



The Traverse Board

Newsletter of the Friends Of The Paul McGuire Maritime Library Inc

November 2009

Proudly Supporting the PaulMcGuire Collection of The State Library of South Australia.

News From The Friends

Members will be aware of our fellow member Barbara Hardy's long and passionate interest in science and in nature conservation.

We are pleased to see her honoured by the naming of a fossil after her.

Barbara's a true 'rock' star

*Article from: The Advertiser
CLARE PEDDIE
October 28, 2009 12:01am*

LIVING legend of South Australian science and nature conservation Barbara Hardy will have a fossil named after her.

While some important people have their names attached to stars, streets or suburbs, Mrs Hardy's name will forever be tied to a fossil of one of the world's oldest predators.

"I think it is absolutely wonderful," she said.

"I'm delighted. I'm keen on geology, therefore to have a fossil named after me is a great honour."

SA Museum director Dr Suzanne Miller said she searched for a "fitting tribute to Barbara" and finally settled on a "truly exceptional" fossil from Emu Bay on the north coast of Kangaroo Island.

The small shrimp-like soft-bodied "flipper beast" lived in the Early Cambrian, between 510 and 520 million years ago. It must have preyed upon other animals, because the scientists found bite-sized pieces of trilobite preserved in the fossil's gut.

The announcement came this week as the Nature Foundation SA Inc celebrated Mrs Hardy with a fundraising dinner in Bonython Hall. Mrs Hardy has retired from the conservation charity after 28 years of service.

Beach Petroleum managing director Reg Nelson said Mrs Hardy was a constant source of "constructive messages" on the environment.

Next Meeting

The November Meeting will feature Michiel Lucieer who will speak on early navigation aids in South Australia with an emphasis on Althorpe Island (details page 2)

Date: Monday **November 30th 2009**

Time: **8:00 pm**

Venue: **Railway Hotel, Port Adelaide.**

Cost: **Donation**

"To be named after the first predator simply indicates your ability to raise funds for worthy causes," he said.

Premier Mike Rann gave \$100,000 to establish the Nature Foundation's Barbara Hardy Fund for Nature. Businessman, aviator, film-maker, and explorer Dick Smith said he and his wife would match that figure, provided another \$100,000 was sourced from local industry.

"You've got two weeks," he said.

"Surely, look there are some very wealthy businesses here in SA, there are wealthy people. Many of us have done very well out of our country and it's a fantastic cause."



The November Meeting

We are pleased to introduce Michiel Lucieer as our November meeting speaker.

Michiel will provide a broad aspect of the State's early navigational aids with a focus primarily on Althorpe Island, which was declared a 'model lighthouse station' in 1879 and for the next 112 years, the 'island life' had its trials and tribulations before automation replaced light-keepers.

His interest in maritime history developed during the time he was a Keeper on Althorpe Island, then Gabo Island, before automation replaced manual operations.

He has continued to visit Althorpe Island on a yearly basis for the last 20 years and became the inaugural President of the Friends of Althorpe Island in 1996 and is currently a committee member of FOAICP and is a member (Editor) of the Friends of the South Australian Maritime Museum.



Althorpe Island

Ethel Beach, Innes National Park



The barque Ethel remains



The Ferret boiler

Donation to the Library

The Friends are pleased to provide funds to the State Library for the purchase of a book not in any Australian library collection.

The book is about longitude and navigation and is by author James Inman.

It is ***A Treatise on navigation and nautical astronomy designed for the use of British seamen*** and was published Portsea, Woodward, 1821

The book is the first edition of this first major published work, and a foundation work of practical navigation reprinted as a standard text for the British navy for several decades.

It will be a valuable addition to the Paul McGuire Collection.



Weirs Cove storehouses, Cape DeCoudic, Flinders Chase National Park

30 years on: the Fastnet Race tragedy remembered

Neil Tweedie

Published: 10:00PM BST 15 Aug 2009

It is 4.30 on Wednesday morning, and the yacht Ariel Clipper is ploughing through the darkness towards the Fastnet Rock. Somewhere in the night, 300 other yachts are converging on Ireland's most southerly point, beating their way through the white-capped Celtic Sea. This is the Fastnet Race, one of sailing's most famous challenges, taking competitors 600 miles from the Solent to the Fastnet, topped by its lonely lighthouse, and back through the Western Approaches to the finishing line at Plymouth.

Nick Ward is huddled against the spray in Ariel's exposed cockpit, part of the vessel's night watch. The 30-ton boat is only 35 miles or so north-west of the Isles of Scilly, but she may as well be alone in the Southern Ocean. The huge fleet gathered on the start line at Cowes in bright sunshine the previous Sunday has dispersed, and not one yacht is in sight. The swell is strengthening and a fine, soaking rain is beginning to coat the boat and its occupants. Ward remembers this spot well – indeed, he will never forget it.

With him in the cockpit is another crew member, stretched out while taking a nap. "That sends a shiver down my spine," he says, looking at the still body clothed in foul-weather gear. It takes only a moment to work out why. He is talking about Gerry – Gerry Winks.

It was 30 years ago, almost to the day, on the evening of August 14 1979, that Nick Ward, then 23 years old and an epileptic since a brain haemorrhage at the age of 15, was discovered by the crew of a Royal Navy rescue helicopter huddled in a state of shock on the stern of the dismasted, half-swamped yacht Grimalkin. Near him, in the boat's cockpit, lay the body of Gerry Winks, his fellow crewman.

Ward was the last man plucked to safety after a storm of unprecedented ferocity struck that year's Fastnet Race on the night of August 13, continuing at full force into the next day. Five yachts sank, and 19 more were abandoned as crews struggled for survival in mountainous seas driven by hurricane-force winds.



Nineteen men died, among them Winks and the owner-skipper of the 30-foot Grimalkin, David Sheahan, who was swept to his death after suffering a serious head injury.

The Fastnet Disaster has been a part of Ward's life ever since – not only as a terrible memory but as the source of an ongoing controversy. For 30 years he has been asking himself why the three other members of the Grimalkin's six-man crew, Mike Doyle, Dave Wheeler and Matthew Sheahan, the son of David Sheahan, took to a life raft at the height of the storm, leaving him in an apparently doomed boat with a dying man.

In *Left for Dead*, Ward's account of his ordeal published last year, he describes how he recovered consciousness following a capsizing to find himself in the righted boat with Gerry Winks suspended by a safety harness from the side of the boat. What follows is an intensely moving description of Winks's death and Ward's struggle for survival in the face of unforgiving Nature.

Given such a harrowing experience, one would imagine he would want nothing to do with the Fastnet again, but here he is, sailing into the scene of a nightmare."

"I have some unfinished business here," he says, peering out from under his hood towards the invisible horizon. "I knew I would do the Fastnet again one day; it was just a matter of when and how."

30 years on: the Fastnet Race tragedy remembered (continued)

His return to Fastnet followed a chance meeting during the Southampton Boat Show. Emily Caruso of Clipper Ventures, the sail training and ocean racing company chaired by the revered solo yachtsman Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, bumped into Ward, heard his story, read his book and suggested he should join one of the Clipper yachts taking part in the 2009 race. "It seemed a way of providing some form of closure for Nick," she says.

But, before the race, there would be one last airing of the Grimalkin controversy. As the 30th anniversary of the disaster approached, Matt Sheahan, now technical editor of the magazine *Yachting World*, felt compelled to issue a rebuttal to *Left for Dead*.

"If I don't speak now, what has been published so far will become fact by default," he told a Sunday newspaper, before putting forward his version of events. His father's death following the capsizing had, he said, left him "numb, exhausted, in shock and bewildered". His instinct had been to remain with Grimalkin, but Doyle and Wheeler had launched the life raft and were urging him to climb in. Nick Ward and Gerry Winks were, he said, motionless in the cockpit, apparently dead.

Ward relates in harrowing detail how he sought to revive Winks with the kiss of life after himself regaining consciousness. There is no doubt whatsoever in his mind that Gerry was alive for a considerable time after the launching of the life raft. Sheahan insists on citing the coroner's report in the Winks case, suggesting he died under the boat during the capsizing. Nick Ward was the only man present, however, and surely he should know.

Matthew has his facts, I have my facts, but it should not be a cause of rancour," says Ward.

"What we went through should bring us together, not push us apart. There was never any bitterness after the race. There was bitterness in the boat, but that was then. It's time to move on."

In the aftermath of the disaster, Ward accompanied Sheahan to Ireland to inspect the battered Grimalkin, which had been salvaged from the Irish Sea. If the two young men had spoken then, the controversy that divides them half a lifetime later might never have arisen. Emotions were too raw, however, and nothing was said. Grimalkin was eventually repaired and sold on – and was there at Cowes on Sunday to wish Nick Ward and the Ariel Clipper best speed. Ward hopes one day to meet Sheahan for a drink to discuss the events of that night, when both men fought for their lives. However, their relationship may take more repairing than the Grimalkin.

It is 8am on Thursday and the 11-strong crew of the Ariel Clipper have sighted the Fastnet Rock. It juts out of a flat calm sea, the lighthouse seemingly an organic part of it.

There is much cheering, the distribution of a celebratory fruit cake and a traditional offering to Neptune: the pouring of some malt whisky on to the waves. The voyage has taken four days, but for Nick Ward it is nearer to 30 years.

Seeing Fastnet for the first time, he remarks: "How lonely it is, this rock in the middle of the ocean. I had forgotten how big the ocean is, how harsh."

Taking a candle from his pocket, he lights it and throws it into the sea with the words: "This is for lost friends. God bless them and may their souls rest in peace." Then, with more jollity: "What a rock, what a day! I finally got round that bloody rock. It has laid it all to rest. I am thinking about the future now."

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