceans.

And the guy on the right, Malcolm Mclean is to blame for it all.

Ports handled an estimated 390 million boxes last year

I will do a full story on this later



**PICNIC AT THE FOREST OF TRANQUILLITY 12 FEB 2006—A REALLY TOP DAY!!**



From L-R top row- Margaret Anderson. Barry Akers of Tanunda ship in bottle fame, John Mears, Mick (Wilko) Wilkinson, Micks G/son- G/daughter-daughter & son-in-law,  
 Second row L-R Ron & Marion Casey, David Bell- Lennon, Richard Brown, John Paulling, Alison Maynard, Maureen Hales, Don & Jo Jenkins (I got it right this time!!)  
 Front Row L-R Marea Mears- Jacqui King- Tony Maynard, Terry Hales, Bill King.

It was especially good to see Tony & Alison Maynard, Tony braving the park grounds in his wheelchair, he was looking well and we hope to see them at more of our get-togethers.

It was also really good to see our old Vindi friend David Bell - Lennon of ship model, ship photo & book fame, those of us who went to the two great Vindi dinners he put on for us in his 'English pub' are never likely to forget them.



On a more sombre note Sad news came from New Zealand the other week Of the death on April 6th. of Mike Norfolk founder/organiser of the NZ central TSVA. Many of our people would have Met Mike at the Napier ANZ Vindi reunion last year. The photo shows Mike holding his Life membership certificate Presented to him when he handed over his Vindi job some time ago.

**ABOVE**—THE World's largest liner the 160,000 ton "Freedom of the Seas" Arrives in Southampton May 25 on a voyage from Hamburg where she did her final fit out to New York where she will start her cruising Schedule. She weighs in nearly 50,000 tons more than QM2. Her owners Carnival Cruises have ordered another scheduled to be launched in 2009 that is half as big again!! Looking at that photo I can only think of all those deckheads to Soogee!!

## Fear

*Sent in by 1949 VB Des Jenkins, who recently fled the 'heat' of Sydney and who is now I hope is shivering in Wangarei NZ!*

Fear wasn't a constant companion when I was a seaman; else I would never have gone to sea for as long as I did. I must admit there were times when fear was there; when in a hurricane or a gale; a big sea would send the ship into a heavy roll and all your worldly goods would crash across the cabin, towel and port curtains stretched horizontally from their rails. Your heart wanting desperately to come up through your mouth as you hung onto the side of the bunk to stop yourself being tossed out onto the deck, you would wonder if she would ever right herself.

Then there would be times when fear would visit without warning.



*The 'Trevoise is that an 'H' on the funnel, one of Hungry Hograths?*

Like the time I had to paint the mast on the cargo ship "Trevoise". I had just been made up to senior ordinary seaman, and the Bosun decided it was time I had the experience of painting the mast. No sweat to an old hand like me after all this was my third trip to sea!

I climbed nimbly up the ladder to the crossrees the platform at the top of the main mast, climbed under the handrail, and stood catching my breath. The horizon was clear; the sun sent pinpoint of light sparkling off the tops of the long swells of the Indian Ocean that gently rolled the ship. I looked down at the bow cleaving through the sea fifty feet below. It was as if I was alone in the universe, just the sighing of the light breeze through the rigging, and the hiss as the bow parted the sea before it. Then the voice of my mate calling from below brought me back to the task at hand. It was when I went to reeve the gantline; that I discovered the lanyard that was usually reeved through the truck, which was the highest point of the topmast; had rotted and had carried away. I looked up; above me rose the topmast, nine feet high, as thick as a girl's waist at the base, tapering to about four inches at the truck. Normally I would have tied the rope the end of which I had around my shoulders; to the lanyard and hauled it through the block, thus enabling me to tie the bosun's chair on and start painting. Now I would have to shin up the topmast and reeve the rope through the sheave at the top. My heart had started to beat a little faster. I hitched the rope into a more comfortable position around my shoulders; and putting my arms and legs around the mast started to shin up. The drag of the rope which stretched down to the main deck got heavier as I went up. I was young; fit; so it was easy enough as long as I didn't look down. The ship was rolling with the long swell. Don't look down! When I reached the truck I clamped my legs tight around the mast and gave my arms a rest. I was sixty feet up; and I watched as one of those long lazy swells rolled up and sent her rolling over to port then back to starboard. I clung tighter with my legs, my heart started to pound a little faster, my legs started to ache. I wore only shorts and I could feel the sun on my back, the sweat started to trickle down, and sweat started to break out on my palms.

Don't panic! If you have to just slide down to the cross trees.

My legs muscles began to quiver with the strain, sweat was now trickling into my eyes, I tried to let go one hand to wipe them, then there was a shout from down below to hurry it up. That was all I needed. I took a deep breath and pulled myself tight against the mast with my left hand; I let go my right and wiped my eyes with the back of it. I then pulled some slack up on the rope; jamming it between my body and the mast, I clung again to the mast and took a few deep breaths. The sweat off my body had, by this time made the old paint on the mast slippery and I knew I didn't have much time left before I would start sliding down the mast, the fear inside me started to take control. I reached up to reeve the rope through the sheave. As I stretched up; my legs started to slip, desperately I lunged at the sheave with the end of the rope; it appeared out the other side, pulling myself in tight to the mast I grasped the end of it between my teeth. The ship gave a roll to port; I started to slip down and at the same time slide around the mast. The sweat pouring out of me now wasn't only the heat from the sun. Desperately I tried to control the speed of my descent, the rope between my teeth made me gag; but no way was I about to let go, It would have gone flying up and out through the sheave. With a thump my feet hit the handrail of the crossrees. I took the end of the rope out of my mouth and jumping down onto the platform tied it to the rail. I stood there for a few moments, head bowed to regain my composure before sending the end of the rope down to the deck below. Although the episode only took a very short time, no one but myself; and whoever it is who looks after sailors would ever share my moments of fear.



## SS CERAMIC

Of all the photos of her this White Star Poster is I think the most 'dramatic' showing her in her White Star livery.

When Cunard merged with White Star all the ships on the Australian run were sold to Shaw Saville who later had extensive modernisation done to her.

The 'Ceramic holds forever a place in my mind from the poignant story that our late ACT member Charles Taylor told me some years ago.

In November 1942 Charles along with 5 other 16 year boys said good bye to the Vindi and full of confidence headed to the Liverpool shipping federation office (the pool) in Canning Place.

Exited and eager they lined up at the Clerk's little window and passed their brand new discharge books over the counter, the first four boys were allotted jobs on the famous liner 'Ceramic', Charles at number five in the queue and the other deck boy behind him were allotted (I believe) 'Otranto' another famous liner belonging to P&O.

The 'Ceramic' sailed, independently, on the 23 of November and was never heard of again.

It was much later that she it was announced that she had been torpedoed and sunk with the loss of every soul on board, 655 men women and children, except one, Army corporal Eric Munday who was picked up by the U-boat that sank her.

This near miss with fate changed Charles's life, he never forgot it and in his later years he devoted his time to WW2 MN research to find the names of all the MN war dead missing from memorials both here and the UK.

Some of you will remember that I have published that little story before—my reason for doing it again is the new book by Clare Hardy entitled "SS Ceramic The Untold Story"

Clare's Great Grandfather Trevor Winser was one of those onboard who died that day.

She spent six years researching the story and late last year had the first 500 copies printed.

By all accounts it is a great book containing nearly 600 pages with many photos. Each book will be signed by the author and Eric Munday the sole survivor of this wartime tragedy.

John Mears our Co-Newsletter editor ran an Ad for it in our last newsletter you may recall, John an avid reader of all WW2 MN books ordered a copy right away, when he ordered his copy John mentioned the Charles Taylor story above and after some more research Clare has added that to the next copies to be printed.

If you wish to order a copy you can contact Clare by emailing her, you find her email at <http://www.ssceramic.co.uk/> You can now pay by 'Paypal' a well know website that handles payments for hundreds of websites, I have used it a few times, this saves having to buy an international bank draft.

### ***On my list of Australian MN WW2 casualties are these men who died that day.***

**ARMSTRONG**, Fifth Engineer Officer, ANDREW JOHN, **S.S. Ceramic** (Southampton). Merchant Navy. 7th December 1942. Age 24. Son of George and Alice Sarah Armstrong, of Waverley, New South Wales, Australia.

**DOWN**, Electrician, ARTHUR, Merchant Navy. Lost in **S.S. Ceramic** (Southampton) 7th December 1942. Age 21. Son of Percival and Martha Down, of Punchbowl, New South Wales, Australia

**FLATTERY**, Fireman, JAMES JOSEPH, Merchant Navy. Lost in **S.S. Ceramic** (Southampton) 7th December 1942. Age 23. Son of Veronica Flattery, of Stanmore, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

**GREEN**, Boatswain's Mate, ALBERT STANLEY, Merchant Navy. Lost in **S.S. Ceramic** (Southampton). 7th December 1942. Age 51. Son of Albert and Elizabeth Alice Green; husband of Ada Green, of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

**JOHNSON**, Fireman, PETER WILLIAM, Merchant Navy. Lost in **S.S. Ceramic** (Southampton) 7th December 1942. Age 21. Son of Charles George and Eva Emma Johnson, of Pyrmont, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

**MORRIS**, Greaser, COLIN, **S.S. Ceramic** (Southampton). Merchant Navy. 7th December 1942. Age 27. Son of Melville Arthur and Marjorie Morris, of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

**MORRISON**, Fireman, DOUGLAS HADLEY, Merchant Navy. Lost in **S.S. Ceramic** (Southampton) 7th December 1942. Age 22. Son of Edward and Ethel Matilda Morrison, of King's Cross, Sydney, Australia.

**McMASTER**, Engineer Officer, KEITH ALEXANDER, Merchant Navy. Lost in **S.S. Ceramic** (Southampton) 7th December 1942. Age 22. Son of Charles and Ruby May McMaster, of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

**NIVEN**, Junior Engineer, ALLAN ROBERT, S.S. "Queen Elizabeth" (Southampton). Australian Merchant Navy. lost in **S.S. Ceramic** (Southampton). 7th December 1942. Son of Robert Niven, of Rockdale, Cumberland, New South Wales, Australia.

**PAGE**, Steward, PETER, Merchant Navy. Lost in **S.S. Ceramic** (Southampton) 7th December 1942. Age 19. Son of William Page, and of Ina Frances Page, of Clovelly, New South Wales, Australia.

**STEEDMAN**, Steward, WILLIAM ALFRED, Merchant Navy. Lost in **S.S. Ceramic** (Southampton) 7th December 1942. Age 24. Son of Alfred and Eva Steedman, of Cabramatta, New South Wales, Australia.

*I have read somewhere that some 40 Australian seamen went down with her.*

# Relics from the Battleship "HMS DREADNOUGHT"

Found in the NSW Blue Mountains

By Alex Dilworth

## The Photo -



The Silver Bowl



The Base inscription

## The story

Well I was attending a funeral for a fellow officer in the Blue Mountains, after the funeral, I suggested to a fellow officer, that we find a watering hole as you do.

We found a nice little pub on the highway and after a few he said he wanted to go into an antique shop he knew around the corner from the pub.

While browsing I espied this silver urn with a role of foolscap sticking out of it. I checked it out, the foolscap were pages of writing, drawings and a photo of HMS Dreadnought, I checked out the urn it has a weighted heavy base and it had a stamp on the bottom relating to the year 2-5-07 noting she completed her sea trials on a date in December 1906, the urn must have been purchased I assume and put aboard with the officers dining room silver.

There is also an engraving on the bottom of the urn with the picture of the "Dreadnought" and the words HMS Dreadnought beneath.

I spoke to the shop owner and said I was interested in purchasing it, I said I would not pay the asking price but made a lower offer she spoke to the owner over the phone and he accepted.

I have not found out as yet whether it was ships' silver or the story behind it but I have sent a letter to a guy in the naval museum at Plymouth and to date I am awaiting a reply but by all accounts it is authentic.

Terry you can decide whether it is worth mentioning and you can write it in your own words, just maybe someone out there may know more and it would be good if they got back to me.

*I thought it better in Alex's own style—his canny Geordie way comes through his words, I can just hear him bargaining. Ed.*

## HMS Dreadnought (Battleship, 1906-1922)

HMS Dreadnought, an 18,110-ton battleship built at Portsmouth Dockyard, England, represented one of the most notable design transformations of the armoured warship era.

Her "all-big-gun" main battery of ten twelve-inch guns, steam turbine powerplant and 21-knot maximum speed so thoroughly eclipsed earlier types that subsequent battleships were commonly known as "dreadnoughts", and the previous ones disparaged as "pre-dreadnoughts".

The swiftness of her construction was equally remarkable.

Laid down in October 1905, she was launched in February 1906, after only four months on the ways.

Dreadnought was commissioned for trials a year after her keel was laid and was completed in December 1906.

Her building, trials and early service were closely watched by the World's naval authorities, including the U.S. Navy's Office of Naval Intelligence, the source of all of our photographs of Dreadnought.

The new battleship served as Flagship of the Home Fleet in 1907-1912 and remained part of that fleet thereafter. Dreadnought served with the 4th Battle Squadron in the North Sea during the first two years of World War I.

On 18 March 1915, while so employed, she rammed and sank the German Submarine U-29.

From May 1916, Dreadnought was flagship of the 3rd Battle Squadron, based on the Thames to counter the threat of bombardment by German battlecruisers.

Placed in reserve in 1919, the once-revolutionary warship was sold for scrapping in 1922.

The nice thing about being senile is that you can  
hide your own Easter eggs.

## THE “GLOBAL MARINER”

Many of you will remember her visit to Sydney— she didn't have long to go as it turned out. Briefly her story again.

In 1988 the ITF purchased and fitted out, with the help of the UK Government the 17.880 ton cargo ship 'Lady Rebecca' owned at the time by a Hong Kong Co. (*I believe earlier she had been one of the last 'Bank Line boats*) for an 18 month trip around the world for the twofold purpose of employing & training more officer apprentices and to take to the world an exhibition about the evils of Flags of convenience and the giant corporate sweat shops such as Nike & Reebok to mention just two that I saw onboard that where booming in Asia at that time.

She arrived in Sydney in July of 99 and a few of us Sydneyites did the tour of her.

After her spell as a floating exhibition the ITF chartered her out as a general cargo ship, then I believe sold her.



Above—left the Global Mariner in her Glory Days.

Right the Global mariner sinking in the Orinoco river after a collision with the "Atlantic Crusader" in July 2000.

The Mariner had just left a wharf heading downstream, apparently the Crusader that was dragging her anchor in the fast current and the Mariner wasn't able to avoid her. The Mariner's side hit the Crusaders bow slicing her open holds 1,2,3 & 4 filled quickly and down she went, quickly.

All hands were taken of safely. She was declared a total loss and as far as I have heard she is still on the bottom of the river.

**Left**—The scene of the collision was more than a hundred miles up the Orinoco. A sad end to a noble idea!

**Far right** a few of us who went aboard the 'Global Mariner'

Talking to the cooks—well who else would a Vindi boy bother talking to.

**Right**— That same day the 'Doulos' was moored at Circular Quay. She has been circling the globe for years now with Book & Education exhibition.



Today at 92 she is still on the same mission! She is the oldest seagoing Lloyds A1 classification passenger liner.

Constructed in 1914, MV Doulos is the world's oldest active ocean-going passenger ship. During her lengthy career, she has sailed under four distinct names: Medina, Roma, Franca C and Doulos. The ship has been utilised for four very different purposes: freighting goods, transporting emigrants, for cruises, and most recently in her present role as a vessel to bring knowledge, help and hope to the people of the world.

During her lifetime, she has twice been extensively renovated and upgraded, and undergone two engine replacements.

Over 18 million visitors have been welcomed on board for tours, programmes and visits to the floating book fair. With stops in over 500 ports of call, this unique ship has visited more than 100 countries in including Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia, Europe, the Middle East and many island nations.

Doulos is recognised in the Guinness Book of Records as the world's oldest active ocean-going passenger ship.

Doulos was purchased in 1977 by Gute Bücher für Alle e.V. (Good Books for All), a private, non-profit, charitable organisation registered in Germany.

"According to a new survey, women say they feel more comfortable undressing in front of men than they do undressing in front of other women.

They say that women are too judgmental, where, of course, men are just grateful."

Robert De Niro

## NEW BOYS

That 'orribal specie we all once was!

**But we still extend a warm welcome to them and hope to meet soon**

**Alec Bedford—wife Anne**—lives in Campbelltown, being still a youngster a 1966 deck boy he is still working—self employed as a Occupational Health & Safety Trainer in the building game.

Alec has been to a couple of our get-togethers now and has volunteered to be a committee member.

**Roy Tuffrey - hails from London** - lives on the Central Coast at Wye point—a Sept—Oct 1958 catering boy. His time at sea is pretty evenly divided between Port boats & Union Castle boats—Including one that I was on the 'Rochester' like a little yacht she was—my heart still 'sighs' when I think of her! Roy rose to the dizzy heights of purser on Union Castle, in 1967 he emigrated to Oz attended Adelaide Uni and graduated BA of commerce 1971—joined Price Waterhouse and became a chartered accountant 1973—he is currently employed by the 'Sims group' as internal auditor.

His hobbies are Sailing—computer applications & wine tasting-

Roy came along to our AGM and like Alec offered his services to the committee—we just have to catch him when he is on the ground in Sydney and not jet setting around the globe in his line of work!

**Robert Kelty— Wife Maureen**—hails from Chelmsford in Essex— Lives on the Central Coast also at Niagra Park -Bob was a deck boy on the Vindi from the 22/6/59 to 28/8/ 59—he also sailed on Port & Union Castle boats, he is also still in the work force as a construction sales manager— his hobbies are Caravanning Wood Turning. .

Our other wood turners of repute— Ron Casey of Forster and Arthur Clark of Bundaberg. Arthur a 1939 VB took up wood carving when he retired at 65 he is now famous in such circles and has a big exhibition called 'Denizens of the Deep' a carved depiction of the Barrier Reef. It was exhibited in Brisbane last year for the second time.

You can see some of it at <http://www.bundabergonthe.net/ahcsculptures/>

**Stuart Reed—wife Jenifer** they live in Elanora Heights—Stuart was a 1959 Vindi Boy and that is all I know for the moment, I lost the paper with his details—must phone him later—have to go to print now Running late , as usual.

### Getting Older.

As old age is creeping on  
I find that I am changing,  
Or, perhaps, more to the point,  
My body is rearranging.

I used to enjoy a good read  
Till my arms began to get shorter  
And if I bring my book closer  
My eyes begin to water.

I struggle to reach my feet,  
Getting socks on and off  
And if I bend to tie laces  
I will puff, gasp and cough.

I often wonder what happened  
To the very trim waistline I had,  
It seemed to suddenly vanish  
Beneath a forty inch pad.

My wife says “wear dark trousers”,  
Which I consider drivell  
And she said I have a problem  
Of a jet reduced to a drizzle.

Colin D. Rodgers. April 2006.

### STOP PRESS

**NOW** unlike Colin's poem over there I want you all to be  
on the button, wide awake and with it!

(Wherever IT is)

Before you put this newsletter away, turn back to the  
front page again and put pen to paper (or get the wife to  
do it) but register for our 'DOWNUNDER Reunion'

I shall be asking Questions later.

**Senility will not be accepted as an excuse, death might  
be!**



### STOP PRESS 2

**Its not to late to book for the QUEENSLAND VINDI'S  
BIG BIRTHDAY BASH –May 23 to 24**

Being held at the Maroochy palms holiday Park Ma-  
roochydore Tel 1800 633 316 -lovely and warm up there  
now—a treat for all us Southerner's at this time of year.  
A full programme of events is planned to keep it all mer-  
rily rolling along—a big marquee will be used for the day  
time events just like the wonderful Nambucca reunion.  
A good time is guaranteed—In fact it will be **COMPUL-  
SARY!**

**\$25 registration fee P/P to Alan Piper, Unit 110 Sapphire  
Gardens, 196 Logan St. Eagleby QLD 4207**