

THE NAVY AND QUEENSLAND'S DEVELOPMENT

(A Long and Valuable Connection)

by The President

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In these times of its prosperity, with the dramatic and continuing development of its seaports and their facilities as exports grow, it is well to look back and realise how much Queensland owes to the Navy which explored, surveyed and charted its long and hazardous coastline and Great Barrier Reef.

The massive and arduous task, begun in 1770, continued for nearly 200 years, enabling the establishment of our sea ports and sea lines of communication once colonisation began: the Royal Navy also assisted in transporting early settlers to North Queensland and keeping them supplied with stores. Over the years, as ships increased in size, such as those of the British India Steam Navigation Company of some 6000 tons which, by arrangement with the Queensland Government ran a direct monthly service from London via Torres Strait, calling at the principal Queensland ports with Brisbane as the terminal port in the latter part of last century, to the coming of the great tankers, bulk carriers and other large ships, the work of the naval surveyors kept pace with it all.

THE SHIPS AND MEN OF THE NAVY

The first on the long list of naval explorers/surveyors, Lieutenant James Cook in H.M. Bark *ENDEAVOUR*, sailed from south to north in 1770 inside, outside, through and on the Barrier Reef, naming many places as he went, all the way from what is now the border of Queensland with New South Wales to Possession Island off the north-west tip of Cape York.

Among the names, he remembered those who made his voyage possible: on 17 May he passed the cape which he called Cape Morton after the Earl of Morton, President of the Royal Society, which had obtained a grant of four thousand pounds to finance the expedition. In

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the region to the north of Magnetic Island he honoured his patron George Montagu Dunk, Earl of Sandwich and Earl of Halifax, the First Lord of the Admiralty, by naming Dunk Island, Cape Sandwich on Hinchinbrook Island, and Halifax Bay.

Cook landed on Possession Island on 22 August where, in the name of King George III he took possession of the whole of the eastern coast from latitude 38° south to the island 10° 30' south together with all the bays, harbours, rivers and islands situated upon the said coast, which he called New Wales in his original journal but later named New South Wales.

In addition to discovering and taking possession of this new land, Cook established beyond doubt, from personal knowledge gained from his landings on the coast, that it was eminently suitable for settlement. In his reports he said:—“The industry of man has had nothing to do with any part of it and yet we find all such things as nature hath bestowed upon it in a flourishing state. In this extensive country it can never be doubted but what most sorts of grain, fruit, roots etc. of every kind would flourish once they were brought hither, planted and cultivated by the hands of industry: and here is provender for more cattle, at all seasons of the year than ever can be brought into the country.” He had spent 100 days on the Queensland coast, where all his landings except one at Botany Bay had been made.

The next ship to arrive was H.M.S. *PANDORA* in command of Captain E. Edwards, which had been despatched to arrest the *BOUNTY* mutineers at Tahiti, when William Bligh reached England after passing through Torres Strait in 1788 during his epic journey of 4000 miles by open boat to Timor. Returning from Tahiti, *PANDORA* intending to pass through Torres Strait was wrecked near Endeavour Passage in 1792, as Captain William Bligh in H.M.S. *PROVIDENCE* with Midshipman Matthew Flinders on board was proceeding on his second bread-fruit voyage: en route Bligh came to Torres Strait, where his survey made an important contribution to our hydrographic knowledge of the area. Bligh's entrance is still the most important of the passages into this complicated area of navigation.

In 1799 Lieutenant Matthew Flinders in the schooner *NORFOLK* came to Moreton Bay, being the first to enter and explore it. In 1802 Flinders, in H.M.S. *INVESTIGATOR*, now promoted to Commander, proceeded from Moreton Bay to Torres Strait and the Gulf of Carpentaria and came again in 1803 in the schooner *CUMBERLAND* to carry out further surveys of Torres Strait. Some of Flinders' original work, especially his survey of the outer limits of the Barrier Reef and notably the Gulf of Carpentaria, was incorporated in modern charts. His two original charts of the “Gulph of Carpentaria in Terra Australia” continued to be issued in Admiralty folios until 1929. Flinders had conceived the name Australia and, considering it preferable to

Australis, used it in all his work. (In 1817 Governor Macquarie adopted it for use in his official correspondence).

H.M. brig *KANGAROO*, Lieutenant Charles Jeffreys, between 1816 and 1817 surveyed portion of the Barrier Reef. In 1819 Lieutenant Phillip Parker King, the first Australian-born officer engaged in the early surveys, investigated our coastline from Hervey Bay, the inner route of the Barrier Reef and Torres Strait in H.M. cutter *MERMAID*, 84 tons and 56 feet long. Three times he circumnavigated Australia in the little *MERMAID*, afterwards making a long and hazardous voyage in H.M. brig *BATHURST*, working from the north-west coast round to Bass Strait. Promoted to Commander on 17 June 1821, he arrived at Plymouth on 23 April 1823, in *BATHURST* after six years in Australian waters. Two years later King was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society and the Linnean Society: in 1826, when H.M. ships *ADVENTURE* and *BEAGLE* sailed to survey Tierra del Fuego, he was appointed to *ADVENTURE* in command and in charge of the expedition, being promoted to Captain on his return in 1830.

(Phillip Parker King, a son of Governor Philip Gidley King, was born at Norfolk Island on 13 December 1791 and christened Phillip after his godfather, Governor Arthur Phillip. Educated in England, he joined the Royal Navy in 1807 and fought in the Napoleonic wars. Promoted to Rear-Admiral in 1855 on retirement, he died in Sydney on 26 September 1856.)

FIRST SETTLEMENT

In 1823 Lieutenant John Oxley in H.M. cutter *MERMAID* examined Port Curtis (now Gladstone) and then Moreton Bay where he explored the Brisbane River. On his recommendation after his return to Sydney, the first settlement was established at Moreton Bay in 1824. It was also the first seaport: Pilot Gray assumed duties the following year, and in 1827 Captain the Hon. Henry J. Rous in H.M.S. *RAINBOW* surveyed the Rous Channel which leads in from the south passage entrance to the Bay. He was a son of the Earl of Stradbroke whose heir was Viscount Dunwich, hence the name of the island bestowed by Governor Darling and that of the small settlement on its western side at the end of Rainbow Channel.

During 1841, whilst H.M.S. *BEAGLE* was working in the Torres Strait, Gulf of Carpentaria areas, her captain Commander J.C. Wickham, owing to ill-health returned to England and relinquished his command to Lieutenant J. Lort Stokes. Both Wickham and Stokes had spent many years in the *BEAGLE*: Stokes, who joined the ship soon after entering the Royal Navy, served in her for 18 years, passing through all grades of his profession from midshipman to commander.

BARRIER REEF SURVEYS INTENSIFIED

The Admiralty decided in 1841 to have the Great Barrier reefs explored and to have the gaps surveyed in order that some means might be devised for marking the most suitable of these openings so that they could be recognised in due time and vessels passed through in comparative safety. So, from 1843 to 1845, H.M.S. *FLY*, Captain F.P. Blackwood, with H.M. cutter *BRAMBLE*, Lieutenant C.B. Yule, surveyed the reefs of the Great Barrier, Port Clinton, Endeavour Strait and also erected the Raine Island beacon.

In 1847-1848 H.M.S. *RATTLESNAKE*, Captain Owen Stanley (who had been a midshipman with Captain P.P. King in the *ADVENTURE* on the Tierra del Fuego survey) continued the survey of the inner route, Port Curtis and Torres Strait. From 1858 to 1861 Captain H.M. Denham in H.M.S. *HERALD* was operating along the outer limit of the Barrier Reefs, the Coral Sea, Torres Strait and surveyed reef anchorages. The *FLY*, *RATTLESNAKE* and *HERALD* were engaged in their work for a total of some eight years, part of it in New Guinea waters.

Australia's first warship, the fine steamer H.M. colonial sloop *VICTORIA* was sent by the Victorian Government to the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1861 to meet the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition. The Norman River was named after her captain, Commander Norman.

PORT CURTIS

Early in 1846, following a proposal by W.E. Gladstone, Secretary of State for the Colonies, to settle in this remote area of New South Wales convicts from Britain who would be pardoned on arrival, the Queen issued Letters Patent erecting a separate colony to be known as North Australia. This was to comprise such of the territory within New South Wales as lay to the northward of the 26th Degree of South Latitude, with the Governor of New South Wales as Governor of the new colony and a Lieutenant-Governor to administer it. Colonel Barney's appointment to this position was notified in the *London Gazette* of 8 May 1846.

It was 25 January 1847 when Colonel Barney and some of his staff arrived at Port Curtis: meanwhile the first *Government Gazette* of North Australia had been issued in manuscript form, but Earl Grey who had succeeded Gladstone, wrote to the Governor, Sir Charles Fitzroy, on 15 November 1846 informing him that Her Majesty had revoked the Letters Patent erecting North Australia into a separate colony. Not until 15 April 1847 when the steamer *KANGAROO* brought this news to Barney did he learn that the new colony had ceased to exist two months before he had arrived to take up his appointment.

Barney then departed with his party for Sydney. The fiasco had ended and all that remained of it at this fine harbour was the name Gladstone, which had been given it.

However, new settlers kept arriving in the district, and for a few years the Government in Sydney had favoured Gladstone with expenditure of Treasury money, the theory being that with separation in the offing the capital of the new Colony should be farther away than Brisbane, which was regarded as close enough to Sydney to become a rival metropolis.

As a first step to this end Gladstone was constituted the seat of a Government Resident. Towards the end of 1853 Maurice O'Connell was gazetted Government Resident, Police Magistrate, and Commissioner of Crown Lands, being formally installed as Government Resident on 17 April 1854 by Governor Fitzroy who had come to Gladstone in H.M.S. *CALLIOPE* and while in the district named the Calliope River after the ship that brought him.

SEPARATION 1859 AND THE CAPE YORK SETTLEMENT

When Queensland's first Governor, Sir George Bowen arrived at Moreton Bay in H.M.S. *CORDELIA*, pastoral settlers had been pressing northwards for twenty years: in 1854 the first sale of land in the Gladstone area had been held. The flow of shipping through Torres Strait having increased, especially after the establishment of a French colony and naval station at New Caledonia, and the number of ships of the Royal Navy with steam power, caused the Governor to stress the need for a station in the extreme north of Queensland in a despatch sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on 9 December 1861; part of the settlement to be set aside for use by the Royal Navy, with a harbour of refuge and coaling station. Approval having been given, the Admiralty instructed the Commodore in charge of the Australian station, Commodore Burnett, H.M.S. *PIONEER*, to embark the Governor and proceed to Cape York area for the purpose of selecting a suitable site.

Accordingly *PIONEER* sailed from Brisbane on 27 August 1862, arriving at Booby Island thirteen days later, where an iron chest was deposited for letters to be left by passing ships of all nations and conveyed by succeeding vessels to their destinations. (Cook had given the name to this island where he made the last of his landings). The site ultimately chosen was in Albany Pass, the passage between the north-eastern tip of Cape York and Albany Island and was named Somerset after the Duke of Somerset, First Lord of the Admiralty. The settlement was established on 21 August 1864 when H.M.S. *SALAMANDER*, Commander the Hon. John Carnegie, arrived and landed a

detachment of 25 Royal Marines in charge of Lieutenant Pascoe to remain at Somerset. (*SALAMANDER* was a paddle wheel barque rigged ship fitted for survey work)

By this time the cotton and sugar industry in Queensland had been given great impetus owing to the dislocation of American industry due to the Civil War. As a result, ports began to be developed along the Queensland coast under the able guidance of Sir George Bowen, an eminent geographer, and the volume of ships increased. So began a survey in 1863 of the Queensland coast by the colonial schooner *PEARL* first with Commander J. Jeffery and later Commander E.P. Bedwell, which was to last for fifteen years. Work commenced at Hervey Bay and the entrance to the Mary River, as this area was becoming a prosperous sugar centre and the principal port of entry for kanaka labour recruits. *PEARL* surveys included the Burnett River, Keppel Bay, Port Bowen, the Endeavour River and completion of the survey of Moreton Bay.

H.M.S. *SALAMANDER*, now in command of Captain George Nares between 1865 and 1868 conveyed settlers north and attended to their needs, in addition to carrying out survey work. This embraced Cleveland Bay where the port of Townsville was to be established and from Abbot Point n.w. of Bowen to Whitsunday Island.

The nomenclature in the vicinity of Hayman Island which originated from *SALAMANDER'S* survey consisted of the names of all the officers in the ship, as follows:—

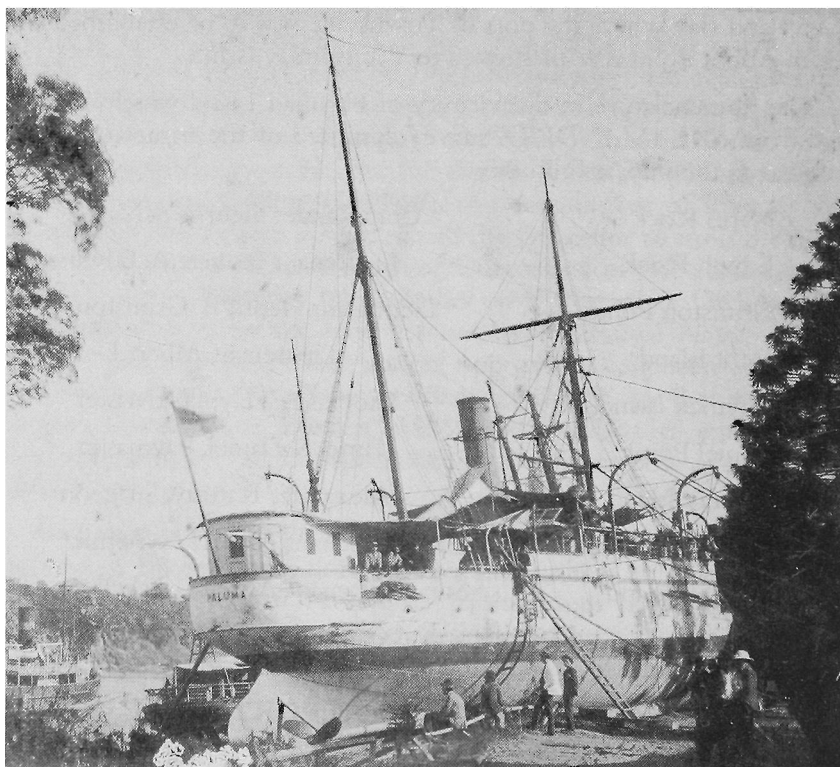
Nares Rock	Commander George S. Nares
Edwin Rock	Lieutenant Robert A. Edwin
Grimston Point	Lieutenant Henry A. Grimston
Dent Island	Lieutenant Albert Dent
Hayman Island	Thomas A. Hayman, Master
Daniel Point	James S. Daniel, Paymaster
Rattray Island	Alexander Rattray, Surgeon
Armit Island	Sub-Lieutenant Robert N. Armit
Eshelby Island	Sub-Lieutenant Alfred L. Eshelby
Cannonvale	Richard Cannon, Assistant Surgeon

HYDROGRAPHER'S REPORT 1864

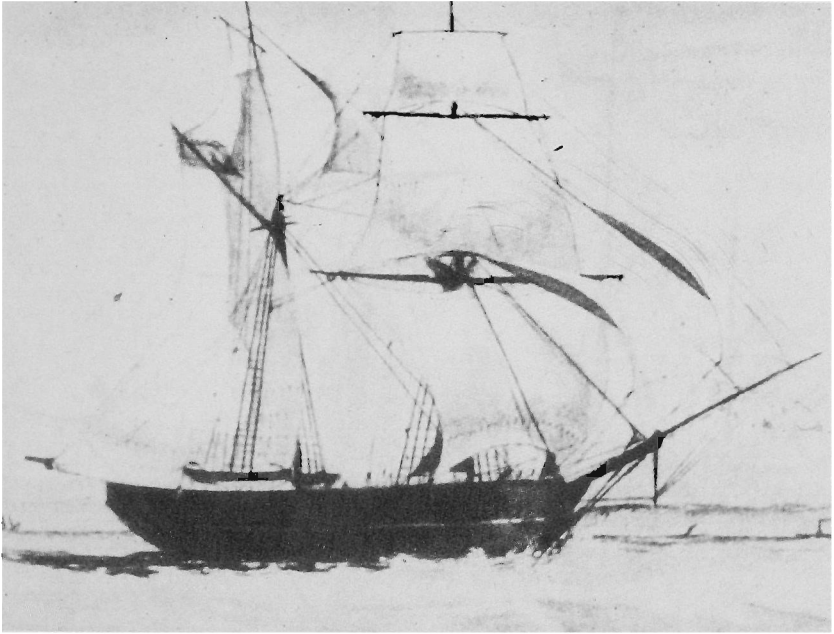
In his report submitted to the President of the Royal Geographical Society, published in 1864, the hydrographer to the Admiralty made the following comment on the inner route of the Great Barrier Reef:—

“Under these favourable circumstances, coupled with the growing prosperity of Brisbane and the rapid expansion of the white population towards the north, we cannot doubt that the whole eastern coast of Australia will ere long be opened up to navigation and commerce. In truth we are beginning the fruits of those long years of toil and industry – the rewards of that skill and patience and perseverance which produced to the world the magnificent survey of 800 miles of channels within the reefs of this coast, a survey which, when commenced, must have appeared almost a hopeless undertaking, but which has led to the opening of a safe highway, soon to become the beaten track between India and Australia. In connection therewith let not the names of King and Blackwood and Stanley be forgotten. Well may the companions of these gifted men, who still remain feel proud of their perseverance and skill, and among nautical surveys will stand unrivalled.”

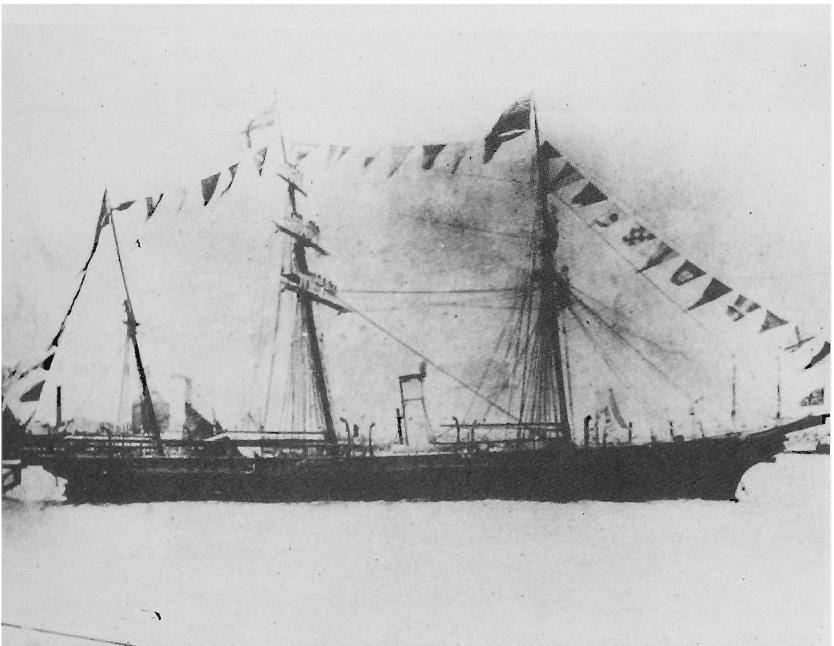
(The hydrographer, Captain G.N. Richards as Captain of H.M.S. *HECATE* had been engaged on the Torres Strait survey prior to his appointment and retired in 1874 as Vice-Admiral Sir George Richards, K.C.B., F.R.S.)



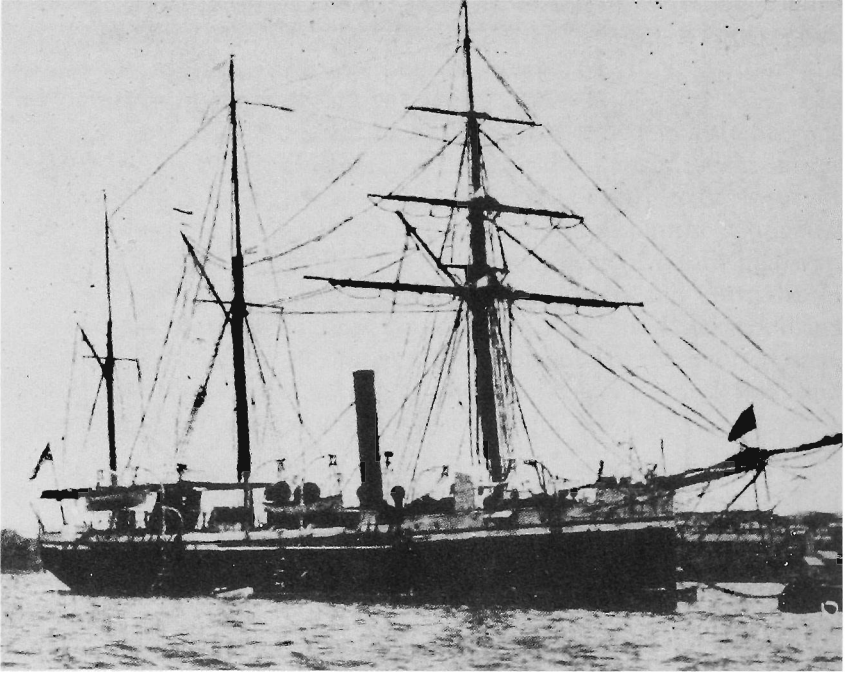
H.M.S. PALUMA ashore in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens in the 1893 flood. She was refloated later.



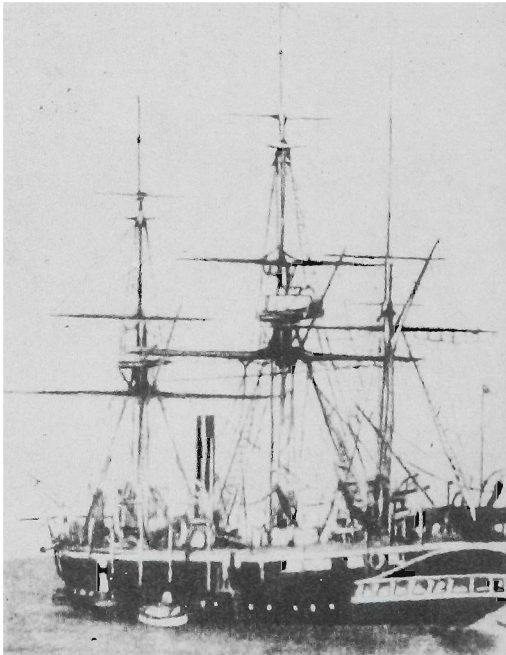
H.M. cutter BRAMBLE



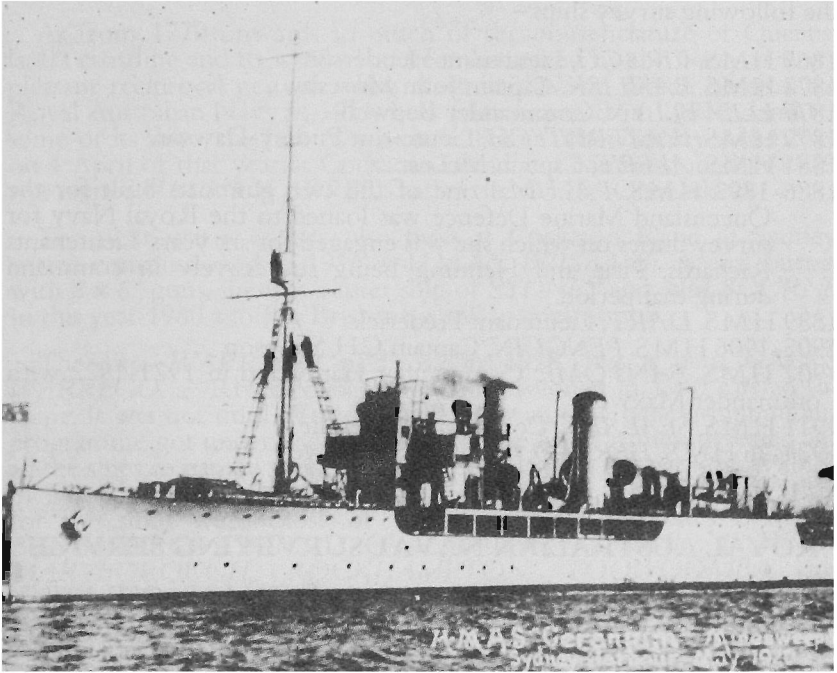
H.M. colonial sloop VICTORIA



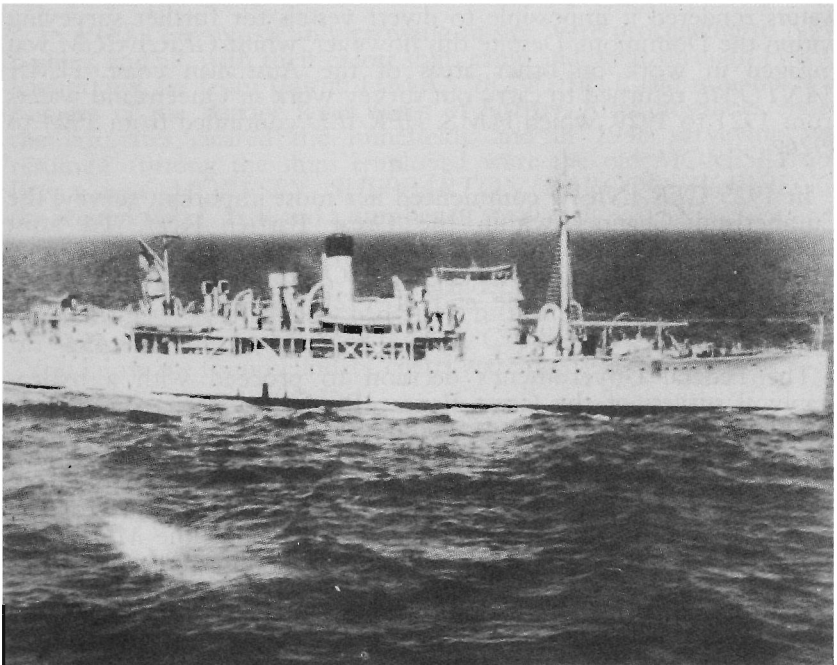
H.M.S. DART



H.M.S. PENGUIN



H.M.A.S. GERANIUM



H.M.A.S. MORESBY

The survey of Queensland's waterways and seaports continued with the following survey ships:-

- 1868 H.M.S. *VIRAGO*, Lieutenant Henderson
- 1878 H.M.S. *BASILISK*, Captain John Moresby
- 1879 *LLEWELLYN*, Commander Bedwell
- 1879 H.M.S. *WATERWATCH*, Lieutenant Pudsey-Dawson
- 1881 H.M.S. *ALERT*, Captain McLearn
- 1886-1892 H.M.S. *PALUMA* one of the two gunboats built for the Queensland Marine Defence was loaned to the Royal Navy for survey duties on which she was engaged for six years. Lieutenants Richards, Pirie and Henning being successively in command during that period.
- 1889 H.M.S. *DART*, Lieutenant Frederick
- 1905-1906 H.M.S. *PENGUIN*, Captain C.H. Simpson
- 1907 H.M.S. *FANTOME*, Commander Hardy and in 1921-1922 with Commander Maxwell
- 1911 H.M.S. *SEALARK*, Commander Glennie
- 1924-26 H.M.S. *HERALD*, Commander Harvey.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVAL SURVEYING SERVICE

This was formed in 1921 and, in that year H.M.A.S. *GERANIUM* which had been presented to the Royal Australian Navy with her sister sloops *MARGUERITE* and *MALLOW*, entered the survey service firstly under Commander H.L. Mackenzie then Commander H.T. Bennett, D.S.O. In 1921 the Admiralty informed the Dominions that shortage of survey ships and the immediate need for work in home waters rendered it impossible to divert vessels for further surveying within the Dominions. Despite this however, whilst *GERANIUM* was engaged in work on other areas of the Australian coast, H.M.S. *FANTOME* returned to carry out survey work in Queensland waters from 1921 to 1929, which H.M.S. *HERALD* continued from 1924 to 1926.

In 1925 *GERANIUM* commenced her most important survey, the Cumberland Channel within the Great Barrier Reef. To assist *GERANIUM* the Admiralty lent to Australia H.M. survey ship *SYLVIA*, which was renamed H.M.A.S. *MORESBY* after Admiral John Moresby and arrived at the end of 1925 under the command of Captain J.A. Edgell.

The Federal Government's decision to proceed with a hydrographical survey of the Great Barrier Reefs had been considerably stimulated by the activity of the Great Barrier Reef Committee formed in 1922 and was persuaded to pass a special vote of 100,000 pounds towards this object - the vote being augmented in following years - until a sum of 300,000 pounds had been put aside for this purpose. The *GERANIUM* was paid off in 1927 but the *MORESBY* continued the survey until 1929 when funds were no longer available when the ship was laid up. The *MORESBY* resumed operations from 1933 to 1939, during this period carrying out surveys in Whitsunday Passage and Long Island Sound. During World War II the work of surveying moved from Queensland to New Guinea and beyond but was resumed again in 1946.

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY – THE RECEIVING OF NAMES

As from 1770 onwards so much of the nomenclature of Queensland's coastline and its waters had been bestowed by the Navy, it was a pleasant reciprocal gesture when Australia's Navy, which became the Royal Australian Navy in 1911, now took names from Queensland for some of its ships, the first of which, a "River" class destroyer launched on 4 April of that year at Cockatoo Island and commissioned in 1912, was named H.M.A.S. *WARREGO* after the river in Queensland.

The next was a cruiser, also built at Cockatoo Island in Sydney, which commissioned in 1916 as H.M.A.S. *BRISBANE*. A coal burner with 8 x 6" guns, she was a sister ship of *SYDNEY* and *MELBOURNE*. In this year 1980 another Brisbane is still in commission.

The first *WARREGO* paid off in 1928, but a new H.M.A.S. *WARREGO*, a "River" class sloop, commissioned in 1940 carried the name. It was not until World War II, after an emergency shipbuilding programme got under way in 1940, that the list of names increased and all the ships so named were built in Queensland in the yards of Walkers of Maryborough and Evans Deakin of Brisbane. The names selected for the ships were those of "towns" for the corvettes *BOWEN*, *BUNDABERG*, *CAIRNS*, *GLADSTONE*, *GYMPIE*, *IPSWICH*, *MARYBOROUGH*, *ROCKHAMPTON*, *TOOWOOMBA* and *TOWNSVILLE*, and "Rivers" for the frigates: *BARCOO*, *BURDEKIN*, *CONDAMINE* and *DIAMANTINA*.

H.M.A. ships *BINGERA* and *BARALABA* also bore Queensland names, but had been given these by their owners, the A.U.S.N. Company, before the vessels were commissioned for naval service.

In 1942, convoys steadily growing in size were proceeding to New Guinea, and all, with their escort ships came and went through Fitzroy Passage not far from Cairns: H.M.A.S. *BUNGAREE* laid minefields in passages of the Barrier Reef north of Fitzroy. After hostilities ended the corvettes cleared the minefields, and in 1946 surveying was resumed. Among the ships employed were the old *MORESBY* and later a new *MORESBY*, *SHEPPARTON*, *BARCOO*, *WARREGO*, the second *PALUMA*, and a number of small craft.

Whilst visiting Cairns in 1958 I went on board H.M.A.S. *WARREGO*. Her captain, Commander John Osborne R.A.N., a Queenslander, told me they had just returned from surveying the area off Weipa and the harbour for the new Queensland port. He remarked: "You know we found Flinders' charts were pretty accurate".

During the 210 years since James Cook discovered the eastern coast of Terra Australis and drew attention to its potential for settlement on his return to England, it has been seen that much of Queensland's early settlement, subsequent development and prosperity has been closely linked with the work of the Navy.

In North Queensland at the present time, 14 patrol boats are being built at Cairns for the Royal Australian Navy. Three of these will be named *GLADSTONE*, *IPSWICH* and *TOWNSVILLE*, so a little more history is being made to add to that which I have briefly outlined in this paper.

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