

being fast on the rocks, and on the pumps being sounded it was found there were 4 feet in the hold.' Most of the crew, and an unidentified number of passengers, managed to leave in the *Lancier's* yawl but four men left behind had to be rescued by the harbourmaster's boat. The destitute crew were initially housed at the local gaol (the Round House) and Captain James Dempster assisted the passengers while they were at Fremantle.

A Mauritius newspaper, reprinted in the *South Australian Register*, later criticised the lack of navigation aids at the approaches to Fremantle and the poor state of the pilot service, stating: 'Unless the people of Swan River take means to render their harbour safe, they will get few persons to go near them, for no person will send his vessel to a port where it is almost certain she will be cast away.'

*Lancier* was a barque of 285 tons, 97' in length, and built in 1834 at the port of Mahe in the Seychelles, for Charles Fourette. The vessel was registered at Port Louis, Mauritius, in 1835 and in June 1839 ownership was transferred to merchant Salome Giguel. The site of the wreck was rediscovered by divers in 1970, lying at the southern edge of Hugel Passage.

REFERENCES: PG 5 October 1839; SAR 8 February 1840; Henderson 2007: 222–7.

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## Elizabeth



The unregistered 13-ton schooner *Elizabeth* left Sydney in early October 1839, and spent the next four weeks being battered by bad weather and making little progress down the New South Wales coast. On 7 November the vessel put into Batemans Bay to shelter from a severe south-westerly gale. The heavy ground swell soon caused the anchor cables to part and the schooner was driven ashore to become a total loss. The three crewmen reached safety and were later found by the cutter *Industry*. While the *Elizabeth's* crew were getting their gear a south-westerly came up and forced the *Industry* to set sail without picking up the men. There is no report of how, or when, they returned to Sydney.

REFERENCES: SG 19 November 1839; PPP 16 December 1839.

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## Britannia



The brig *Britannia* left Melbourne on 4 November 1839, bound for Sydney in ballast with four passengers and commanded by Captain Owen Morgan. The vessel failed to arrive, but on 1 March 1840 the revenue cutter *Prince George* was sent from Sydney to investigate a report made by Aborigines that a boat had come ashore on the Ninety Mile Beach near Cape Howe. The boat bore the name *Sarah* on it, and was identified as having been sold to the *Britannia* at Melbourne shortly before the brig had sailed. There was some conjecture in the Melbourne press that survivors from the *Britannia* had reached shore and been 'murdered by the natives', although there was no evidence to support this claim.

*Britannia* was a brig of 204 tons, built in 1826 at Teignmouth, England, and owned by Captain Hugh Watts of Port Phillip. The vessel was probably going to be registered at Sydney if it had arrived. *Britannia* had stranded in Port Phillip Bay in March 1839, but was refloated and put back into service.

REFERENCES: PPG 6 April, 19 June, 21 August 1839; PPH 24 March, 14 April 1840; LR 1839–40; Love 2003: 15–6.

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## Britomart



The barque *Britomart* sailed from Melbourne for Hobart on 15 December 1839 under the command of Captain John Gluyas, with a cargo of sheep and a total complement of around thirty crew and passengers, but failed to arrive at its destination. However, when the schooner *Sir John Franklin* arrived at Hobart from Port Phillip on 17 January 1840, Captain James Gill reported that while sheltering at Preservation Island he had gone ashore to visit former sealer James Munro, and observed a considerable quantity of wreckage on the island, not to mention valuables in Munro's hut, much of it clearly belonging to the *Britomart*. The *Sir John Franklin* brought several items on to Hobart, including Captain Gluyas's sea-chest, with the contents completely dry, a quantity of mail and the ship's register.

Rumours soon began to spread that the *Britomart* had been lured ashore with false lights, the crew and passengers murdered, and the vessel



The residence of James Munro at Preservation Island, where items from the missing *Britomart* were found. *British Museum*

plundered. Gill himself was accused of aiding and abetting them, as he had neglected, according to law, to hand over the salvage within 24 hours of arrival in port, but an inquiry cleared him of all blame. The government cutter *Vansittart* was sent to investigate, but returned to Hobart without having added any new information. In all likelihood the *Britomart* had been wrecked during a gale, probably while attempting to shelter in the vicinity of Preservation Island. A boat trying to reach safety may have been wrecked or swamped close to land, and items had washed ashore to be salvaged by the local residents.

*Britomart* was a barque of 243 tons, 98'3" x 24'8" x 5'8" between decks, and registered at Hobart in the name of William McDonald. However, the press noted that the vessel had been sold in September 1839 for £2,800 to a Mr (John) Bourke, details of which did not appear on the register. The *Britomart* had been built as a 10-gun sloop for the Royal Navy, being launched from Dudman's yard at Deptford in July 1808 and sold out of the service in 1819.

REFERENCES: *CT* 24 January, 4 February, 10 March, 19 May 1840; *HTA* 15 May 1840; Reg. Hobart 16/1839; Broxam & Nash 2012: 30–2.

## 1840

### *Wanderer*

At the beginning of January 1840 the unregistered 20-ton schooner *Wanderer* was reported to have capsized and foundered at Hobsons Bay, Port Phillip. The two crew were left floundering in the water but were fortunately spotted by the second mate of the barque *Bright Planet*, which was anchored nearby, and rescued. The last report on the *Wanderer* was that it was lying on the bottom of the bay with only the tips of the masts showing. There is no indication that the schooner was ever salvaged. The vessel was owned by a Mr Murray of Melbourne.

REFERENCES: *PPH* 7 January 1840; Love 2012: 1.

### Unidentified Wreck

At 11 pm on 17 January 1840 the schooner *Maria*, Port Phillip to Hobart under the command of Captain Morris, passed a small vessel, bottom up, off the 'West Cape of Van Diemen's Land'. A heavy