

The Traverse Board

Newsletter of the Friends Of The Paul McGuire Maritime Library Inc

March 2012

Proudly Supporting the Paul McGuire Collection of The State Library of South Australia.

News From The Friends

Thulia: a rare piece in the Paul McGuire Maritime Library

Thulia: a tale of the Antarctic by J.C. Palmer, New York: Samuel Colman, 1843. With 12 illustrations by A T Agate.

Handsomely illustrated by Alfred Thomas Agate, expedition artist to the United States Exploring Expedition under Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, *Thulia* is a verse account of one of the voyages of the *Flying Fish*, a New York pilot vessel of 96 tons, the smallest of the vessels in Wilkes' squadron of six.

The verses lyrically recount the small boat's, and its crew of 13, encounters with the ice, the dramas of storms at sea with swamped cabins, broken limbs and the glories of the Aurora and the perceived protection by God, as they sail beneath

'a holy sign, the southern cross ... assurance that an eye divine watches the exile from on high.'

And there is a near approach to the Antarctic coast, surpassing the earlier French and Russian expeditions and hard upon James Cook's heels. This, 70°S, 101°W, was as far south as any of the vessels of the squadron would sail. The verses are complemented by a narrative account which details the voyage.

These exploits were met with in the Bellinghousen Sea, south west of Cape Horn. Cape Flying Fish on Thurston Island was named for the pilot boat and its crew in 1940: this was its nearest approach to land, although they were unaware of this at the time.

So why a verse account of the voyage of this one small boat in Antarctic waters?

The records of the *Flying Fish* were lost when its companion vessel *Peacock* had been sunk why attempting to pass the bar of the Columbia River in Oregon. A much larger vessel at 650 tons, it carried the records from the *Flying Fish*, as a perceived safety precaution. James Croxall Palmer fortunately wrote this verse account 'for the gratification of a few friends'.

Next Meeting

The March Meeting will feature a visit to the *Titanic, The Voyage Of the Century* exhibition at the SA Maritime Museum following lunch at the Railway Hotel.

Date: Sunday **March 25th 2012**

Time: **2:00 pm**

Venue: **SA Maritime Museum, Port Adelaide.**

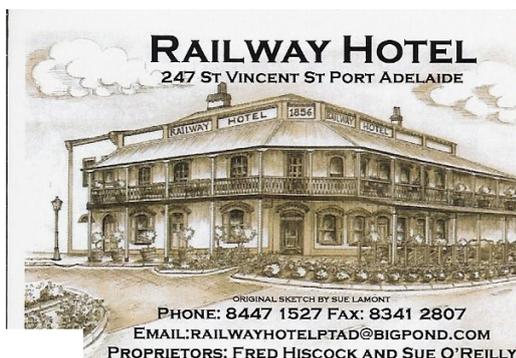
The United States Exploring Expedition had been first mooted in 1828 but it was not until 1836 that the round the world expedition was finally authorized by the US Senate. It would be a further two years before an oddly assorted squadron of six ships sailed from Hampton Roads harbor in Virginia. Its commander, a lowly lieutenant, Charles Wilkes, had a penchant for science, hence his selection over more senior officers. He was also a martinet and authorised numerous floggings. He was subsequently court martialled and acquitted of most but not all charges. The Wilkes expedition had a complicated program of exploration throughout the Pacific, including the northwest coast of North America, around Puget Sound and the Columbia River. It was also in the southern summer to explore southwards looking

for the Antarctic continent. It found this west of the Balleny Islands. This part of Antarctica was later named Wilkes Land but today it is doubtful whether Wilkes' expedition actually saw the continent but were instead misled by ice and clouds into seeing 'an appearance of land'. This of course is the stretch of land to which Douglas Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition would sail in December 1911, making landfall at Commonwealth Bay in January 1912.

Two ships from the squadron were lost: the *Peacock* as already mentioned and the *Sea Gull* 110 tons in May 1839 in a storm off Cape Horn.

The *Flying Fish* was sold out of the squadron in Singapore in February 1842 as unfit for further service.

The supply ship *Relief* was sent home early as she was a slow sailer and unable to keep up with the remaining ships. She reached New York in March 1840 after doubling Cape Horn. (continued ...)



The Traverse Board

Published by:

The Friends Of The Paul McGuire Maritime Library Inc

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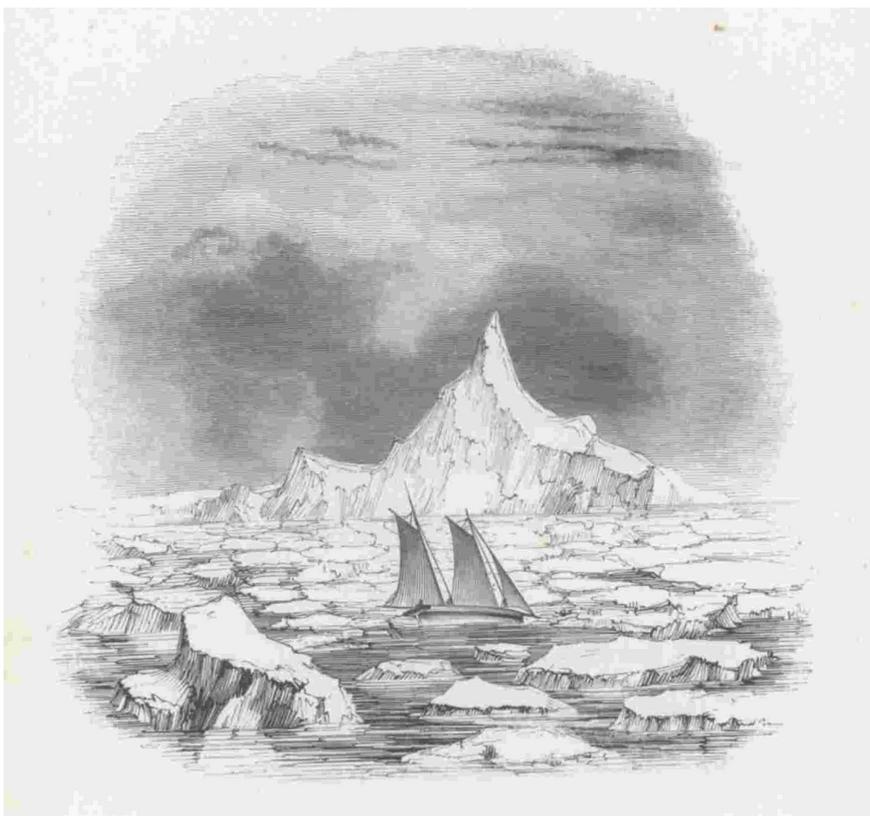
Thulia: a rare piece in the Paul McGuire Maritime Library (continued from page 1)

Vincennes and *Porpoise* both completed the exploration and were the first US naval ships to circumnavigate the globe. *Porpoise* continued in navy service for a number of years, including another survey and exploring expedition in the north Pacific. *Vincennes* was decommissioned two days after her return to the United States.

This delightful book was purchased for the Paul McGuire Maritime Library by the Friends of the Paul McGuire Maritime Library in January. It is a handsome addition to the McGuire Library and also to the State Library's collection of Antarcticana.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity the Friends of Paul McGuire Maritime Library Inc have afforded me in being able to acquire this volume for the State Library's collection.

Valerie Sitters
Content Services
State Library



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8th February 2012

Neil Waller
Secretary/Treasurer
The Friends of The Paul McGuire Maritime Library Inc.
2 Quigley Court
Aberfoyle Park SA 5159

Dear Neil

I am writing to thank the Friends, on behalf of the Libraries Board, for their generosity in funding notable additions to the Paul McGuire Maritime Library.

Our recent purchase of *Thulia : a tale of the Antarctic* / by J.C. Palmer is an excellent example of a rare and valuable title that we would not otherwise be able to acquire.

It is highly unusual in being the only surviving account of the voyage of the Flying Fish to Antarctica in 1839 and in being written in verse.

As the preface reads: "*The following Poem is a true story of the incidents more minutely described in the Appendix, to which the reader is referred for a narrative prepared from the journals of the 'Flying-Fish.'* It unfortunately happened that all these journals, which had been collected on board the U. S. Ship Peacock, were lost with that vessel, at the mouth of the Columbia; so that the account which I wrote only for the gratification of a few friends, has become the sole remaining history of a highly interesting adventure. J. C. P. Baltimore, September 1st, 1842."

I am sure that it will be of more than passing interest to future maritime historians.

Yours sincerely

Tony Leschen
Manager Collection Development
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PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

March 2012

Greetings to you all, as I put together this report on a beautiful sunny March day - perfect. We have seen another year with its usual ups and downs, as follows.

Our year started with a wonderful slide-show by Bob Sexton, covering his recent trip to Britain, a most interesting evening, including some shots of the "City of Adelaide", soon to be a part of the scenery in Port Adelaide.

In May we managed to send two more young people away aboard the "One and All", and they were invited to our meeting later that month; Avalon Oates came along but Leon Kitek could not make it, but sent along a nice letter of thanks instead. We also watched a film of a sail-training voyage from Canada to PNG and back, which Neil acquired while on his travels overseas.

Historian Dorothy Heinrich addressed our July meeting, on a Sunday afternoon, and her topic was the early settlement of Kangaroo Island, particularly the arrivals aboard the ship "Duke of York", Captain Henry Morgan, and how their descendants fared in their new country.

Then came the bad news that the managing company of the "One and All" had collapsed, the ship being now moth-balled until a new structure can be put together, which so far has not occurred, thus preventing any journeys by young people being possible. The ship is currently lying at the R.S.A.Y.S., waiting for some good news!

Mark Sinclair was a lucky find, as a speaker, being the top man in the company that now operates the Laser Airborne Depthsounding System. You may remember that the 'inventors of this system received the first Maritime Achievement award, back in 1986. Mark slipped his yacht at the Squadron last year, and I took the opportunity to invite him to talk to us, the result being a most interesting evening, as he brought us up to date on the recent activities in this field.

In October we bid fairwell to member and sometime committee-member Colin Todd, who succumbed to leukemia. Colin was a proud Navy man, a good yachting, and a good mate, with a sharp sense of humour. Sail on, Toddy.

We enjoyed a new venue for our annual dinner in late October, gathering on board the good ship "Buffalo", currently moored at Glenelg. The food, wine and service were excellent, and those present had a jolly time, as always. Pity for those unable to attend!

Ever wondered about life on a pirate radio ship? Jack Curtiss had us fascinated with his tales of those days, the crazy times when pirate radio spread rock'n'roll across the airwaves of Britain back in the sixties, another lively meeting at the Railway Hotel, in November. Thank you, Jack.

To start the new year, we combined the AGM with a barbeque, an idea of Neil's, which worked out pretty well despite rather threatening weather. The end result was that the Committee remained as before, and we had a good time down at the Yacht Squadron. Nice to see Dick Cabban out and about again.

My thanks to you all for remaining constant Friends, and especially to Neil for his extraordinary efforts as Treasurer, Secretary and Editor.

Regards, Julian.



Some of our meetings: above: July; right top: annual dinner; right bottom: Jack Curtiss regales us with tales of Pirate Radio.

A Cruise With A Difference

• by Bill Deed (New Zealand)

It was a cruise with a difference

More often than not, one goes on a cruise to relax, meet new people, see a different location and enjoy the food.

But not this man ... he went on the cruise because of the ship. The ship is the *Athena*, but why is it different? Well it happens to be the oldest operating cruise ship in the world at 63 years, but not only that, because the ship has a very dark and eventful history.

Built in Sweden in 1948 the vessel was christened the *Stockholm* and was designed as a combination passenger and cargo ship for trans-Atlantic liner service for her owners the Swedish America Line.

The *Stockholm* plied those sometimes boisterous waters successfully for eight years until the fateful day of the 25th July 1956 where she was involved in one of the most famous collisions in maritime history.

She left New York for Gothenburg in Sweden. It was foggy. From the other side of the great ocean sailed the pride of the Italian Line, the three year old *Andrea Doria*. She was a beautifully designed ship with beautiful, well proportioned lines and she was becoming popular for passengers as she started to accelerate her owners' service after the disastrous passenger liner declines after the Second World War years for Italy.



The Athena at Port Lincoln, 5th February 2009

Off Nantucket Lightship 60 miles from New York, the ships were destined to pass one another. The *Stockholm* in the fog noted the large Italian liner, but it appeared she was coming across the course set by the *Stockholm*. The *Stockholm* took evasive action as she turned, but alas it was to set a collision course.

The *Stockholm's* bow hit the side of the *Andrea Doria* just aft of the bridge on the starboard side. The ships separated but it was already too late for the *Andrea Doria*.

As a result of the collision the *Doria* was starting to list and it was only a matter of time - in fact hours - until she would capsize and slide to the depths of the cold water.

Forty six lives were lost on the *Andrea Doria* and five from the *Stockholm* in the collision.

The *Stockholm* was severely damaged, but her watertight doors prevented her from being in the same imminent danger as the Italian Ship. The *Stockholm* limped back to New York.

After the *Stockholm* was repaired she resumed her Atlantic service for her Swedish owners for a short time until 1959 when she was sold to an East German company as a workers' holiday ship and was renamed *Viilkerfreundschaft*. After the collapse of the eastern bloc countries, she was sold for an apparently somewhat checkered period of service until 1994 when the ship was sold to Italian interests.

She was stripped down to her hull and totally rebuilt as the *Italia Prima*. Most recently in 2005 she was leased to Classic International Cruises, a Portuguese company who specialise in operating veteran cruise ships. As the *Athena*, she has operated cruises in the southern hemisphere summer out of Fremantle Australia for the last two years, then to Europe for the remaining months of the year.

It was at Fremantle where my wife and I joined the ship for a nostalgic five day cruise to Esperance and Albany, both on the West Australian coast.

The vessel bears little resemblance of her former life, and never is there a mention of her earlier infamy by crew on board.

But for me, as a maritime historian it was a dream come true.



Scenes from the Barbecue at the R.S.A.Y.S. Though the day was overcast and showery the barbecue went nicely. It was nice to see long time member Dick Cabban who finds it hard to get to meetings these days.



Ancient barque to be reconstructed for museum

10:48 AM Sat 25 Feb 2012 GMT

A Japanese University has provided a \$10million grant to help see the reconstruction of one of the oldest known boats in the world, and the process has begun this week in Egypt, near the Giza Pyramid.

With the help of the grant from Waseda University archaeologists on Monday began restoration on the 4,500-year-old almost 140ft (43 metre) so-called 'solar barque', which has shown signs of being used during the life of its owner Khufu(King Cheops) but was apparently also meant to carry him into the afterlife.

Its 'sister' boat has already been restored and is housed in a specially built museum at the Giza pyramid complex since 1982. Its discovery was described as one of the greatest Ancient Egyptian discoveries in Zahi Hawass's documentary 'Egypt's Ten Greatest Discoveries'.

The boat was sealed into a pit in the Giza pyramid complex at the foot of the Great Pyramid of Giza around 2500 BC. The ship was almost certainly built for King Cheops, the second pharaoh of the Fourth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom of Egypt.

King Cheops is credited with building the Great Pyramid of Giza, the largest of the pyramids. Son of Snefru, he was the second ruler of the fourth Dynasty around 2680 B.C. and ruled Egypt for 23 years.

Both barques, made from Lebanese cedar and Egyptian acacia trees, were originally discovered in 1954.

The head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, Mustafa Amin, said Egyptologists began taking samples of the wood for restoration on Monday.

'The boat was found in a complete shape, intact and in place,' he said, adding that the focus now is on taking samples of the wood.

Previously, experts had initially thought the vessel would be safer left underground than exposed to pollution, but evidence showed that pollution, water and insects had invaded the boat's chamber.

Now they said restoration would likely take about four years and that at its completion, the boat would be placed on display at the Solar Boat Museum near the pyramids, which routinely attract millions of tourists and boost one of Egypt's most important industries.

by Renate Johns sailworld.com

Next Meeting
Sunday 25th March 2012

Our March meeting is another Sunday afternoon event, this time a visit to the *Titanic: Voyage Of The Century* exhibition at the SA Maritime Museum following lunch at the Railway Hotel.

Join us at the Railway Hotel for lunch from 12:00 noon before visiting the Maritime Museum at 2:00pm to view this new exhibition which opens on the 24th March.

May Meeting

Our May meeting will be something different. We will visit the State Library of South Australia's special book collections guided by the Library's collection specialists. The prime attraction will be the McGuire Collection, and in particular *Thulia* described by Val Sitters on the front page of this Traverse Board.

The date and time is yet to be finalised but the suggested time is a weekday morning visit to the library followed by lunch in the cafe on the ground floor.

Details will be in the next Traverse Board.

Members attention is drawn to the following SA Maritime Museum Event:

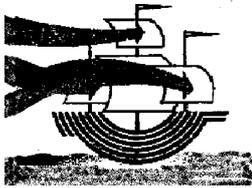
Titanic: the Unknown Child- an evening with Dr Colleen Fitzpatrick

31 March 2012

5:45 for a 6pm start

Colleen Fitzpatrick is an American forensic genealogist and the author of two best-selling books on the subject. She will be in Adelaide as a featured speaker at the World Genealogy Congress and, on the evening of 31 March, will speak at the Maritime Museum about the pioneering forensic work used to find the identity of The Unknown Child on the Titanic. The evening will also offer an exclusive viewing of our exhibition RMS Titanic: Voyage of the Century. Free. Bookings required (SAMM - 8207 6255).

Membership subs are now due. Please return the form below to the treasurer at the address shown. Alternately he will be only too glad to receive your subs at the next meeting.



The Friends Of The Paul McGuire Maritime Library Inc.

Membership Renewal

Ordinary Memberships are all due for renewal in January each year. Please send your \$20 to

The Treasurer,
The Friends Of The Paul McGuire Maritime Library Inc.
PO Box 680
Mitcham Shopping Centre 5062

Name _____

Address _____

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Contact phone: _____ Alternative Phone: _____

We can send *Traverse Board* via email. Email Address: _____

Every member: if your contact details have changed please fill in the new details above and send the form to the Treasurer.