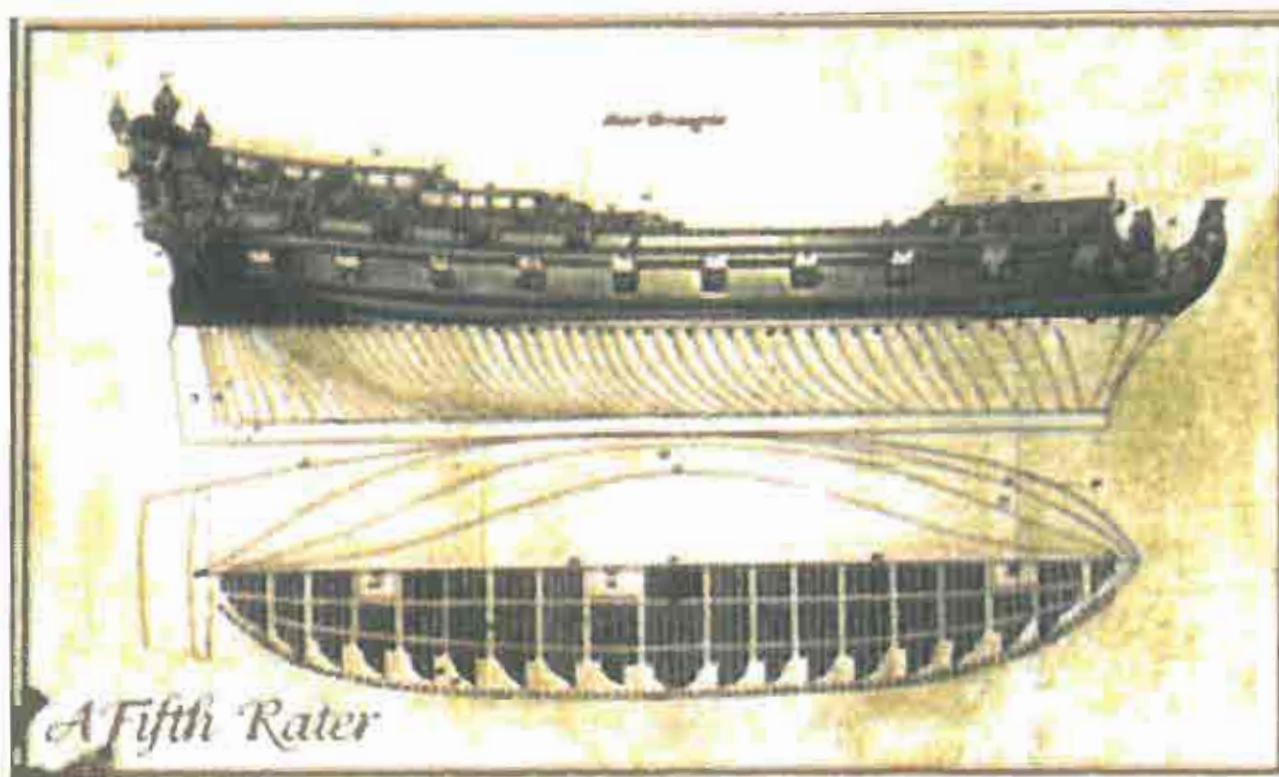


His Majesty's Ship *Roebuck* (1690-1701)



Dr M. McCarthy
Department of Maritime Archaeology
W.A. Maritime Museum
Cliff St. Fremantle
6160
March 2002

With contributions from: A. George, M. Flecker, P. Godard, C. Jörg, G. Kimpton, R. Sexton, S. Slack-Smith, J. Williams.

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Tri-centennial stamp issue. Designer Neil MacFall of Ascension Island*

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Again mention is made of Mr Robert King's role in facilitating the obtaining of a 'Duty Fare' on board the RAF Tristar flight from Brize Norton to Ascension Island, the Falkland Islands and return.

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Preface

Just prior to the August 1999 William Dampier Tri-Centennial celebrations in Shark Bay, Western Australia, it was agreed that a multi-disciplinary and inter-institutional team should be developed in order to search for, and if possible document, two of Western Australia's lost exploration vessels. These were HM Ship *Roebuck* (1701) that was abandoned at Ascension Island and the French exploration corvette *L'Uranie* (1820) that was lost in the Falkland Islands. The ships had conducted substantial explorations in Shark Bay, and both ships and their complement were considered highly significant in the context of European exploration of Shark Bay and the Australian coast in general. Present at the preliminary meeting were Councillor Les Moss, President, Shire of Shark Bay, author Hugh Edwards and M. McCarthy of the Western Australian Maritime Museum.

If permission could be obtained from the many stakeholders, the search was to be conducted under the auspices of the WA Maritime Museum and, if they so desired, other institutions (such as the Shire of Shark Bay, the Ascension and Falkland Island communities and their administrators).

The proposal was duly formalised at a celebration in which author Hugh Edwards' book on the history of the Bay and botanist Alex George's work on Dampier as Australia's first natural historian were launched. Present on this occasion were Cr Moss, Dr Patrick Berry, then Acting Executive Director of the WA Museum, local business people, authors Mr Hugh Edwards and Alex George, Ms Serena Marner, Manager of the Fielding-Druce Herbarium at the Department of Plant Sciences in the University of Oxford where the Dampier collection is housed, a number of Shark Bay and Kimberley identities including fisherman Peter Sartori, pearlery Helen and Peter Morgan, and the author. Unbeknown to the group, author, M. Philippe Godard had similar plans. On learning of each other's intentions, he readily accepted the offer to join the team.

Subsequent to the contact advising him of our interests, an invitation was extended to this office by His Honour, the Administrator of Ascension Island, Mr Geoffrey Fairhurst to begin work in preparing the expedition. This was to be conducted in association with Flt Lt Richard Burke of the RAF, who was appointed as liaison on behalf of both the Island Heritage Society, of which he is Secretary, and the Administrator himself. Contacts were subsequently established with the Falkland Island Administration and their heritage interests. The local civilian and service communities then expressed a desire to join in the proposed searches and to assist where possible. The British government also indicated its willingness to support the project as a non-disturbance search and survey exercise through Ms Marion McQuaide at the Admiralty in the HMS *Roebuck* case and through Mr Robert King, the Receiver of Wreck at the Falklands and Mr John Smith, Curator of the Falkland Island Museum and National Trust in the *Uranie* instance. The French Consul in Western Australia and the office of the Ambassador in Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, also indicated their support for the program as part of the Museum's 'French Connection' studies.

While the Museum provided administrative support, equipment, and staff time to the program, funds and sponsorship still need to be obtained—the breakthrough coming with the involvement of Dr John William's of Augusta, a long-time supporter of the Maritime Museum's programs. He interested numerous friends and colleagues in supporting the venture, culminating in the receipt of substantial donations from Mr John Lashmar and Dr J. (Barney) Hanrahan that ensured the program could proceed.

Cr Les Moss, President of the Shire of Shark Bay, then obtained the financial support of Shark Bay interests, notably the Shire of Shark Bay, Shark Bay Salt and the Monkey Mia Resort. Then Richard and Sue Lushey proprietors of the camping supplier MainPeak Australia, provided a great deal of camping equipment and clothing gratis. Royal Brunei Airlines carried many crates of equipment at a greatly reduced rate and Qantas Airlines assisted with excess baggage. Mr Robert King Receiver of Wreck in the Falkland Islands, arranged a Duty Fare for each expedition member on the RAF Tristar run from Brize Norton to the islands and return, another substantial saving. Thus on Friday 2 March 2001 the team departed for the Falkland Islands and then Ascension Island in search of Western Australia's 'maritime heritage abroad'—*L'Uranie* and HM Ship *Roebuck*.

Background to the Wreck

Dampier's voyage around the world

In 1697 William Dampier published a book entitled *A New Voyage Round The World*. It was an account of his extensive travels in the period 1679-1691 that also contained a large amount of information including draughts (maps) of geographical features, comment on the peoples encountered and the natural history of the places visited.

His *New Voyage* proved such a literary and maritime sensation, that it was translated into French and Dutch in 1698 and into German in 1702. By 1703 it had gone through five editions in English and has been available ever since as one of the great English classics. Even today, it appears an astounding and gripping narrative.

The portrait of Dampier by Thomas Murray that is now hanging in the National Portrait Gallery in London shows Dampier holding his recently published first book. The portrait, probably executed in the year 1698, is entitled *Captain William Dampier: Pirate and Hydrographer*. To an extent this description captures the paradox that Dampier represents, even to this day.

Figure 1: A portrait of William Dampier by Thomas Murray hanging in the National Portrait Gallery in London, in which Dampier is holding his recently published book. The portrait, probably executed in the year 1698 is entitled 'Captain William Dampier: Pirate and Hydrographer' (From George, 1999).



In 1699 Dampier also published a second volume to the work, including as Part III a section entitled *Discourse of the Trade-Winds, Breezes, Storms, Seasons of the Year, Tides and Currents of the Torrid Zone throughout the World* which, as the title indicates, dealt with oceanographic, meteorological, and other phenomena of import to mariners generally. Considered his 'most important contribution to the science of hydrography' (Lloyd, 1966:29), this work proved of long lasting benefit to mariners of many nations, and it further cemented Dampier's international reputation. His contribution in these two instances and in the works that followed were of such long-lasting benefit, that a century later the Emperor Napoleon had a bust of Dampier erected in his 'Gallery of Consuls' (Marchant, 1998:104).

Dampier: buccaneer, privateer or pirate?

While none will doubt the importance of his maritime and literary legacy, Dampier's supporters generally use the term 'privateer' rather than 'pirate' when referring to him. Given that the captains under whom Dampier served on his 12-year voyage were generally acting as *bona fide* privateers carrying a legal permit or a *lettre de marque*, this is to an extent defensible and it refocuses attention to the contemporary artist Thomas Murray's use of the term 'pirate'. Also needing critical analysis is the wording in the title of the latest edition of Dampier's work entitled *A New Voyage Round the World: The Journal of an English Buccaneer* (Beken Edition, 1998).

The modern tendency to mix the terms 'pirate' and 'buccaneer' also adds further to the need to examine the confusion that is still evident in respect of Dampier. In a recent theoretical analysis of the activities of these two classes of 'sea rovers', for example, the following comment was made

It might seem odd to speak in the same breath of piracy and science....the cultural transformation of the buccaneers from plundering pirates into ethnographic observers grows directly out of [the] connection between imperial administration and modern conceptions of political sovereignty. (Neill, 1999).

In his work, Associate Professor Leslie Marchant (1988) explains at length the error in uncritically mixing the terms 'pirate', 'buccaneer' and 'privateer'. He prefers the use of the term 'privateer' in referring to Dampier and in taking this tack, he follows the lead of Dampier's earlier biographer Clennell Wilkinson (1929) and that of Sir Albert Gray, editor of an edition of the *New Voyage* published two years earlier. All three seek to portray Dampier in the best light possible by drawing a clear distinction between the terms to Dampier's betterment. While allowing that many pirates were once buccaneers, for example, Wilkinson, effectively draws a concise distinction between the two by stating that buccaneers were in effect rebels and that pirates were

...ordinary sea-robbers—small gangs of men, usually mutinous seamen, who went about thieving and murdering in a hole-and-corner

way, and were shot at sight by every honest man with a gun. But the rise of the buccaneers was an insurrection of all discontented elements in the West Indies (Wilkinson, 1929: 57).

The lines between these three groups of 'sea rovers' were blurred even in their own time, however, especially at the hands of the 17th century Dutchman A.O. (John) Esquemeling in his *De Americansche Zeerovers*. It was first published in Dutch in 1678 and then translated into English in 1699 under the title *The history of the bucaniers of America*.

Further, while the predominantly French and British privateers operated under a legal framework that was policed after the Treaty of Madrid in 1670 (Neill, 1999) and was not dismantled until 1856 by a treaty signed in Paris (Marchant, 1988), the Spanish, whose colonial towns and shipping bore the brunt of the raids and attacks, considered the attacks piratical and treated those 'privateers' they captured accordingly.

Dampier's role in the various elements of his disjointed 12-year voyage around the world and his position on board the ships on which he sailed is certainly difficult to define as he appeared to rove across the accepted barriers between poop and forecastle. Regardless, Wilkinson claims that while in the privateer *Revenge* under Captain John Cook, Dampier 'occupied some position of authority, probably that of assistant-quarter master' (1929: 98).

Further it was on this ship that what is accepted as an 'arrant act of piracy against a friendly nation' occurred (Lloyd, 1966:43). This took place in 1683 south of Sierra Leone and it involved a 40-gun Danish slave ship, apparently with 60 female slaves that was seized and renamed *Bachelor's Delight*.¹ References to this incident are found in contemporary works by Dampier's shipmate Ambrose Cowley (See Masefield, 1906, Vol II:532, for example). The fact that it was clearly piracy—for slaving was then a legal and in some quarters 'respectable' occupation—apparently led Dampier to make no mention of it in his account. As one early commentator remarked 'there is not a syllable of all this in Capt. Dampier' (Callander, 1768, Vol 2:531). Modern analysts all agree that it was piracy and one commentator observed that it was 'no wonder Dampier says nothing about the episode, confining himself to innocuous descriptions of flying fish, flamingoes and the configuration of the Slave Coast' (Lloyd, 1966:43-44).

A recent analysis by J.H. Baer casts even more light on Dampier's close association with acknowledged pirates, especially in the period between this and the *Roebuck* voyage. Baer examines further the reasons that Dampier later came to be labelled an 'Old Pirateing Dog', by Lt George Fisher RN, his alienated second-in-command on board the *Roebuck* (1997).

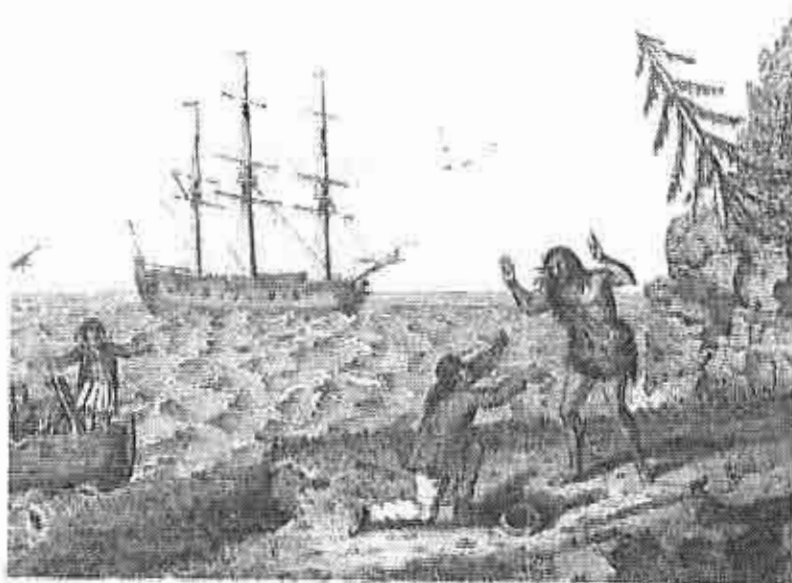
¹ The alternative spelling *Batchelor's Delight* as used by one of Dampier's better known biographers, John Masefield, is apparently reflecting the naming of the ship after one of the backers of the voyage. There is evidently some confusion here and Marchant, for example, uses both 'Bachelor' and 'Batchelor' in his work.

Dampier, the writer

Pirate, buccaneer, or privateer, throughout his *New Voyage* Dampier emerges as a complex and gifted man, well worthy of consideration as one of England's 'greats' despite his joining with all three in the pursuit of the knowledge and experience he craved. On the occasion of one particular debauch at Mindanao in 1687 for example, he records 'ever abhorred drunkenness', and he regularly stepped back from the nefarious activities surrounding him to comment dispassionately on them and the people involved (Dampier, 1697, quoted in the Beken edition of his book, 1998:175).

His descriptions of people, places and events stands the test of time and his accounts are acknowledged as having a marked influence on English literature. In 1684, for example, the privateers landed on Juan Fernandez Island to look for a Mosquito Indian accidentally left there three years earlier. He was a man observed to have 'almost as good a claim as Alexander Selkirk himself to be considered the "original" of Robinson Crusoe'. His ingenuity and his feats of endurance on the same island were certainly the equal of Selkirk's later adventures and Wilkinson sees some significance in the name—Robin—of another Mosquito Indian who was the first to leap ashore to greet his compatriot. (Wilkinson, 1929:103)

Figure 2: The meeting of the Mosquito Indians on Juan Fernandez Island. Note the style of the vessels in the background (From A New Voyage, Beken Edition, 1998).



Captains and ships came and went with some regularity on this voyage and eventually Dampier found himself on board the *Cygnets* commanded by Captain Charles Swan. On the coast of Mexico, he and Swan apparently proposed that they travel across the Pacific for the East Indies, a plan that was initially opposed by the majority on board.

A passage reproduced from his manuscript 'where it is much fuller than in his book' provides some insight into Dampier's influence on board. Dampier, in his own words, indicates that he was one whose 'advice and counsel was ever accepted by the Company as any one man's', and he also worked with Swan and his chief mate to 'persuade the unthinking rabble to it'. (Quoted in Wilkinson, 1929: 115).

These incidents alone would cause the observer to question the analysis of Sir Albert Gray, one of Dampier's noted biographers and supporters, which reads thus:

He took no leading part in the various mutinies, keeping his mind to himself until he had to take one side or the other' (Quoted in Baer, 1997:105-6).

Notwithstanding these concerns, during one violent storm near the Philippines while they were travelling even further into danger with a crew, of which he was becoming increasingly weary, Dampier presented the reader with a clear statement of his intent and of his apparent willingness to gamble all, including his own life, in the pursuit of knowledge and experience:

I was well enough satisfied, knowing that the farther we went, the more Knowledge and Experience I should get, which was the main Thing that I regarded (Dampier, September 1687. Quoted in the Beken edition, 1998:207).

They sailed on and when an acute shortage of provisions appeared imminent, he learnt of a plot to kill and eat both he and his captain. With only three days supplies left before they were to be despatched for the dinner table, the situation was relieved by their fortuitous landing at Guam and their obtaining of food including an abundance of breadfruit. His was apparently the first description of it to reach England (Wilkinson, 1929:119). Again, as always, Dampier also recorded events in a manner that provide insights into both his position on board, his objectivity and of his literary flair:

This made Capt. Swan say to me, after our arrival at Guam, Ah! Dampier, you would have made but a poor Meal. For I was as lean as the Captain was lusty and fleshy. (Ibid:119).

Swan was marooned in Mindanao soon after and command passed to John Read, resulting in an even less palatable situation for Dampier and even more insights into his complex character.

Dampier at New Holland in 1688

In respect of the Australian connection that was the root of the Western Australian Maritime Museum's interests, these were best enunciated for Western Australians in recent years in Alex George's *William Dampier in New Holland: Australia's first natural historian* that was published in 1999 and in Leslie Marchant's tome entitled *An Island unto Itself: William*

Dampier and New Holland. Published in 1988, the latter work traces Dampier's path along this coast and in addition to numerous other explanatory passages, it also serves to place him into a European social and literary context.

In essence, Dampier documents a landing on the north-west coast in January 1688 in the privateer *Cygnet*. Under the command of Read, they stayed for two months, camping ashore, obtaining water and careening the ship. Dampier provides quite detailed accounts of his stay, as did the Dutch East India Company explorers who preceded him on the north and west coast of New Holland after 1606. His disparaging comments on the peoples encountered and the quality of the land visited were to remain the commonly-held view of New Holland and its indigenous peoples. These persisted until the advent of the post-revolutionary visits of the French under Baudin. For a variety of reasons, none of the explorers appreciated the age-old traditions, the complexity and richness of the Aboriginal culture. It was a failing caused by the short duration of their stay and it was based on their use of the 'yardstick' of material wealth, riches and edifices, that has been shared by the vast majority of Australians right up until the 1970s and the advent of 'multiculturalism'.

Figure 3: The voyage of the *Cygnet* to New Holland (Dampier, 1697).



Dampier abandons 'sea roving'.

Dampier took many risks in the pursuit of the knowledge and experience he craved and while at New Holland in 1688 he tried to induce the crew to abandon the voyage and sail to the nearest English 'factory' in the East Indies. He was threatened with being marooned at New Holland as a result. This hardened Dampier's resolve and though he sailed with them into even more adventures he eventually escaped from what he describes in his account as the 'mad, fickle crew' of the *Cygnets*.

From New Holland they proceeded to Sumatra and the Nicobar Islands, where Dampier finally escaped with eight others including four 'Malays'² who had been captured in a 'native boat' off Sumatra. According to Wilkinson, in escaping Dampier 'put a final end to his career as a buccaneer' (1929:128).

While ashore Dampier exchanged an axe for a canoe, which he describes as being not much larger than a 'Thames Wherry'. Thereafter called the *Nicobar Canoe*, it was loaded for the journey to the English 'factory' at Achin in Sumatra, some 150 miles away, but it abruptly capsized as soon as they set off. The 'Malays' then fitted outriggers to it and on 15 May 1688 they set forth on 'one of the most remarkable canoe voyages of which we have any record' (Wilkinson, 1929:133). This episode in a boat with very little freeboard was a real test of Dampier's skill and courage, for in navigating off Sumatra, they were struck by an extremely violent storm. Expecting to meet his end, the reader was presented with Dampier's *mea culpa* for all that had transpired in a period of his life when in his own words 'our business was to pillage':

I had a ling'ring view of approaching Death, and little or no hopes of escaping it; and I must confess that my Courage, which I had hitherto kept up failed me here, and I made very sad Reflections on my former life, looking back with Horror and Detestation on Actions which before I disliked, but now trembled at the remembrance of. I had long before this repented me of that roving Course of Life, but never with such Concern as now.' (Wm Dampier, 18 May 1688).

After surviving this voyage Dampier went to Bencoolen in Sumatra where he accepted a post from the Governor as chief gunner to the fort. After serving well and yet being refused permission to return home, Dampier escaped with a prisoner of war from one of the Philippine Islands who had been sold to him at Bencoolen. He was the famous 'Painted Prince' Jeoly, a tattooed man later described in a Folio Broadsheet in England of 1691-2 as the 'just wonder of the age' (Quoted in the Masefield edition, 1906: 539). In his precipitate flight with Jeoly, Dampier saved only his journal and some draughts (maps), leaving behind his books, instruments, clothes, bedding and 'wages'.

² Malay: A name then applied to the peoples occupying the islands and region north of Australia.

His return to great fame

Thus Dampier returned home on September 1691 'penniless' (Wilkinson, 1929:146), with the Prince Jeoly as a potential sideshow revenue earner and with his journal. After considerable work and advice from friends and colleagues soon it became a book.

Its publication in 1697 together with a dedication to Charles Montague, the Earl of Halifax, President of the Royal Society, changed Dampier's fortunes overnight. In John Callander's chronologically-presented journals of all who proceeded in 'Voyages to the Terra Australis, or Southern Hemisphere', first published in 1768, it is recorded that:

The reputation of his voyage round the world, recommended our author to the favour of the most ingenious persons, and to the greatest encouragers of public-spirited undertakings that the age produced, and amongst these to the Right honourable Thomas Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, who most worthily discharged the office of Lord High Admiral, in the reign of King William III. To whom our author applied himself for favour and protection (Callander Vol III:66).

Dampier became noted in official circles and was befriended by the rich and famous, including Sir Hans Sloane, a 'distinguished collector, patron of men of science and founder of the British Museum', and Secretary of the Royal Society. It was apparently he who ordered Thomas Murray to prepare Dampier's portrait. (Wilkinson, 1929:150). In his letter, seeking the 'patronage' of Montague, Dampier apologises for 'the too obvious Faults, both of the Author and the Work' and he asks Montagu 'if in perusing these Papers, your goodness shall so far distinguish the Experience of the author from his Faults, as to judge him capable of serving his Country' (Masefield, 1907:17-18). This may have been the catalyst that saw Dampier appointed to a post as a 'land-carriage man' in the customs at a quite respectable £35 per annum (Masefield, 1906:3). This and the royalties of his books would have provided some comfort to his wife Anne, who he left soon after their marriage to embark on the journeys that brought him so much fame.

Interest in the east coast of New Holland

By January 1699, Dampier's *Supplement to the Voyage Round the World*, together with his *Voyage to Campeachy* and the *Discourse on the Trade Winds &c.*, were in the hands of the printers. These, by their publication while he was on the *Roebuck* voyage to the Southland, added further to his growing fame and reputation and they would have been influential in the events that transpired after his return home.

In respect of his interest in the Australian continent, Dampier records that, after sailing 500 leagues west from the coast of Chile, a fellow privateer, Captain Edward Davis, had seen a sandy island with high land behind it in around 27° south latitude. In musing that 'Davis Land' 'might probably be

the coast of Terra Australis', Dampier reflected on the failure of better-known explorers to utilise this approach to the great South Land.

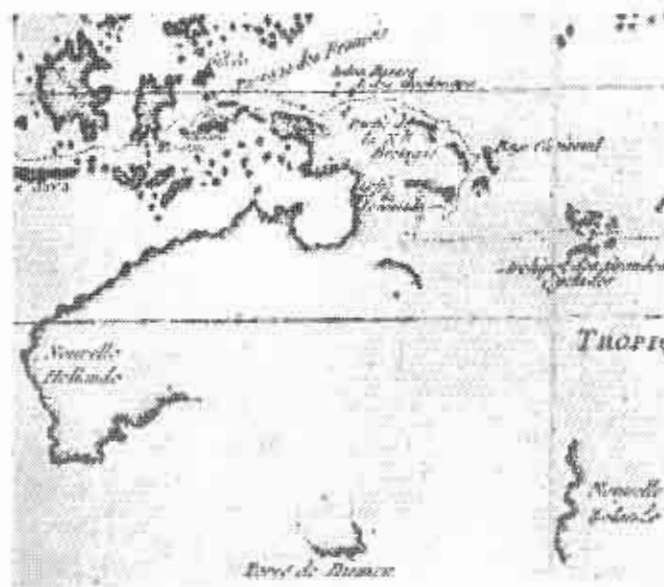
Dampier then addresses his reader: '...to speak my Thoughts freely, I believe it is owing to the neglect of this easy way that all the tract of Terra Australis which bounds the South Sea is yet undiscovered' (Wm Dampier, 1697, Beken Edition, 1998:163).

In a statement reflecting the state of contemporary knowledge, he said of the eastern part of the continent:

New Holland is a very large Tract of Land. It is not yet determined whether it is an island or a main continent, but I am certain that it joins neither to Asia, Africa nor America. (Dampier, Beken Edition, 1998:217)

Dampier's reputation after the publication of his sensational *New Voyage* was such as to be able to influence the Admiralty to support his planning and leading a voyage that was designed to remedy this situation and to approach the uncharted eastern coast of New Holland from Cape Horn and the Pacific Ocean. The intention was to survey it and the eastern coast of New Guinea after making landfall around 35-40° S (about mid-way between Sydney and Melbourne). He also intended to examine the partly known islands between New Holland and the Dutch Indies on the way home via the Cape of Good Hope (Williamson, 1939:xxviii). It is also pertinent to note that until the explorations of Flinders and Baudin over a century later, it was still believed that there may have been a vast strait separating New Holland from 'Davis Land', or what was later to become James Cook's New South Wales.

Figure 4 An 18th Century French chart of New Holland, showing the gaps on the south and east coasts (From Wood, 1922:343)



Dampier's appointment as a civilian and former privateer—and in some eyes a pirate—to command a naval vessel, no matter how humble, was remarkable. But his fame and influence amongst royalty and powerful men was enough to transcend such a hurdle, as the following quote from the diarist John Evelyn on 16 August 1698 attests:

I dined with Mr Pepys, where was Captain Dampier, who had been a famous buccaneer, had brought hither the painted prince Job [Jeoly], and printed a relation of his very strange adventure...He was now going abroad again by the King's encouragement, who furnished a ship of 290 tons. He seemed a more modest man than one would imagine by relation of the crew he had associated with' (Diary of John Evelyn, quoted in George, 1999:135-6).

After finding the first vessel assigned to him, the *Jolly Prize*, totally unsuited and in advising the Lords of the Admiralty accordingly in late June and again in early July 1698, Dampier was soon after provided with His Majesty's Ship *Roebuck*.

HM Ship *Roebuck*

While there are discrepancies in the literature, irrefutable clues as to the *Roebuck's* size and fit-out have been found and these are essential in any analysis of the potential archaeological remains at Ascension Island.

We can deduce, for example, that John Evelyn was definitely referring to *Roebuck* and not to the much smaller *Jolly Prize* in the entry above, for example. On August 27, only 11 days after Evelyn's diary entry, Dampier advised that he had carpenters at work on *Roebuck* and that the rigging was almost completed. (Letters Wm Dampier to the Secretary of the Admiralty reproduced in Masefield, 1906:327). Thus the *Roebuck* was of 290 tons.

Dampier also complains that she carried 'but 12 Guns' and in a letter of September 1698 he also complains that the crew allowed to him were 'but fifty'. In both being insufficient, he sought 'seventy men and about twenty guns'. (Letter reproduced in Masefield, 1906:325-335). Here are reliable 'primary' indicators of the *Roebuck's* carrying capacity. Of importance also is his comment in that same letter that he had hoped to finish loading his 'iron ballast' by the end of that week. Here is a very important clue in respect of the archaeological 'signature' of the *Roebuck*.

In regard to 'secondary' sources containing information about the vessel, according to Dampier's biographer Clennell Wilkinson, the *Roebuck* was 'a fifth-rater, almost certainly of two decks, and had previously been a fire-ship' (1929:157). In his recent biography of Dampier, Christopher Lloyd records that *Roebuck* was built at Wapping in 1690, of 292 tons and was 96 feet long, with a beam of 25 feet (1966:78). James Spencer, editor of a 1981 edition of the *Voyage to New Holland*, carries similar details, and he also records that the ship was capable of carrying 26 guns (1981:31). In his 1993 work entitled *The Sailing Navy list: All the ships of the Royal Navy—built, purchased and captured 1688-1860*, David Lyon, then of the National Maritime Museum at

Greenwich, produced similar details to those above, as did R.C. Anderson in 1966.

Just prior to the publication of this report, South Australian maritime historian Robert Sexton joined the team and then presented his preliminary report to the Museum on *Roebuck*. The result of an exhaustive search of these and other sources, it appears in full in Appendix 5, while a précis of his findings appears at the conclusion of the following section.

Roebuck a 5th or a 6th rate ship?

While most authors assigned HM Ship *Roebuck* to the 'fifth rate' of naval vessels, there is an element of confusion. In Manning and Walker's *British Warship Names* (1959), *Roebuck* is listed as a 'sixth rate' vessel, for example. E.H.H. Archibald's comment in *The wooden fighting ship in the Royal Navy*, that a sixth rate was 'also of the size suitable for adapting into fire-ships' is also relevant (Archibald, 1968:29). Further, according to Kemp (1988:692) early '5th Rates' carried between 32-50 guns and sixth rates any number up to 30; i.e. on these figures alone *Roebuck* was certainly a 'sixth rate'. The issue clearly needed some attention in respect of future descriptions of *Roebuck*, and in regards the expected archaeological remains at Ascension Island.

According to Kemp, though the rating system was introduced by Anson, the first Lord of the Admiralty in his first term of office in 1751-6, 'some naval writers have ante-dated it for the sake of convenience in describing earlier warships'. Again, there is some disagreement on this, for the well-known maritime historian, Brian Lavery, traces the use of the term 'rate' back to 1672 and the Third Dutch War in his analysis entitled *The Ship of the Line*. There reference is made to the tactical deployment of 'fifth and sixth rates', for example (1983:28). Further, Dampier's contemporary Samuel Pepys also referred to the term 'rate' during his term of office.

In his analysis of *Deane's Doctrine of Naval Architecture 1670*, Lavery indicates that the standard dimensions developed by Deane and the surveyor of the Navy, Sir John Tippetts, were accepted for larger vessels after 1677, and were the 'first attempt at standardisation of design', apparently for 1st through to 3rd rates. It needs be allowed that under the continued patronage of Samuel Pepys, the powerful Secretary of the Admiralty, Deane continued to exert great influence up to 1688, two years before the *Roebuck* was built and that standardisation may have begun filtering through to the lower rates by then.

Though the dimensions provided by Kemp may reflect the advent of rigid standardisation right through the entire rating system from 1st down to 6th rates in the 18th century (see Lavery's discussion on page 61 of his work), of interest in examining the characteristics of the 290-ton *Roebuck* is Tippet's creation, the 266 'tuns burden' *Dartmouth*. It was a 32-gun ship and, according to one contemporary anonymous source, was built in 1655 with a keel length of 80 feet, breadth of 25 feet, depth in hold of 10 feet and a draught of 12 feet (Reproduced in Martin, 1978). It carried 28 guns and 90 men in peacetime and was considered by one contemporary author, Edward

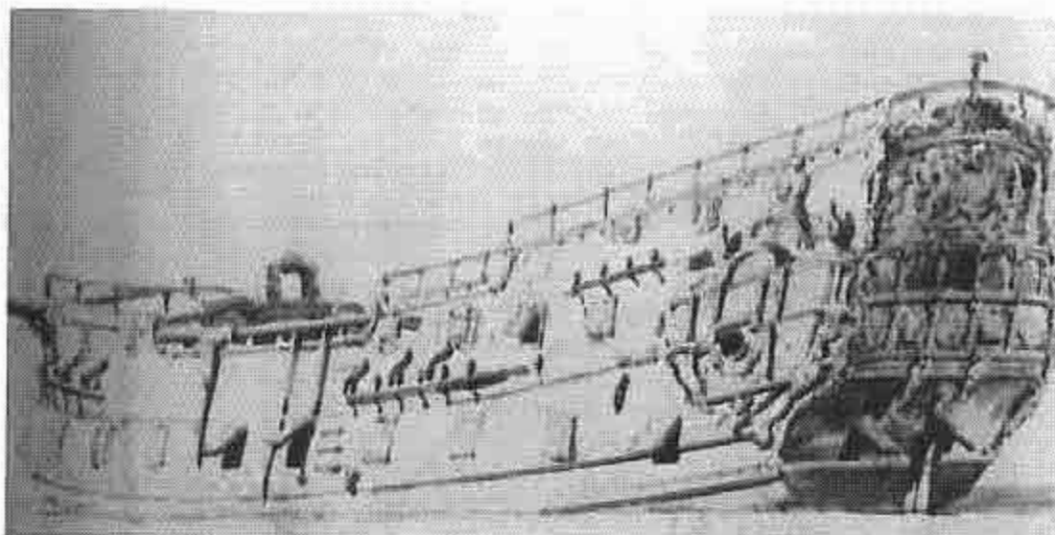
Battine, as a typical example of the 5th rate ship of the time (Adnams, 1974: 272-3).

Again of interest are the details of a refit of *Dartmouth* that occurred in a 1678. While the 1655 details show that the keel measured 80 feet (apparently 'to touch'), the actual length of its new main and false keels were 88 Feet 6 inches. Allowing for fore and aft rake, this would give a length between perpendiculars, another measure of a ship's length, of around 96 feet.³

Further, while *Dartmouth* spent much of its long life as a 5th rate, it was reduced to a 10 gun fire-ship with a crew of 50 men in December 1688, but was restored and refitted to 5th rate in March 1689, just prior to its eventual loss. (McBride, 1976:189).

Finally, the author was recently advised that another factor in assigning a rate to a vessel in this period was Dampier's rate of pay. Researcher J.M. Bingeman, the Government licensee at the wreck *Invincible* (1744-1768), has indicated that 'Dampier's pay for a 5th v 6th rate would have been 12 shillings or 10 shillings per day up to 30th June 1700 and then 8 shillings or 6 shillings after that date' (Bingeman, to McCarthy, 14/10/2001).

Figure 5: Van de Velde's sketch of a 1670s Fifth-Rate, possibly Dartmouth (From Martin, 1978:29).



Thus while *Roebuck* does not fit the parameters of the later '5th rate' in respect of the number of guns loaded for the voyage (12 guns) and crew size (50 men), and though in those respects it is more a '6th rate ship', if one is to apply the accepted definitions; it does appear safe to apply John Evelyn's 290

³ Here also is evidence of a variety of dimensions being provided for ship's length in this period and in that respect it needs be noted that tonnage also is an issue in itself, with there being a variety of measures used to ascertain it. (A useful analysis appears in MacGregor, 1973).

tons as a reliable indicator of its size. Further, Dampier's request for 20 guns and 70 men, while still within the '6th rate' range, are in its upper range and it is reasonable to expect that *Roebuck* could carry more. Further the brief alteration of the acknowledged '5th rate' *Dartmouth* to a 10-gun fire ship with a crew of 50 is significant in assessing the application of Archibald's comment about the suitability of 6th rate vessels as fire ships. Again it is considered that while the terms 5th and 6th rate were being used at the time *Roebuck* was built, allowance needs be made for the slow spread of a form of rigid standardisation that would have allowed direct comparisons to be made.

Reference is now made to Robert Sexton's analysis appearing in Appendix 5. Received a few days before the finalising this report, it was decided to retain the analysis above, thereby allowing the reader an insight into the problem with contemporary references to length and rate during this period.

In short, Sexton has concluded that HM Ship *Roebuck* was built as one of a class of twelve purpose-built fire-ships prior to the introduction of the 'establishments' which prescribed standard sizes. These ships—including one the *Griffin* whose plans may be housed at the National Maritime Museum—were ordered on 6 December 1690, from different builders. All were launched in the period 29 March to 29 April, an inordinately short construction time. *Roebuck* was set afloat on 17 April 1690 and was described as 96 feet long along the lower deck, with a length 'on the keel 84 feet'. Her beam was 25 feet 6 inches, draught 12 feet. Sexton also discusses the 'fire' arrangements within the vessel at length, noting amongst other things that the type also carried around eight guns of the 'minion' and 'falconet' type and that the ports hinged downwards.

The *Roebuck* was present at the battle of Beachy Head in June 1690 as a fire-ship, and in 1695 it was upgraded and classed as a 26 gun fifth rate. Sexton also concludes that a model of a fire-ship in the Rogers Collection at the Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland and plans of it produced by well-known commentator Merritt A. Edson Jr. are of this type. Of additional import, Sexton has noted the similarity in size of the 5th Rate *Roebuck* to its contemporary the 264 ton, 95 feet-long, 25 foot-beam, 24-gun 6th Rate HMS *Lizard*. Launched in 1697, its dockyard model appears in the Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford (McNarry, 1975).

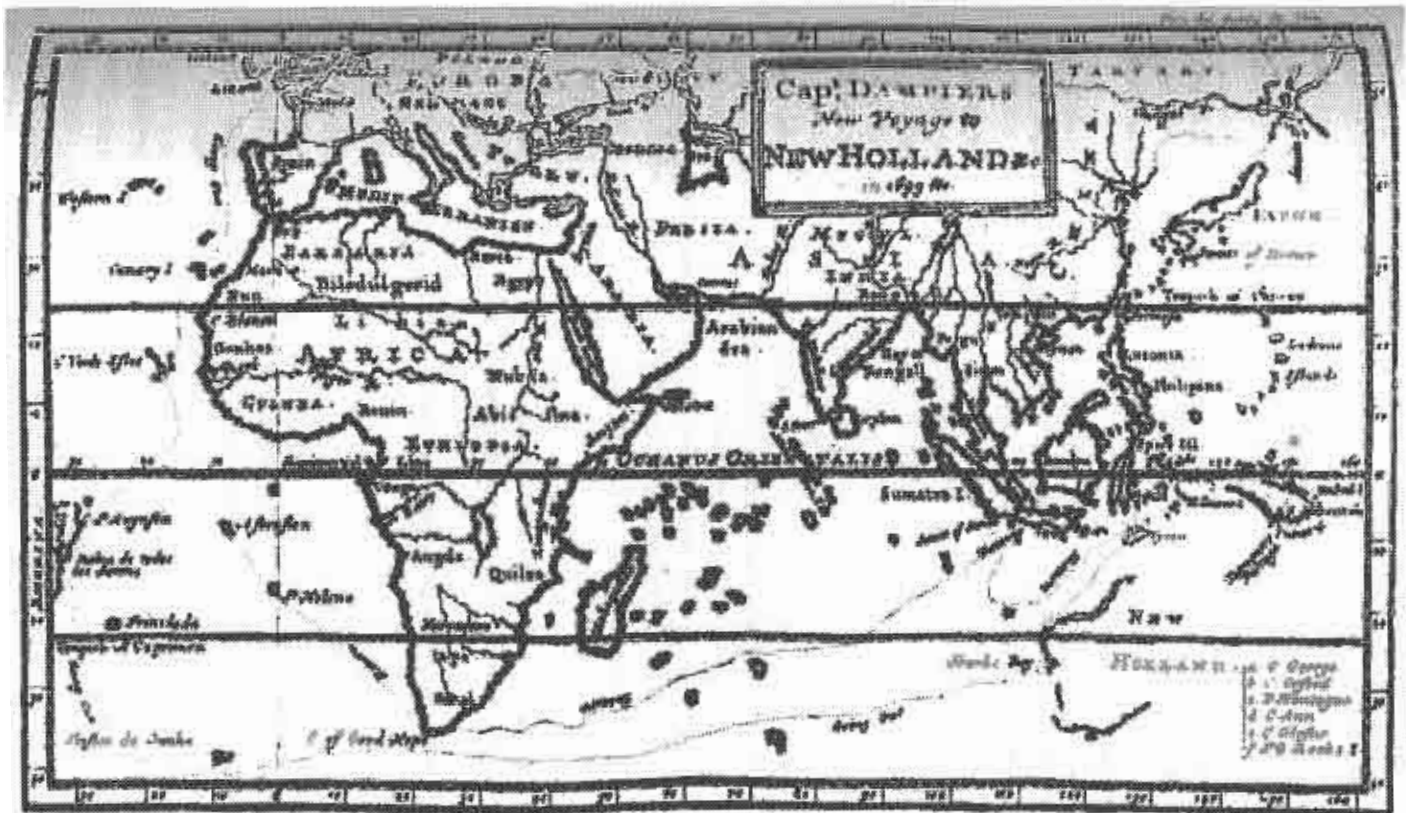
The Voyage of HM Ship *Roebuck*

Too late to take his preferred route via Cape Horn, Dampier departed England on 14 January 1699 for the Cape of Good Hope.⁴ Trouble had surfaced even before they left Deptford, however, centring on acrimony between Dampier and his first Lieutenant George Fisher RN. One analysis indicates that from the moment of departure they were apparently 'behaving equally as boors without a spark of dignity or self-respect... alternately drinking together, backbiting one another to their confidants, and breaking into personal abuse and even fisticuffs in presence of the crew' (Williamson, 1939,

⁴ To avoid confusion, the dates provided are those of Dampier according to the Julian Calendar. They do not correspond with the present dating system.

xxxii). An inevitable state of indiscipline ensued, and *en route* Fisher was caned by Dampier, clapped in irons and confined to his quarters. The crew were divided on the matter and, concerned at the possibility of mutiny, Dampier had Fisher sent ashore and imprisoned for a time at Bahia in Brazil, before he made his way home set on evening up the score.

Figure 6: The Roebuck voyage: (From Wilkinson, 1929: vii)



Having regained control of the ship, Dampier then rounded the Cape of Good Hope, where Wilkinson states:

He found the variation at the Cape more than it was thirty leagues east of it, whereas it should have been less. [In noting this apparent anomaly, Dampier stated] "These things, I confess, did puzzle me—indeed were most shocking to me" . . . Admiral Smyth, a recognized authority, makes the comment that, 'though the local magnetic attraction in ships had fallen under the notice of seamen, he [Dampier] was among the first to lead the way to its investigation, since the facts that 'stumbled' him at the Cape of Good Hope, respecting the variations of the compass, excited the mind of Flinders, his ardent admirer, to study the anomaly.' (Wilkinson, 1929:247).

In continuing on after leaving the Cape of Good Hope, Dampier first made landfall in August 1699 on the Australian continent at the place he subsequently named Sharks Bay on the mid-west coast. There he collected many plants, shells and other specimens, and the in full and detailed descriptions of the plant and animal life encountered, he was the first Englishman to do so. In also describing the landscape and soils and in describing the land and marine animals, some in scientific terms that are still in use today, Dampier deservedly earned himself the title 'Australia's first natural historian' (George, 1999). He also produced a chart of the region that was used a century later on the French explorations of the Bay.

Dampier is not known to have been an artist, however, and the charming drawings in his book entitled *A Voyage to New Holland* are attributed to an unknown member of his crew, a man Dampier himself describes in the preface to his work as a 'Person skill'd in Drawing' (Wm Dampier, preface to *Voyage to New Holland*, reproduced in Williamson edition, 1939: 1xix).

Of some importance to this narrative is Dampier's comment that at 'Sharks Bay' (now Shark Bay), the shore was 'was lined thick with many sorts of very strange and beautiful Shells...I brought away a great many of them...' (Williamson, 1939:86-87). He also comments that further north, in what is now known as the Dampier Archipelago, the tides he encountered indicated that there was possibly a passage through New Holland east to the South Seas. Further north again at Lagrange Bay, just south of present day Broome, he records that '... I gather'd a few strange Shells, chiefly a sort not large, and thick-set all about with Rays or Spikes growing in Rows' (ibid: 107).

Figure 7a: A copy of the cover of William Dampier's *Voyage to New Holland*.

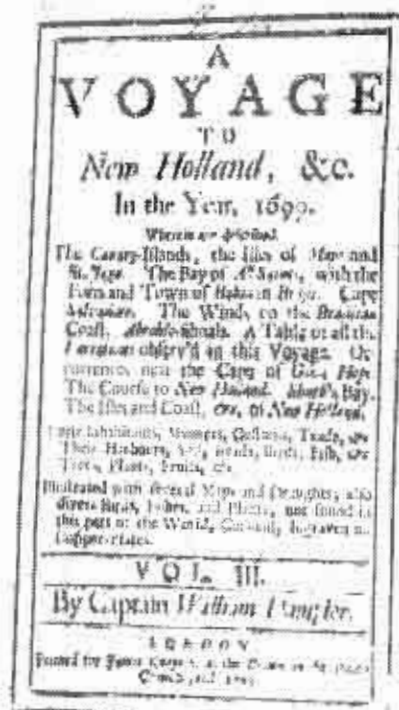
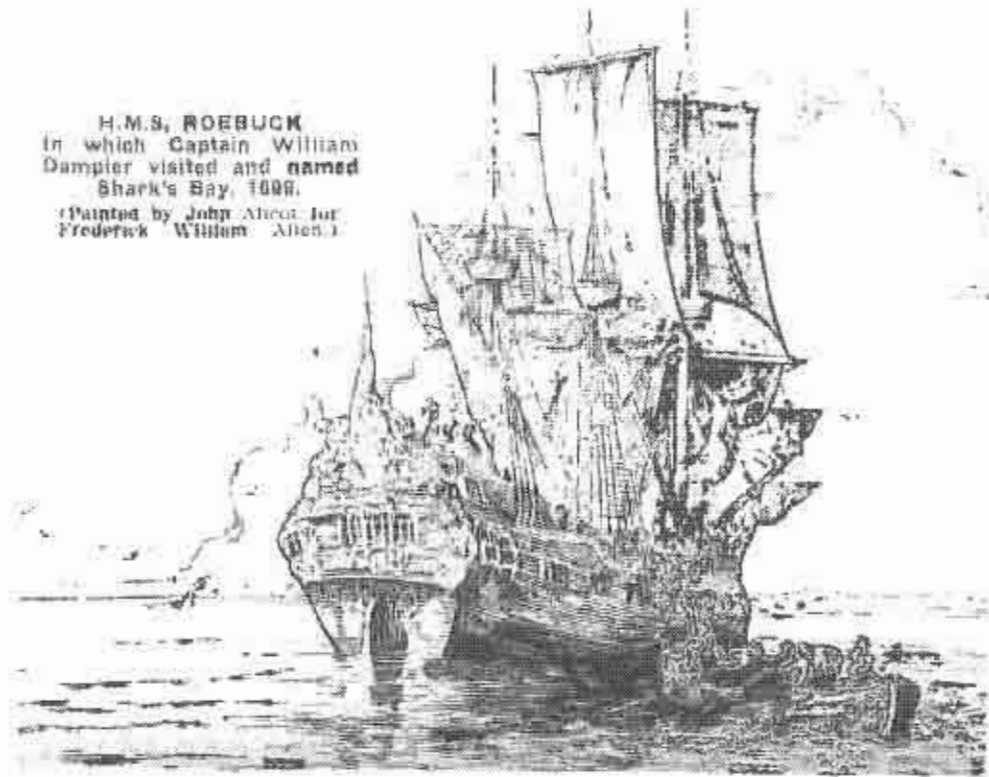


Figure 7b-c: A modern impression of the Roebuck at Shark Bay and a copy of Dampier's chart of Shark Bay



H.M.S. ROEBUCK
in which Captain William
Dampier visited and named
Shark's Bay, 1699.
(Painted by John Alcock for
Frederick William Allen.)

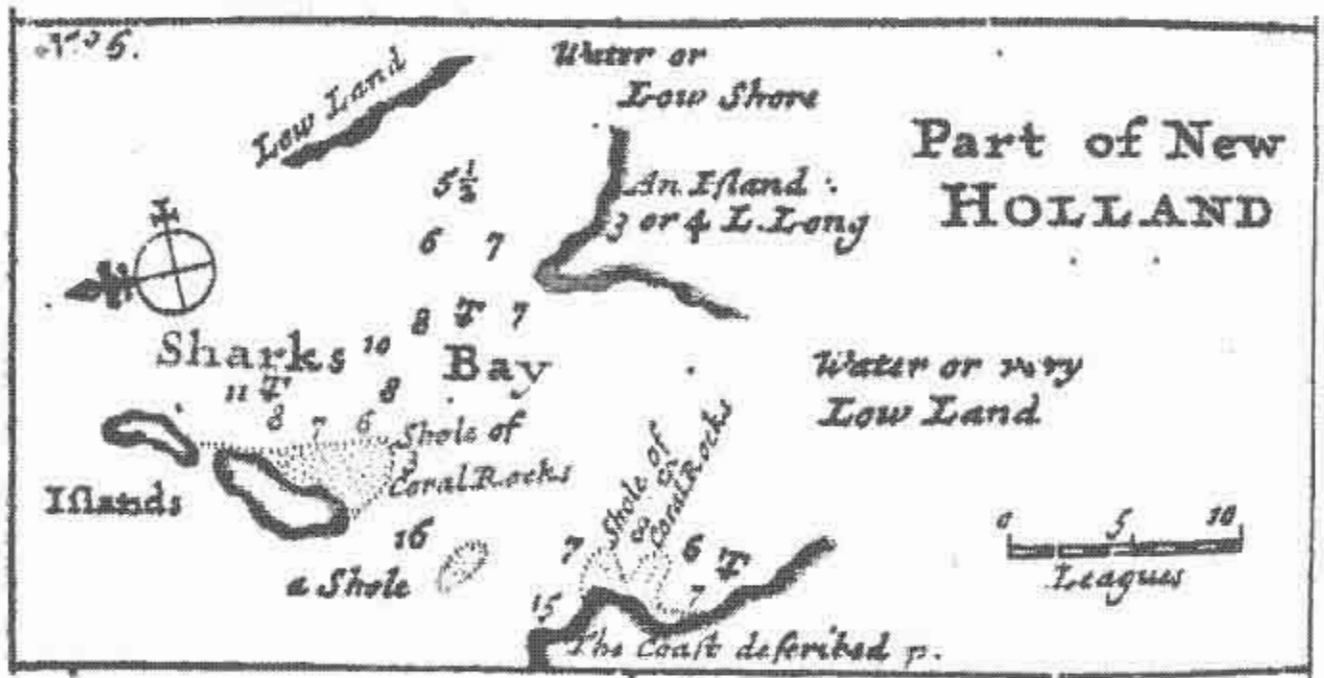


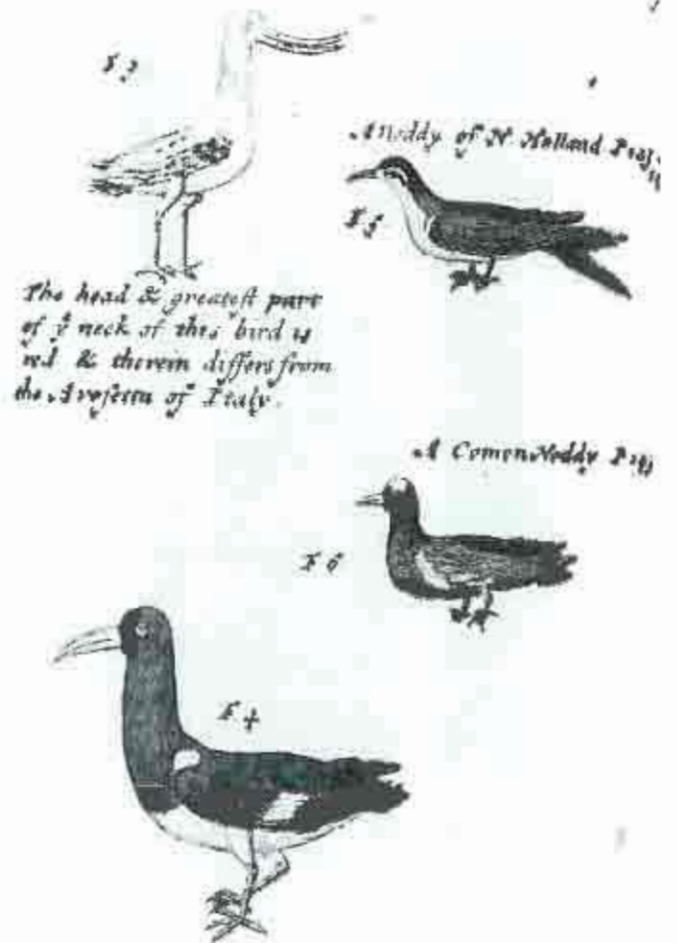
Figure 7d-f: The cover of Alex George's work acknowledging Dampier as Australia's first natural historian and some of the illustrations from Dampier's Voyage to New Holland.



William Dampier
in New Holland

AUTRALIAN FIRST
NATURAL HISTORIAN

ALEX S. GEORGE



In leaving Australia Dampier recorded that:

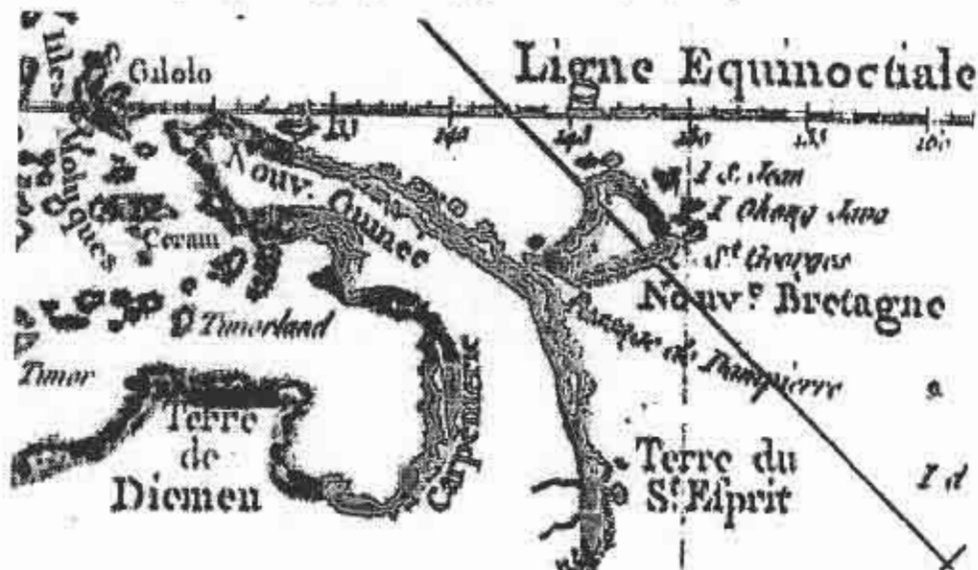
This large and hitherto almost unknown tract of land is situated so very advantageously in the richest climates of the world...that in coasting round it, which I designed by this voyage if possible, I could not but hope to meet with some fruitful lands, Continent or Island, or both (Quoted in Wilkinson, 1929:176).

After calling in to Timor in November, Dampier sailed to the north-west Cape of New Guinea (Irian Jaya) in the vicinity of what is now known as Selat Dampier and there he sent his men ashore at a 'small woody island' he called 'Cockle Island'. His men brought back shells including a 'cockle of a prodigious size', one of which weighed '78 pounds'. The next day they brought back 'several cockles of ten pounds weight' and at from a nearby island 'one empty cockle-shell weighing 258 pounds'. (Dampier Journal, reproduced in Callander, 1768, vol 3:113-115). These entries are of significance in respect of the remains expected at the wreck of HM Ship *Roebuck*.

They then sailed around the northern part of New Guinea, naming Nova Britannia (New Britain). Dampier Strait between the two was subsequently named after him. Soon after and concerned at the state of his ship, at the end of March 1700 Dampier abandoned his plan to sail south to explore the eastern Australian coast, leaving these explorations to Lt James Cook RN well over half a century later. His reasons for doing so are evident in the following quote and here also appears the seed of his coming misfortune.

In the Afternoon I sent my Boat ashore to the Island, to see what Convenience there was to haul our Vessel ashore in order to be mended...but we could not land. I design'd to have stay'd among these Islands till I had got my pinnace refitted; but having no more than one Man who had skill to work upon her, I saw she would be a long Time in Repairing; (which was one great Reason why I could not prosecute my Discoveries further. (Wm Dampier. Quoted in the Masefield edition, 1906, Vol II: 543).

Figure 8: Excerpts from a French chart of New Holland in 1753, showing the area traversed during the final stages of the voyage. Note Dampier passage.



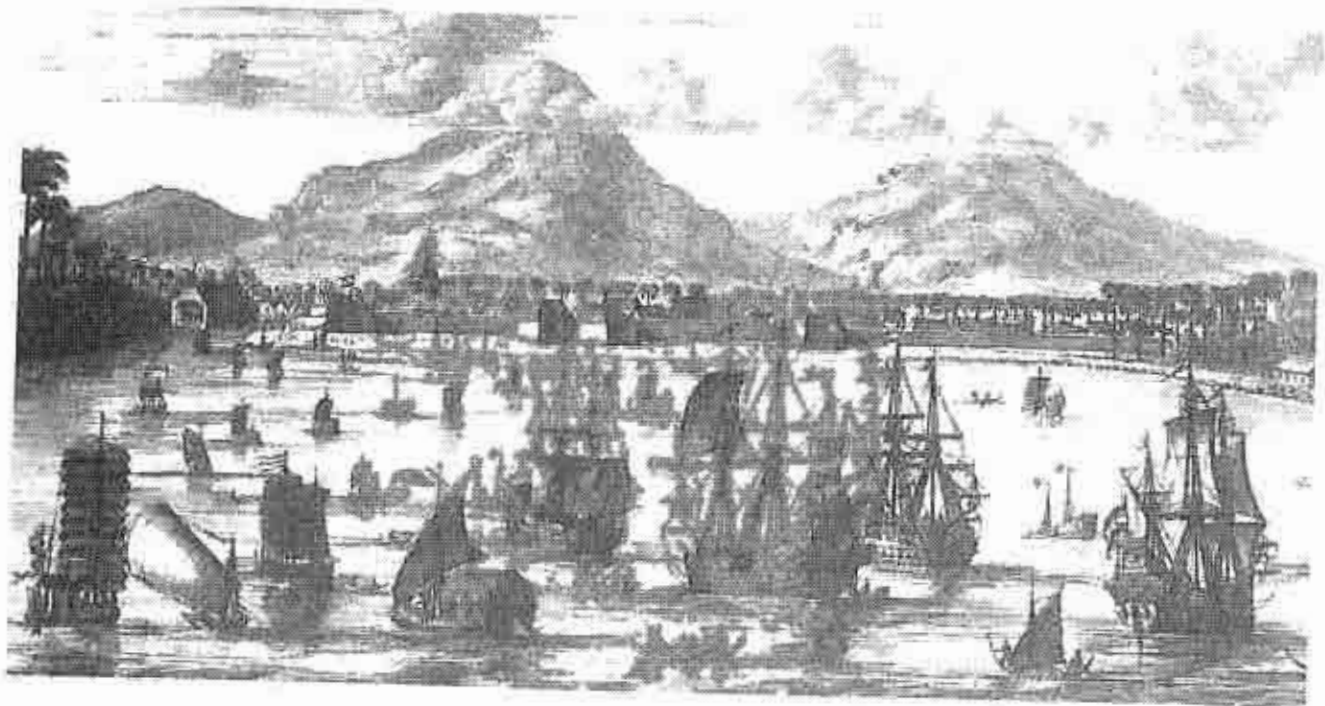
Intending to touch again at New Holland (the west coast) in 20° latitude, he found himself too far west and then headed off in search of the elusive 'Tryal Rocks', scene of the loss of the English East India Company ship *Tryal* (*Trial*) in 1622, the first known European ship lost on the Australian coast. Being sick and unable to continue, Dampier then elected to head for the nearest port Batavia, on west Java.

This vibrant *entrepot* was the headquarters of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the centre of a vast trading network with links to China, Japan, India and Europe generally. A vast array of goods, including ceramics passed through this centre. Again this is of particular significance to this narrative.

Arriving at the end of June, Dampier then set about the repair of his vessel and again the cause of his change of plans and the reasons for the imminent demise of his ailing vessel at the hands of what appears to be an inept ship's carpenter emerge:

... I supplied the Carpenter with such Stores as were necessary for refitting the Ship; which prov'd more leaky after he had caulk'd Her then she was before: So that I was obliged to carreen her, for which purpose I hired Vessels to take our guns, Ballast, Provision and Stores (243).

Figure 9: Batavia in 1676. (From *A New Voyage*, Beken Edlton, 1998: 145).



The loss of the *Roebuck*

On 17 October 1700 they left Batavia, arriving back at the Cape of Good Hope (another VOC centre) at the end of December, and departed thence on 11 January. On 2 February they anchored at St Helena till the 13th and then proceeded to Ascension Island, which they sighted on 21 February 1701.

Dampier's account of the ensuing events reads thus:

From: *William Dampier's unpublished account of the loss of the "Roebuck."* (Public Record Office, Admiralty 1/5262) Dated: 29 September, 1701

An account of the loss of His Majesty's Ship Roebuck Feby 21st 1700/1. At three a'clock in the afternoon being in Sight of the Island Ascension, and not having Light enough to carry us into the Bay where design'd to anchor, ...we stood to the Eastward, At half an hour after 8 in the night we sprung a Leake on the larboard bow about four Strakes from the Keele, which oblig'd us to keep our Chain pump constantly going, at twelve at night having a moderate gale, we bore away for the Island and be daylight were close in with it, at nine a'clock in the morning anchored in the N.W. bay in ten fathom and half water, sandy ground about half a mile from the shoare, the S. point of the bay bore S.S.W. dist. one mile and a half and the northernmost point, N.E. 1/2 N. dist. two mile...

Figure 10: Ascension Island showing major features: (Military Survey, Ministry of Defence, UK, 1997).



... Being come to anchor I ordered the Gunner to clear his Powder roome, that we might there search for the Leake, and endeavour to stop it within board if possible, for we could not heele the Ship so low, neither was there any convenient place to haul her ashoare.... I ordered the Carpenter's Mate...with the Boatswain and some others to goe downe and search for the Leake, the Carpenter's Mate and the Boatswain told me that they could not come at it unless they cut the Ceiling, which I bid them doe, which done they found the Leake against one of the foothook timbers, it was very large, and the water gushed in with great violence... after the cutt the timber... the leake so increased...I ordered a bulkhead to be cutt open to give passage to the water, and withall ordered to cleare away abaft the bulkhead, that we might beale...But about 11 aclock at night the Boatswain came to me, told me... that the Plank was quite rotten, and that it was now impossible to save the Ship...I therefore hoysted out the boate, and next morning, being the 23rd, we weigh'd anchor and warped in nearer the shoare, but to little purpose till in the afternoon we had a Sea breeze by which we gott in within a Cable's length of the Shoare, then made a Raft to carry men's chests and bedding ashoare., and before Eight at night most of them were gott ashoare, She struck not before nine aclock at night, and so continued, I ordered some sailes to be cut from the yards to make us some tents, etc. and the next morning being the 24th myself and Officers went ashoare...

Additional information and details of events significant to the loss of the ship appeared in Dampier's published account entitled *A Voyage to New Holland* that appeared a few years later, in 1703:

...In the Afternoon, with the help of a Sea-breeze, I ran into 7 Fathom, and anchored; Then carried a small Anchor ashore, and warp'd in till I came into 3 Fathom and a half. Where having fastnd her, I made a Raft....

On the 26th following, we, to our great Comfort, found a Spring of fresh water, about 8 Miles from our Tents, beyond a very high Mountain, which we must pass over: So that now we were, by God's Providence, in a Condition of subsisting some Time; having Plenty of very good Turtle by our Tents....The next Day I went up to see the Watering-place...where we found a very fine Spring on the South-East-side of the high mountain, about half a Mile from its top:...About 2 Mile South-East from the Spring, we found 3 or 4 shrubby Trees, upon which was cut an Anchor and Cable, and the year 1642....

[on 3 April] ... appear'd 4 Sail, which came to anchor in this Bay. They were his Majesty's Ships, the Anglesey, Hastings and Lizard; and the Cantebury East-India Ship. I went on board the Anglesey with about 35 of my Men; and the rest were dispos'd of into the other Men of War.

We sail'd from Ascension, the 8th...

Dampier returned home to the inevitable court martial. He also handed over the plant collections he saved from the shipwreck to the Royal Society and they eventually found their way to the Fielding-Druce Herbarium at the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Oxford, where they are presently curated by Ms Serena Marnier (See Appendix 7).

Conjecture about the wreck-site: previous research

The early literature contains no reference to the exact position of the wreck. Further, in concentrating more on the context of the man, his times and on his travels along the coast of New Holland, none of the most modern works assist in the location of his ship. Leslie Marchant, for instance refers only to the Report of the Joint Services Expedition in 1985 and a 'further expedition' to locate the site—presumably under his own aegis—which did not eventuate. (Marchant, 1988:84). In concentrating on Dampier's contribution to natural science, Alex George, author of the most recent work also provided no indication on the location of the wreck (George,1999).

The South West Bay theory

Dampier also did not state where the events that led to the loss of his ship took place and a long-standing island 'tradition' had it that his vessel lay in South West Bay (e.g *The Islander*, 20/4/2000). Another account appearing in J.E. Packer's *The Ascension Handbook: A concise guide to Ascension Island* (1968) reads thus:

1701—Wm. Dampier's vessel 'Roebuck' wrecked probably near S.W. Bay. (See part 2 Dampier's Drip). Goats had already been introduced, probably by Da Nova or D'Albuquerque.

This belief (that the wreck lay in South West Bay) apparently was partly the result of the location of two ancient anchors there (Packer, 1968). It is also reflected in the exhibitions at the Island's Museum as these also referred to South West Bay as the most likely site.

Further, in a short précis entitled *Wrecks Around Ascension Island* that was produced in 1993, author Jeff Cant, also comments that 'South West Bay seems to be the most popular choice for the beaching'. In presuming that, as Dampier fails to mention the ship after it was beached, Cant was of the opinion that *Roebuck* most likely 'broke up due to the action of the seas' (Cant, 1993).

Part of the reasoning behind the 'South West Bay' hypotheses also appears to be deductions based on the naming of a freshwater spring on the north-west side of Green Mountain on Ascension Island 'Dampier's Drip'. Because Dampier recorded he had to travel over a high mountain to access a spring, this led many to concluded that the wreck lay somewhere other than in bays on the north-west side of the island.

A reading of Dampier's own account above indicates that the name given to the spring on the north-west face of Green Mountain was in error, however.

The Clarence Bay theory

However, in examining Dampier's own accounts and in plotting the positions he gives for his vessel it becomes apparent that of all the potential places on the Island, only Clarence Bay on the north-west side fits the bearings he recorded as he came to anchor in a sinking condition.

...at nine a'clock in the morning anchored in the N.W. bay in ten fathom and half water, sandy ground about half a mile from the shoare, the S. point of the bay bore S.S.W. dist. one mile and a half and the northernmost point, N.E. 1/2 N. dist. two mile...

Testimonies provided at the subsequent court martial into the loss of HM ship *Roebuck* and the logs of the vessels that rescued Dampier and his men (See appendix 2), all lead the researcher to focus the north-west side of the island. The following précis from *British Warship losses in the Age of Sail* is but one indication that many others had previously followed this same line of reasoning.

1701

24 February 1701 *Roebuck* 5th Rate 24 guns
292 tons. Wapping 1690

Capt. William Dampier

Returning to England after a voyage of exploration to Australia and New Guinea, a bad leak was discovered in the larboard bow as she approached Ascension Island. The *Roebuck* anchored in the north-west bay of the island, while efforts were made to stop the leak, but a plank about four strakes up from the keel was found to be completely rotten. Filling with water, she was deliberately run close inshore until she grounded, to allow the crew to land before she foundered. The crew spent some time on the island before they attracted the attention of a passing East Indiaman to take them off the island. Dampier was later court-martialled for his actions on board the *Roebuck*, which had led to a mutiny when in the Far East. He was subsequently ordered to forfeit all pay due for the voyage and not employed again. (Hepper, 1994:21)

Further considerations in developing the Western Australian Maritime Museum's search strategy were the methods and equipment utilised by the Joint Services team that performed an extensive search in 1985. While also believing that the site most likely lay in Clarence Bay, in The Long Beach area, they also examined South West Bay and English Bay in their search for the ship (See following).

Earlier searches

Robert Marx's visit in 1973

Robert Marx, a noted wreck hunter, recently indicated that he had found the site in 1973. In a letter on that subject he stated that:

Dampier left such a vivid and accurate account of the area in which his ship was lost, that I was able to find it in less than 20 minutes of diving. With the assistance of several amateur divers from the missile tracking base, we recovered a large number of interesting artefacts which we donated to the local museum. (R. Marx to J. Green, 29/8/2001).

This claim came as quite a surprise when it was received in August 2001, six months after the Museum's team returned from Ascension Island, given the continuing conjecture on the island as to the whereabouts of *Roebuck* that existed right through to March 2001 amongst service personnel, amateur historians and museum officials on the island itself. The claim, which is considered to be in error, is dealt with in Appendix 6 following.

The 1979 Search

Commander John Bingeman, a serving Royal Navy officer, had also conducted an extensive search for wrecks off the west coast of the island and around English Bay. His primary focus was the location of HM ship *Roebuck* and his team initially searched South West Bay, *Roebuck's* traditional resting place. Commander Bingeman advised that these searches were conducted utilising a towed diver system from an inflatable boat and he indicated that his 'servicemen considered they were being used as shark bait' in the process!

In being unsuccessful, and in reassessing Dampier's log, CMDR Bingeman shifted his focus to Clarence Bay and he concluded that the wreck lay buried in the sands off the centre of Long Beach. Despite many hours of towed searches the team failed to find any trace of *Roebuck*.

Commander Bingeman also conducted an extensive archival study and he led the inspection of three wrecks in the area—*Normandie* (1900), HM Store Ship *Maeander* (1870) and a site in Powerhouse Bay that appear to be a conglomeration of HM Store Ship *Tortoise* (c. 1859) and the *Soudan* (1892). (J. Bingeman to M. McCarthy, 14/10/2001). His work appears to have provided the groundwork for the 1985 search, following.

The 1985 Search

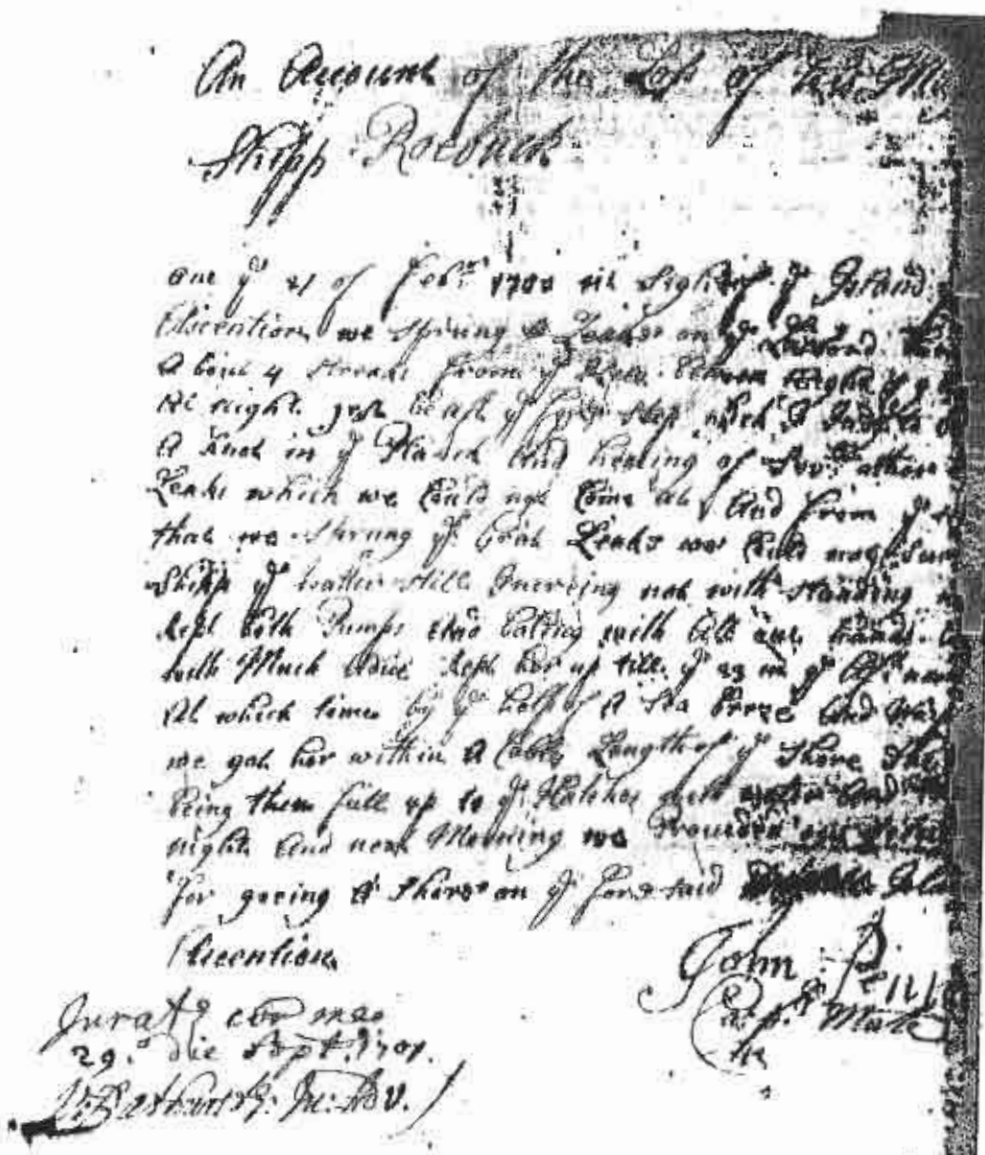
The RAF combined Services team utilised swim searches on scuba and diver tow systems on snorkel and they searched widely and performed a very important function in examining and reporting on all other wrecks on the island. They also recorded that two large anchors had earlier been recovered from North West Bay, though their provenance and location was not known. Squadron Leader C.R. Tebbs RAF, the expedition leader and compiler of the team's report, concluded thus:

In part, the archaeological aims of the expedition were achieved, except in the unsuccessful search for the *Roebuck*. Owing to the highly magnetic nature of the volcanic rock and the serious interference from all the communications equipment and satellite aerials situated on the island, the full potential of the magnetometers was not achieved. However, the magnetometers were used successfully in locating the wreck sites of the iron ships and the task of locating these areas would otherwise have been much more difficult. Extensive searches were made in the seas off Georgetown (the capital of ASI) and southwards to South West Bay. Underwater sleds were used to good effect in carrying out the required search patterns.

Other problems in fixing a starting point for the search

Apart from conducting the literature searches referred to above, the author together with M Philippe Godard also conducted an analysis of the primary sources obtained by researcher Hannah Cunliffe of Wiltshire. She was commissioned to obtain copies of all Dampier-related materials held in British archives, including depositions at the courts-martial into the loss of *Roebuck*. These documents were closely examined and the resultant analyses were produced as a Museum report aiming to fix the most likely search area before departure (McCarthy and Godard, 2001). By this means the bays on the north-west side of the island became the Museum's sole focus of attention. It was an opinion shared by some on Ascension Island, including the Museum's liaison officer on Ascension Island, Flt Lt Richard Burke (R. Burke, to M. McCarthy, 25/10/1999).

Figure 11: Excerpts from the courts-martial. 2 20184 An account of the loss of his Majesty's Shipp *Roebuck* by John Penton. Carpenter's Mate. ADM 1/ 15262. From the originals housed at the Public Records Office. London. See transcripts in Appendix 2.



The Museum's analysis of the primary documentary evidence, a précis of which appears in Appendix 2, showed that after first anchoring his vessel in 10 fathoms of water on the north-west side of the island and concluding that he could not save *Roebuck*, Dampier would have had some time to consider his options before driving the vessel towards the shore, where as the breeze dropped, he again anchored.

After sending an anchor ashore, he hauled the vessel in further until it came to rest in three and a half fathoms (7 metres deep) of water a cable's length (c. 200 metres) from shore. The evidence contained in his depositions to the Court when read carefully against those of the others who also did so, e.g. the Master, indicate that the wreck lay in water no more than three and a half fathoms (7 metres deep) and this placed was almost certainly off Long Beach. These depositions are reproduced in the Appendix 2.

Confounding the matter and making what appeared to be an apparently straightforward conclusion problematic, was the fact that none of the four vessels that came into 'Ascension Roads' on the north-west side of the island barely six weeks after Dampier, saw the wreck. These were the 350-ton East India ship *Canterbury*, HM Ships, the 620-ton *Anglesey*, the 384-ton *Hasting* and the 6th rate *Lizard* mentioned earlier.

A plot based on their logs shows that they all anchored 'close to' in Clarence Bay and at that distance the wreck should have been visible a few cable's length away towards the shore (a distance of c. 500 metres). Instead the three ships noticed Dampier's men first, an apparent indicator that the wreck was then totally submerged, having broken up, was lying on its side, or equally that it was lying somewhere out of their view, possibly even against a backdrop of cliffs at the northern or southern ends of the beach.

Perhaps it had broken up and was already being engulfed in the sands of the beach itself (as is quite often the case elsewhere) for this particular beach was apparently quite mobile. Squadron Leader Tebbs had come to this conclusion and he wrote in the account of the 1985 RAF searches that:

It seems most likely that the *Raebuck* lies underneath the deep sands of Long Beach at Georgetown, and the wreck will probably only be located either after a heavy storm that may shift the sand, or by the use of side-scan sonar or other sub-surface search equipment.

Alternatively it had drifted back out to sea, and again compounding the problem were Dampier's own accounts. One, appearing in the preface to the 1939 edition of his *Voyage to New Holland* reads '...my Ship, having sprung a Leak which could not be stopped, foundered at Sea; with much difficulty we got ashore' (Williamson, 1939: xxii). In that same edition appears a letter from Dampier to the Earl of Pembroke, President of the Privy Council. It reads thus:

The World is apt to judge of every thing by the Success; and whoever has ill Fortune will hardly be allow'd a good Name. This, my Lord, was my unhappiness in my late Expedition in the *Roe-buck*, which founder'd thro' perfect Age near the Island of Ascension.

The use of the phrases 'foundered at Sea' and 'founder'd ...near the Island' lead one to the conclusion that though it had been warped ashore, there was a distinct probability that HM Ship *Roebuck* may have finished up in deeper water off the Island. This could only have occurred if the cable holding the wreck to the shore parted and it could have had drifted back out to sea with the prevailing winds as a semi-submerged derelict.

In planning for the Museum's first visit, it was decided to spend the short time available in examining the first model, i.e. to base the search on the assumption that the ship had not drifted back out to sea and that its remains still lay near the position at which the ship was first abandoned. If this were to prove unsuccessful, on a subsequent visit a search of the deeper waters offshore would be made.

The first task was to fix the area in which the ship was abandoned by following Dampier's recorded movements as his ship slowly sank beneath him. This was to be effected by fixing positions at sea based on his compass bearings and anchoring where and as he described each event in February 1701. Then, if these still supported the notion that the ship was run ashore at Long Beach, rather than South West Bay or any other locality, to search in shallow water a maximum of a cable's length (c. 200 metres) from the present shore at Long Beach in Clarence Bay. In accepting that the beach may have subsequently covered the ship, or that it lay buried under sediments offshore, a combination of visual and remote sensing searches (magnetometers) were planned and minimal-disturbance water-powered sand probes were proposed as a first stage in what was expected to be a prolonged campaign, taking a number of seasons. If results indicated that the vessel was not in shallow water or under the beach, a deep-water search using visual and remote sensing methods (e.g. magnetometer and side scan sonar systems) would need be conducted in later years, as indicated above.

Neil MacFall's analysis

Finally, in conducting a www search under the headings 'William Dampier, *Roebuck* and Ascension Island', an analysis by Ascension Island resident and researcher Mr Neil MacFall was found in electronic copies of the *Islander* for the year 2000. In noting the impending arrival of the Western Australian Maritime Museum's team, he wrote under the heading '*Where is Roebuck*' as follows. The full article appears in Appendix 3.

... tradition says that it was wrecked near South West Bay and that the crew survived on the Island by following a goat to a supply of water at the place that is now called Dampier's Drip...In fact this log of Dampier's will bear closer inspection because if it is read carefully it will reveal that the "Roebuck" is very unlikely to be found off South West Bay at all. With a diving party expected on the Island to search for the wreck I thought it might be a good time to open a discussion on where the ship may now lie and therefore offer my theory to (hopefully) open this forum.

... The area around South West Bay would not offer a safe or even convenient anchorage. Dampier's log for 23 February 1701 states:-

"at 9 anchored in 10 and a half Fathom, sandy Ground. The South-point bore South-South-West distance 2 Miles, and the North-point of the Bay, North-east half North, distance 2 Miles"

The sighting of a point of land two miles to the southwest straightaway rules out South West Bay. The only area where this could apply would be on the north eastern side of the island between Bottle Point and North West Point - or in "English Roads". The second point of the description "2 Miles to the North-east, half North" could apply to anywhere on the south coast or the west coast from South East Bay to "English Roads". Therefore the only place to fit both descriptions would be "English Roads" or as we call it Clarence Bay.

... After repairs had proved unsuccessful the ship was then run in to 7 fathoms (42 feet) riding on a sea breeze and then warped in to 3 and a half fathoms, where she finally sank on 25 February 1701. This would put the wreck of the ship off the northern end of Long Beach, just to the southwest of Bate's Point at a depth of 21 feet, though of course the currents may have subsequently moved her away from that position.

MacFall then translated his analysis into artwork in preparation for an issue of First Day cover stamps commemorating the Tri-Centennial of the arrival of Dampier timed for the February of 2001. Presented to the team on arrival at Ascension Island the very next month, the stamps carried a depiction of events that was later to prove to be remarkably accurate. Of additional importance was the timing of the visit—like that to the *Uranie* site—it coincided with events that occurred centuries earlier.

Figure 12: Neil MacFall's depiction of the loss of Roebuck in Clarence Bay as part of the Dampier Tri Centennial stamp issue

Tercentenary Of The Sinking Of HMS 'Roebuck



Ascension Island

The Western Australian Maritime Museum's search

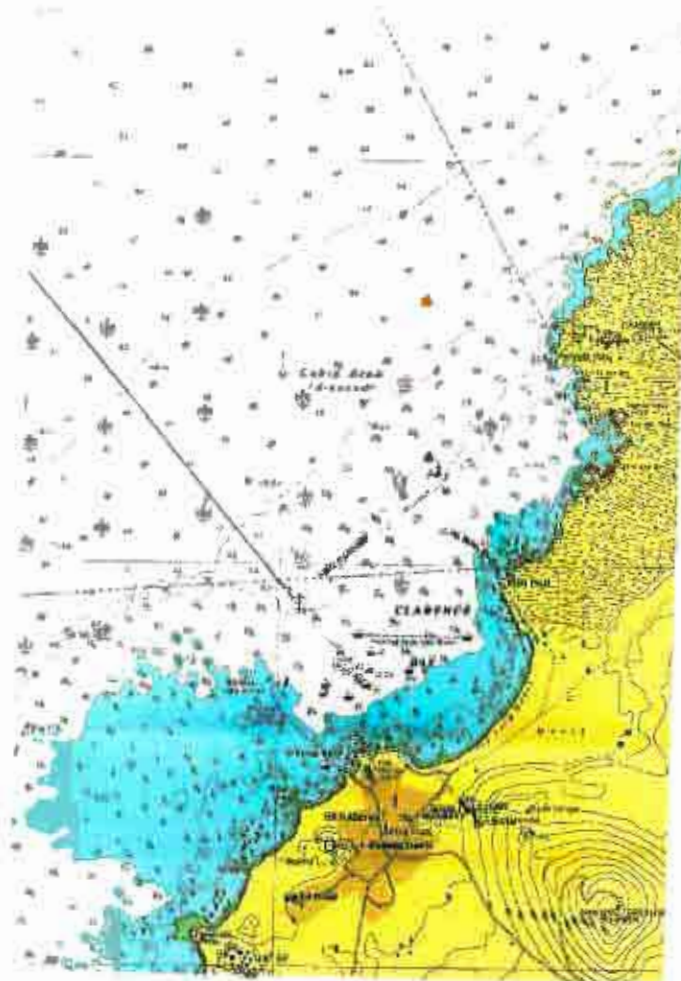
Preliminary fieldwork

In brief the sequence of events leading to the location of relics that have since proved an indisputable pointer to the location of William Dampier's ship was as follows:

On the morning of 15 March 2001, the day after arrival on Ascension Island from the inspection of the remains of the French exploration frigate *L'Uranie* (1820) at the Falkland Islands, the Museum team proceeded in the RAF fishing/diving boat *Ascension Frigate* skippered by our liaison officer Flt Lt Richard Burke RAF for a familiarization dive of the waters in the region. There an indication was had of the sea conditions, of the underwater terrain, of the fish life and (very importantly) of the appearance of wreckage and other detritus in Ascension Island waters. This was essential, for initially (and quite incorrectly) the team had expected substantial coral growth over wreckage, as was common in the Indo-Pacific region.

Later in the day the group then sailed to the position recorded by William Dampier on 24 February 1701 (Julian Calendar), while his ship was in a sinking state. Winds were offshore, seas were slight, on a low swell.

Figure13: Excerpts from Admiralty Chart of Ascension Island (BA 1691, Ascension Island).



Journals and the other accounts of the loss of the ship were read to those onboard while the *Ascension Frigate* was stationed as close as possible at *Roebuck's* first anchorage in 10 fathoms of water. An exact replication of the positions given by Dampier i.e. '... in ten fathom and half water, sandy ground about half a mile from the shoare, the S. point of the bay bore S.S.W. dist. one mile and a half and the northernmost point, N.E.1/2 N.dist. two mile...' was not possible, it being occupied on the occasion of our visit by the Island's Tanker, the *Maersk Gannet*.

Figure 14: *Maersk Gannet* on Dampier's anchorage (Photo John Williams)



While there pondering the situation and with an offshore (predominantly easterly) wind, a small 'willy-willy' (circular localised wind gust) was seen on shore heralding the temporary change of wind direction that is customary around midday. This had been predicted by our guide, Richard Burke, as a regular, but short-lived daily phenomenon.

On this occasion it translated into a rare sustained sea-breeze as per the events that befell Dampier 300 years ago. With these fortuitous events the team were able to deduce with an element of surety Dampier's next course of action in the minutes that would have elapsed as he recognised the opportunity and ordered the ship be got underway. Then with time running out as the anchor was raised and the sails were unfurled and filled, there was just enough of the breeze remaining to allow him to run into 7 fathoms where the breeze then died. He then sent an anchor ashore in order to warp the ship in close.

Thus the team was able to settle on the probable grounding site of HM Ship *Roebuck*. When quizzed on their choice of action in the circumstances, for example, six of the seven on board *Ascension Frigate* chose a direct easterly route in to the beach, with one selecting a south-easterly course in towards the beach at what is now the Pier-head. The winds certainly allowed for such a range of choices, even for a cumbersome and water-laden 'square

rigger' such as the sinking *Roebuck*. Being closest and clear of any visible obstructions, the middle-to-northern end of Long Beach was deemed the best starting place for the search by the majority, though it needs be admitted that it was a near-unanimous choice that was partly dictated by the heavy swells which seemed lower in that area.

At the evening meeting, experience obtained at wrecks driven ashore in storms or similar circumstances was drawn on to form a predictive model for the ensuing search. One very useful example was the 40-gun VOC ship *Zuytdorp* (1712) a much larger vessel than *Roebuck* and one normally drawing c .4-5 metres, which came to rest lying in 2-3 metres of extremely rough water on the Western Australian coast. Another was the hull of the French exploration Frigate *L'Uranie* (1820), of slightly less draught, that the team had found and inspected in 3-4 metres of far less turbulent water at the Falkland Islands the previous week. These two examples indicated that, if it had not been blown back out to sea, Dampier's wreck most likely lay in much less than the 21 feet of water (3 and a half fathoms) described by Dampier as the grounding site. Perhaps, like the *Zuytdorp*, it lay in the surf zone where the scuba diving and towed diver searches of 1985 appear not to have searched.

Search method

Thus the Western Australian Museum search was to be focussed in the shallows close by shore and in the breakers; and, if unsuccessful, it was intended to commence a series of magnetometer surveys and water-driven probes onshore on the beach itself.

The first stages of the search were to be conducted from land through the waves utilising a common, very simple, but quite accurate 'transit' survey method. This entailed swimming out from the beach along a line marked onshore with temporary 'navigation leads' similar to those used by vessels to navigate in and out of narrow channels. One diver was to submerge, the other to keep the team on track. At the completion of that line the divers were to move down to the next line 5 metres south and then swim back to the shore.

Figure 15: The Transit Search method (John Williams)



The next morning, on March 16, the team then proceeded to the northern end of Clarence Bay by land to commence the search of Long Beach. The first two sets of 'leads' were erected and two divers (Kimpton and Lashmar) commenced work. While they were occupied in this manner the others in the team were engaged erecting the next pair of 'leads' for the divers to use as their navigational guide. A search of the beach and of the rocks in the wave line was also conducted.

Again fortuitously, the beach was found to be heavily eroded and very steep just inshore of high water mark, with rocks formerly covered with sand at the northern end completely exposed.

Figure 16: Erosion at the beach (Photo Hugh Edwards).



The location of debris and wreckage

Many heavily-concreted iron fastenings were seen amongst the rocks at the north end of the bay. Though clearly of ancient origin given their form, these were interspersed with such large quantities of modern concreted, iron and steel detritus that it precluded any definitive conclusions being made, for the area was clearly a natural wreckage trap.

Amongst the rocks at the northern end of the beach was a considerable amount of material consisting of concreted iron-work, modern detritus, ceramic fragments, and what appeared to be a broken amulet. This was similar to those seen by the author on the 'Blackbirder' *Foam* (1893) a wooden 'labour schooner' wrecked on the Great Barrier Reef (Beck, 1999) and it was considered possibly of South Sea Island origin. The find was inconclusive, however, and being firmly wedged in the rocks, was left in-situ. While searching along the first eight transit lines (0-45 m) in a moderate swell and smooth seas from the shore to depths offshore of around 7-8 metres (the practical limit of the visibility) and no more than 200 metres from the beach, Kimpton and Lashmar saw numerous concreted objects and much debris.

It soon became apparent from an examination of the recently exposed beach that its entire northern end was littered above and below water with steel drums (appearing as iron hoops), jetty fittings, wreckage and rubbish. Significant or interesting items requiring further inspection were marked from shore, again using a series of intersecting transit markers.

Figure 17: Hugh Edwards with the materials exposed at the high water mark. (Photo M. McCarthy)



After just under an hour of searching with Geoff Kimpton along the transit lines set on the beach, John Lashmar descended and while swimming along the bottom he located a bronze bell on the 9th transit line. It was found lying almost totally uncovered but affixed to a cleft in rocks c. 90 metres from shore on a rock/sand seabed c. 4 metres deep. It had a large hole in its upper surface and was full of shells and other marine matter.

Indications were that the bell had only recently been exposed—with a distinct line on its surface delineating the high point of the latest sand movement around it. Further, the rocks above and around it were all totally devoid of sea life and algae, indicating that they had only recently emerged from the sand. The search regime was then halted, with the team uniformly in disbelief.

After the find was examined by all present on snorkel, the search was suspended for the day while the bell was recorded with video and still cameras on SCUBA. While thus engaged numerous iron concretions, some lead? sheathing, crumpled iron work and large quantities of clearly modern detritus were seen in the vicinity of the bell. This included many 44-gallon drum ends, and a buried tractor tyre with only a small part of its side casing visible. Estimated at around 30 cm wide, this provided a very useful clue to the depth of the sand remaining in the area adjacent the bell.

Figure 18: The Bell as found. Note the lack of marine growth on the rocks adjacent (Photos John Lashmar & Geoff Kimpton).



For a while the ordered progression of the search was lost and a random swim of the immediate area was conducted. A short time later a heavily-concreted grapnel, similar in size to those found on longboats of the period, was found concreted to a rock on an exposed rocky seabed further south.

Figure 19: The concreted grapnel (Photo from a video record by G. Kimpton)



Then a large clam was found exposed in a cleft in the reef on the seabed just a few metres south. It lay in the swell in shallower water c. 100 metres south of the bell and c. 8 metres from shore. The grapnel lay in slightly deeper water than the clam.

Figure 20: John Williams and the clam, showing the sand ridge slightly to seaward and rocks devoid of all marine growth (Photo M. McCarthy)



A few metres further south again, in shallower water, close to the beach and in a very turbulent location, two heavily-eroded, slightly tapering iron objects, very similar to the remains of heavily eroded cannon found on a contemporary site, the wreck of the VOC Ship *Zuytdorp* (1712), were seen. These lay in the wave line and were firmly wedged amongst the rocks.

Figure 21: The eroded cylindrical objects, possibly cannon (Photo from a video record by M. McCarthy)



Once tapering cylinders, these objects had much of their upper surface worn away, apparently by constant sandblasting in the surge. Trunnions or (as is often the case in turbulent exposed conditions like those experienced at the *Zuytdorp*) stubs of trunnions, were not visible, precluding any identification of them as a cannon.

Another also had some of the characteristics of an iron bilge pump pipe, (whose discrete lengths are often incorrectly reported as cannon), but again no identification was made in the circumstances. The wave action and the concreted state of the cylinders also precluded measurements and other analyses that would have resolved these issues.

Throughout there were also landing craft/airstrip tracks from WWII, 44-gallon drum ends, and other unidentified modern detritus, including various sizes and diameters of modern (20th century) pipe. The dive was then concluded and the evidence reviewed.

One obvious conclusion was that a magnetometer, or water probe survey would have proved useless, and given the amount of modern debris exposed on the seabed, a great deal of time would have been spent analysing unrelated detritus if those methods had been relied on.

Another was that, while much of the materials on the seabed and amongst the rocks appeared ancient, their provenance and in many cases their original form and purpose could not be ascertained in a non-disturbance fashion. The heavily-eroded tapering 'pipe' and the ceramic finds proved inconclusive, for example, for in being fixed to the rocks and constantly washed by strong aerated seas, were not adequately examined.

Further, the area at the north end of long beach was a 'trap' for wreckage. This was evident from the materials, jetty fragments, iron-work of all descriptions, rubbish and detritus, lying exposed in the far northern end, at the foot of the heavily-eroded beach itself, in the rocks at the head of the beach and in the water.

The relics : Indicators of the presence of HM ship *Roebuck*?

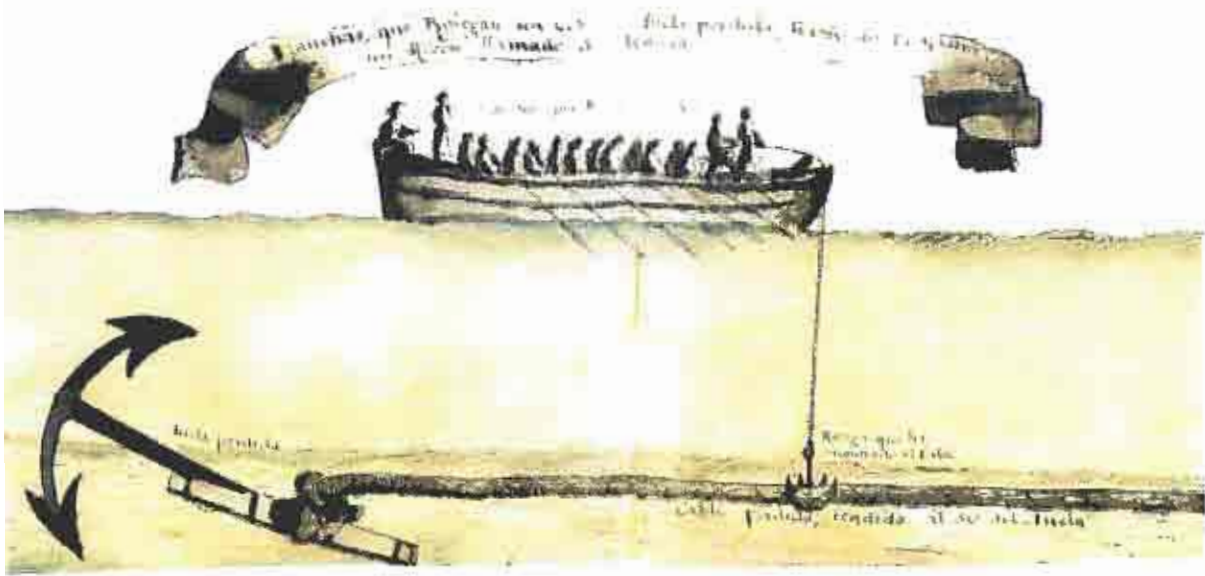
The reasons for believing that the materials identified were an indicator of the final resting place of HM Ship *Roebuck* were thus:

1) The location of the bell in such a diverse wreckage field while inconclusive, was a clear pointer to the loss of a significant early vessel in the bay.

2) The location of the concreted grapnel near the shore and in such a configuration as to indicate that its rope was once tangled and that it was irretrievable when abandoned, was considered highly significant. The Captain's Log of HMS *Hastings* for 5 April 1701 reads as follows:

Satterday 5. . . Wind and Weath[er] Do [ditto]. In y afternoon came on board seven Of y Roebuck men at 10 at night got on board y Roebuck anchor being her small bower and fourtenn fath[om] of cable In giting of which o[ur] Longboat Lost her Grapnel.

Figure 22: Contemporary illustrations showing details of the recovery of a ship's anchor with a grapnel (Album Del Marqués De La Victoria, 1756, Plate:76).



3) Cr Les Moss, the President of the Shire of Shark Bay, and Hugh Edwards, noted wreck diver and author of a recently-published book on the bay, both considered that the clam was very similar to those seen on the north west coast of Western Australia and in nearby tropical waters.

As there were no others seen throughout the inspection and on the familiarisation dives conducted earlier, it was considered to have been brought to the island by human hand, most likely from the Indo-Pacific region. When Dampier's accounts of his collecting shells while on the Australian coast were considered, the possibility that it was part of his collection became evident. In his account of events at Shark Bay that was published subsequent to his return to England after the loss of his ship, he wrote:

The Shore was lined thick with many sorts of very strange and beautiful Shells.... I brought away a great many of them: but lost all except a very few, and those not of the best (Wm Dampier, Quoted in the Wilkinson Edition, 1929:87).

Here Dampier refers to the loss of his ship and most of his shell collection. If not a Shark Bay shell, possibly it was one of the 'cockles' or clams varying upwards from '10 pounds' that were recovered from the waters of Irian Jaya a short while before *Roebuck* turned back for home.

If it could be confirmed as non-indigenous to Ascension Island waters, and unless it could be proved that the clam was introduced to the area by others e.g. by American or British Service personnel or others travelling from the Indo-Pacific region, here was a clear indication that it was part of Dampier's cargo.

On the balance, the bell, the clam, the grapnel, the concreted ironwork and other debris, including the ceramics in the rocks, were sufficient as an assemblage to conclude that the team had possibly located the wreck-site of HM Ship *Roebuck*.

The finds and these conclusions were reported that afternoon to the Administrator HH Geoffrey Fairhurst and the video record was shown to him, to Mrs Wendy Fairhurst, Museum Curator, and to other museum and island officials.

The movement of sand cover: a fortuitous event.

In describing the extent to which rocks were visible on the beach and underwater, we were advised that the sand movement on the beach was unprecedented in HH Fairhurst's memory.

This was subsequently confirmed in discussions with Mr Jimmy Young, a St Helenan, who after 40 years in residence, since 1960, is the longest-serving resident on Ascension Island. He indicated that he had never seen the beach so eroded and that at one time it was possible to walk in almost a direct line from the Turtle Farm at the south end of the beach to the area now occupied by the 'Saints Beach Club' barbecue hut at the north end, that is this confirmed the understanding that the remains were only recently uncovered. Mr Young also advised of the removal of vast quantities of sand for construction work during the Falklands conflict, an activity that was halted by concerns over its effect on the turtle population which regularly laid their eggs there.

Mr Young, who also dived with the 1985 RAF expedition, indicated that they had tended to concentrate their searches in the deeper waters around the island, being prevented by the swell and their tow search methods from venturing in too close. Finally Commander John Bingeman, leader of the 1979 search has advised that photographs of the beach taken in the 1940s when the Americans were landing equipment show the beach extending much further out to the west than is the case today. He has also recalls that the 'Saints Beach Club' was much further back from the sea on the occasion of

his visit in 1979 and that there was a 'smooth incline' from the beach down to the sea and not the 'sand cliff' that the 2001 team encountered.

Figure 23a: View south across the bay with team journalist Carmelo Amalfi. Previously the sand covered much of the region shown to the left of picture. (Photo: Hugh Edwards).



Figure 23b: View into the northern end of the bay, showing the exposed rocks and eroded beach-front. (Photo M. McCarthy)



The excavation and recovery of the bell and clam

From experience with similar situations, such as that at the remains of the *Zuytdorp* (1712), where objects such as cannons have been severely abraded and in some cases almost totally destroyed by similar forces, the author then advised the Administrator that, as the clam and bell were without a protective layer of concretion, they were in danger from both natural and human forces. This advice was based on the fact that they were all clearly visible and they were being 'sandblasted' by abrasive particles carried on each surge. A video record of this phenomenon was also presented. Subsequently, and after due consideration of the many issues involved—including the possibility that the objects be left in situ—as Receiver of Wreck and as the representative of the British Government, Mr Fairhurst notified the Admiralty of his decision to ask the Museum team to raise the 'at risk' materials by fax. Then he requested that the Museum team remove the 'at risk' materials in association with the Ascension Island Dive Club.

Having earlier obtained a commitment for the conservation of any objects that may require attention during the expedition, it was decided to proceed and recover the materials on the following day, despite having made a prior commitment to the British Admiralty to conduct only a non-disturbance search and survey, unless otherwise directed.

By the morning of 17 March, conditions had deteriorated somewhat overnight, the swell was moderate to heavy and the visibility in the northern corner of the bay was less than 2 metres. Again luck was with the team, for the bell may not have been seen had these conditions prevailed on the previous day.

The Broad Arrow on the bell

With the entire museum team and Ascension Island divers, Richard Burke, Phil Chechowitz, Joe Lomseck, Paul Philpott and Jimmy Young in attendance, or in boats stationed above, the excavation commenced. The bell was recorded with still and video cameras and then excavated by chipping away the stones and shell that secured it to a cleft in the rocks on the seabed. It was then placed on a sand bottom nearby and its contents were excavated, secured and recovered. These shells, stones and concretion products from the interior were retained for further study and analysis. A 'Broad Arrow'—mark of British Admiralty since the 1300s (Researcher H. Cunliffe, to M. McCarthy, June, 2001) was visible on the underside of the bell.

The bell, which measured 340mm wide by 300mm high, was then raised and once secured in a tub on the RAF inflatable it was taken to the Pier-head for photography by the local newspaper and transported back to the team's base on the beach for further recording and presentation to those who had gathered to see it.

Recovery of the clam

The clam, which lay face down and was locked into place between two rocks by shells, stones and other cemented matter, was then excavated in a similar fashion. It too was placed on the sand seabed alongside for an

examination of the excavated area and for further recording. While in that position, (i.e. on its back) a set of waves came through that not only sent a stream of sand-laden water across it, but was of such strength as to move the clam inshore and to 'flip' it back onto its face. This process was recorded and it attests to the processes whereby the clam got into its present location and to the destructive nature of the sand and waves, especially when the seabed is rapidly changing. GPS positions were then recorded.

After a celebratory gathering and photographs on the beach, the materials were transported back to the team's base and their arrival there was followed by the usual cataloguing, on-site conservation and storage in a secure environment. Information on their short-to-mid term storage on the island was obtained from the Department of Conservation at the Western Australian Museum.

Figure 24: The bell and clam with the dive team: Photograph by Carmelo Amalfi. Note the line on the bell, possibly an indicator of a past sand movement.



The possibility that the bell was from another RN ship

Initially the team's euphoria at finding the bell from a Royal Navy ship was dissipated when local historians advised of uncertainty that HM Ship *Roebuck* was the only RN vessel to have been lost in the bay.

Research undertaken that evening by Ian Andrews, Neil and Susan MacFall indicated that though a number of vessels were recorded as having been lost in the bay, none was an early British naval vessel.

One of their sources was *Bates' Journal*, a contemporary account, housed in the Island Museum, of events and occurrences during the naval occupation. The ship *Hall*, for example, a 'free trader' came in on 26 August 1834 in a sinking condition and after cargo was got off, she was hauled into the shallows at the beach. Significantly, it was recorded that in less than an hour it 'was dashed to 10,000 pieces'. In November of the same year, the brig *Lady Durham* caught fire and was set adrift. While neither was a naval vessel, both could have added to the masses of wreckage found in the bay in March 2001.

In respect to the possibility that the bell could have emanated from an earlier naval wreck, research also indicated that the island was still uninhabited in 1793 and the British occupation commenced only after Napoleon Bonaparte was landed at St Helena. As a further precaution, formal possession of Ascension Island was taken on 22 October 1822 and all wrecks after the arrival of the British, especially those of naval vessels, would have been well documented.

Mr Jimmy Young's ceramic finds

On the evening of the location of the bell and clam, Mr Jimmy Young called in, showing the team an ornate blue and white ceramic lid that he had found eight or nine weeks earlier. He noticed part of it projecting above the sand while he was SCUBA diving in 5-6 feet of water near a submerged rock c. 150 metres south of the BBQ hut at the north end of the beach. Slight erosion of a small section of the surface of the lid, consistent with its being exposed for short period on a mobile seabed, and a small concretion within the lid itself confirmed Mr Young's observations. Significantly, he also advised that the ceramics were recovered when the sand level was much lower than that seen even by the Museum team. The lid also displayed evidence of abrasion consistent with it being exposed for only a short period (perhaps only a few weeks at the utmost) in the swells.

The next morning Mr Young brought in an intact brown earthenware pot that he had recovered from the same location, at the same time and in the same circumstances. He also advised that he had seen a large timber with a softwood treenail visible in the same vicinity. Again this jar showed slight wear on what had clearly been a surface exposed for only a brief period of time and it also had evidence of concretion sufficient on a number of surfaces sufficient to again verify the circumstances of the find.

Preliminary indications were that these ceramics were consistent with Dampier's time and travels, though clearly expert opinion needed to be obtained.

Now aware that it was considered possible that these ceramics were also related to the bell, clam and grapnel finds, Mr Young immediately sought to make them available to Museum Curator Mrs Wendy Fairhurst for exhibition at Ascension Island. Clearly if it could be subsequently proved that the ceramics were from HM Ship *Roebuck*, then Mr Young must logically be considered to have been the first to have located material from William Dampier's ship.

Figure 25: Mr Young and Flt Lt Burke with the lid and the jar (Photo M. McCarthy)



Further in-water searches

In closely examining the seabed around a large rock in the vicinity of Mr Young's finds, now designated 'Jimmy's Rock', the Museum team also located three small ceramic sherds lying on the seabed in the wave line at the foot of the rock. These were not far from both the clam and the grapnel finds. They were also raised, placed in a secure on-site conservation environment and then recorded and catalogued. This rock and others in the vicinity were also examined closely and a distinct line of weed c. 50 cm higher than the seabed was noticed, with all below it devoid of any life. This added further evidence to the conclusion that the seabed had only recently dropped.

On 17 March, with smooth seas and a moderate to heavy swell that further reduced visibility in the northern corner, the entire region from the concrete block that fortuitously marks the middle of the bay, to seaward and back to the Bates Point, was searched with the assistance of the RAF dive team of Phil Chechowitz (USAF), Paul Philpott, Joe Lomseck, Jimmy Young and Richard Burke (See Figure 24).

The tip of another large grapnel was located to seaward of the first, as was a very small grapnel embedded in the rocks north-west of the bell find. Loose timbers were also located in a line of reef to seaward of the site. Disappointingly, the location of more grapnels reduced the impact of the first find, and it cast doubt on the belief that the first grapnel was that lost during the recovery of Dampier's anchor.

The second large grapnel was clearly ancient and the sand around it was hand-fanned to better gauge its size and provenance. After some difficulty, it was ascertained that its arms measured approximately one metre from fluke to fluke and that, given that only the extreme tip of one vertical fluke was originally visible, it therefore lay in a bed of sand around a metre thick. It was not possible to ascertain what the grapnel was lying on however.

The next day was Sunday 18 March was designated a free day and while sightseeing members of the group examined the island for shipwreck materials such as guns and anchors.

On the Monday the team anchored *Ascension Frigate* in around three and a half fathoms, c. 21-24 feet of water, about 200 metres offshore and about a third of the way from the northern end of the beach in a bid to fix *Roebuck's* grounding site.

The submerged reef offshore

Lying almost under the boat appeared a line of rocks of varying length and height running from Bates Point diagonally across the bay towards the south-east. Of varying width, projecting from around 3 to 5 feet (1-1.5 metres) above a sand bottom, and having gaps between each outcrop not much more than 5 metres, the line was dubbed by Hugh Edwards, as the picket fence reef'.

Depths to the seafloor alongside the reef measured 15 feet at its northern end at 7° 55.189'S, 14°24.420'E, nor far offshore from the bell, to a

maximum of 23 feet in the middle of the line, and shallowing again to the southern end to 19 feet deep at 7° 55.259'S, 14°24.435' E.

Here there were large quantities of modern ferrous and other materials interspersed amongst the rocks that formed the reef. This and the materials exposed on the seabed elsewhere confirmed that magnetometers, metal detection equipment and water jet 'probes' would not prove suitable search tools in this environment.

Again there were indicators that the seabed had dropped even at this distance from the shore. In again referring to the experience at the *Zuytdorp*, it was recalled that a cannon removed from that particular site and deposited over 400 metres offshore in 20 metres of water on a sand bottom was found a few months later lying on bedrock.

The implications of the submerged reef offshore

An obvious issue with the nature and configuration of the 'picket fence reef' was the question whether *Roebuck* grounded at, or on, the reef as it was warped inshore. These events are described by Dampier in the account reproduced earlier thus:

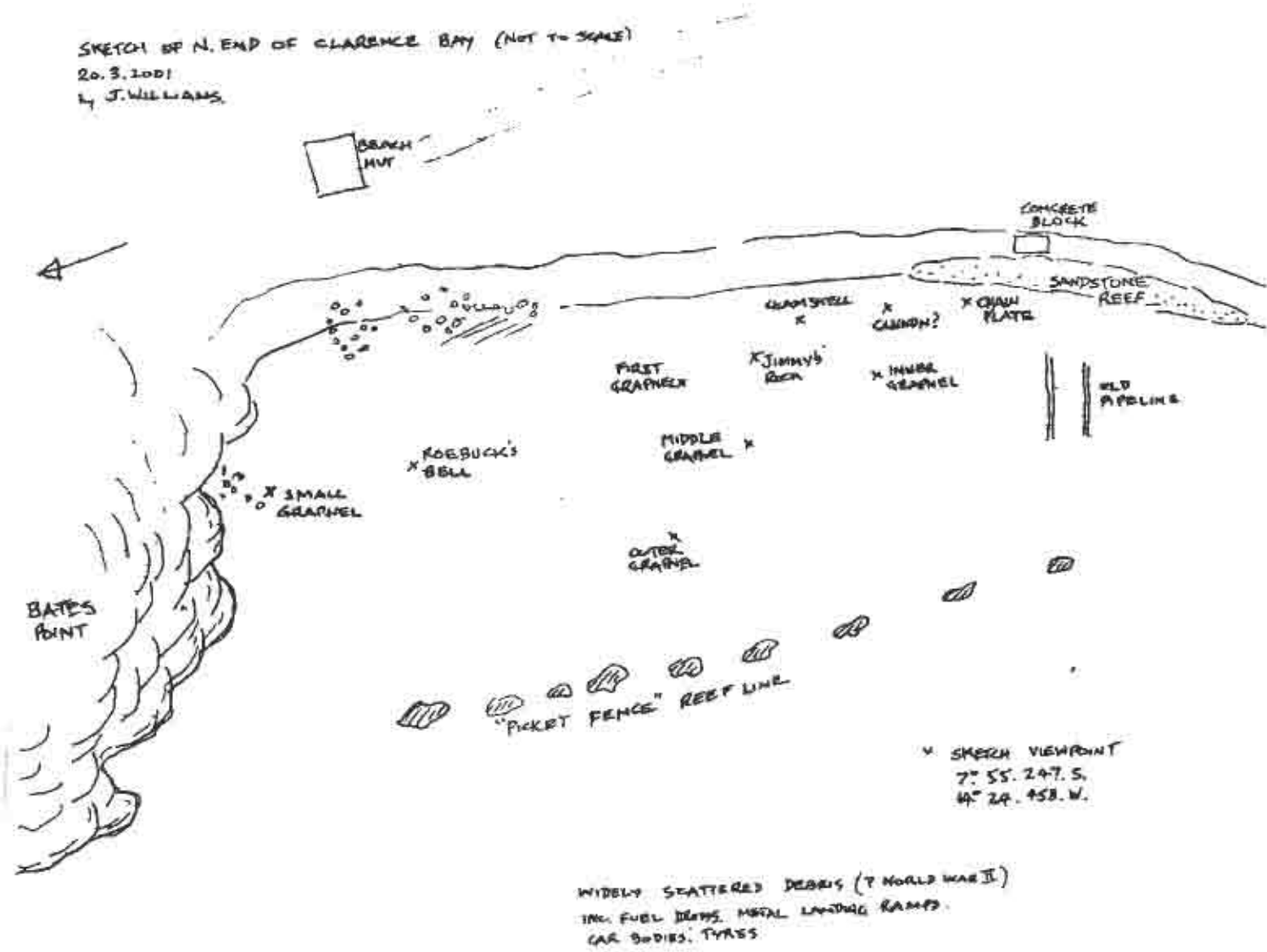
...In the Afternoon, with the help of a Sea-breeze, I ran into 7 Fathom, and anchored; Then carried a small Anchor ashore, and warp'd in till I came into 3 Fathom and a half. Where having fastnd her, I made a Raft...

There are some further tenuous clues to this possibility. For example the word 'struck' is used in other evidence by both Dampier and the Master John Hughes at the subsequent Court Martial into the loss of the ship. The term 'grounded' would have been more appropriate if the vessel had merely come to rest in the shallows.

Figure 26: One outcrop in the reef. The arms of the scale are one metre long (Photo M. McCarthy).



Figure 27: Sketch of Clarence Bay, the materials found, and the submerged reef (By John Williams)



The account of John Penton, Carpenter's Mate, shows that the vessel was filled with water up to the hatches (most likely those on the upper deck) by the time it had been warped in, precluding anything being saved from below decks and leaving only materials on the poop and forecastle, including Dampier's journal and the master's log available for salvage:

At which time with the help of a Sea breze and warping we got her within a cables length of ye shore. She then being full up to ye hatches with water. And that night and next morning we provided ourselves for goeing a shore on ye foresaid Island Ascention.

Full up to its hatches, apparently with only the comings keeping it afloat, *Roebuck* was secured, most likely at the 'picket fence reef' where it was impossible to continue. The men, though unable to recover materials from below, began to make their way ashore, while the officers waited till morning.

Thus the warping in, the grounding on the reef and the subsequent sinking of the vessel could appear to be separate events. Charles Harbree's, use of the words 'in sum short time after ye ship sunk' appears a possible indicator of the settling of this :

...this night the 23 we warp'd in and in ye even[ing] having gott wthn a cables length of ye shore in sum short time after ye ship sunk.

With the vessel recorded as having come to rest in three and a half fathoms (21 feet) and about a cable's length (600 feet or c. 200 metres) from shore, and with this reef being close to that distance off shore and with its tops a little shallower than the 21 feet recorded, the evidence appears to support the theory that *Roebuck* first lay across it and then it sank a short distance further down to the seabed when the hull was breached. While concreted wreckage was found amongst these rocks, the deep sand layer and the presence of so much modern material combined to prevent any confirmation of this theory in the non-disturbance fashion agreed to, however.

The location of other underwater wreckage

On Tuesday 20 March, with the northern end of the bay searched, the middle to southern end of the bay was targeted. A natural delineator for these separate searches was the large concrete block on the beach mid-bay from which a parallel pair of steel pipes ran out to sea. At first glance these appeared to have once been connected to the twin tanks near the playing field inshore. A two-diver tow search of the seabed in deeper water followed by a five-diver in-line swim search of the shallows was then conducted.

Despite the very poor visibility that was encountered at the southern end of the Bay adjacent the old Turtle Ponds, a number of 'strikes' were registered and examined. A concreted object similar to the sheathing found on a vessel's gripe was located at the southern end of the bay, but the identification was not confirmed. Some timbers were also located during the tow search. By this means a search of the entire southern part of the bay overlapping with the area searched in the northern half on previous days was completed.

The only item that could be definitely relate to an early sailing vessel of the *Roebuck* vintage was a section of rigging chains found totally exposed on the sand 10 metres north and 5 metres to seaward of the concrete block in mid

bay. Nineteenth Century vessels like the *Hall* (1834) can be expected to have had a more modern version, though again the evidence is not conclusive.

Figure 28: The Chain plate (Photo Geoff Kimpton).



Figure 29: Timber and detritus exposed on the seabed (Photo M. McCarthy).



Shipwreck materials on the island

As indicated, when not needed in the water, or on official visits, for instance to the Residency, or the dive club HQ, the team inspected cannon, anchors, museum objects and other data for clues that might cast further light on the loss of HM Ship *Roebuck*, or may even have emanated from it.

Two bells each with a broad arrow were located at the Museum, eroded ship's cannon, that were once submerged for some time, similarly adorned with a broad arrow were seen at the Residency, as was a very early nineteenth century Admiralty-pattern anchor that had recently been raised. A cannon also forms a bollard at the Pier-head. Collections of nineteenth century copper-alloy (brass) fastenings and other shipwreck objects were also viewed at the Museum—a facility of considerable quality and charm, which in the very proximity of the objects displayed, provides an immediacy that would be the envy of most others throughout the world.

After due consideration and after viewing the evidence, including the list of wrecks in the 1985 RAF report, it was considered that only the guns at the Residency remained as possible links to HM ship *Roebuck*. Given that other naval wrecks had occurred in Island waters and that the guns equally could have emanated from those sources, a definite link was not established. A report on the guns of Ascension Island carried no reference to the matter and it is worth pursuing. Of additional interest was the fact that the cannon had spent quite some time underwater and were of quite an early appearance. Again this matter needs be pursued.

A disappointment, given the references to the earlier recovery of early ship's anchors in the 1985 Combined Services Report, was the location of only two anchors on the island, one an early Admiralty pattern of the early-to-mid 19th century at the Residency and the other a modern close-stowing anchor on exhibition at the hostel in town.

The finds re-assessed

After the team returned to Fremantle, further research was conducted, the evidence was again reassessed, and the following conclusions were reached.

The Grapnels

As indicated above, the configuration of a large grapnel located amongst the wreckage spread indicates that it appeared to have had its cable wrapped around a rock. This fitted the description of a grapnel lost by HM Ship *Hastings* while attempting to recover the anchor and cable Dampier sent ashore in order to haul his vessel as close in as possible. That account is reproduced above.

As indicated, the location of other grapnels nearby and the inability to excavate them to examine their form and what lay beneath rendered problematic the conclusion that this grapnel was most likely the one lost by the *Hastings'* men. Despite the uncertainty, having once been entangled in the

reef to which it was now concreted, this and its form allow this grapnel to remain a likely possibility.

Of additional importance was the section of the *Hastings'* log that read:

got on board y Roebuck anchor being her small bower and
fourteen fath[om] of cable

That the length of anchor cable (rope) was only 14 fathoms, when the distance from the *Roebuck* to shore was a 'cable length' or c. 100 fathoms, indicates that the cable broke or was cut prior to its being retrieved.

The Ceramics

Digital photographs and prints of the ceramics raised by Mr Young and the Museum team were examined by Dr Christiaan Jörg of the Groningen Museum, a specialist on 17th/18th Century export wares for the Dutch market, and Dr Michael Flecker, researcher and member of numerous expeditions involving the recovery of similar ceramics. They were also examined by my colleagues Rosemary Harper and Jeremy Green, both involved in the examination of similar ceramics from south-east Asia.

In respect of the jar, Dr Flecker's comment read thus:

These jars are quite common. They have been found on the *Leeuwe*, which wrecked off Saint Helena in 1613, and on the *San Diego*, which was lost off Fortune Island, south of Manila, in 1600 [2]. I have also seen them at antique shops in the Philippines.

This type of jar seems to have been manufactured for some time with little change in form. Shipwreck evidence shows that the form remained the same throughout the first half of the 17th century, and in all probability it changed little right through to the 18th century. They were most probably produced at kilns in Guangdong Province, southern China. (Flecker to McCarthy, May 2001)

The blue and white ware provided much more information, being more easy to date.

The blue-and-white jar lid and the shards are products of the Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi Province, China.

The jar lid is very similar in form to hundreds of jar lids recovered from the *Vung Tau Wreck* of c. 1690 [3]. The distinct panelled decoration brings to mind kraak porcelain of the early 17th century, although this technique carried on through the transition period at the end of the Ming Dynasty and, in a less severe form, right through the Kangxi period of the Qing Dynasty (1662-1722). ...While your lid is nowhere near imperial quality, it is of fairly high export quality.

There is a possibility that the two shards are slightly later. (Michael Flecker to M. McCarthy, May 2001)

While Green and Harper concurred with Flecker, Dr Jörg felt that, though it was not of imperial standard, the blue and white ware was of high quality indeed, the sort of materials that officers would acquire. All agreed that Batavia (now present-day Jakarta) was most likely source of the ceramics, an important observation as *Roebuck* spent a considerable time there effecting repairs for the voyage home.

Dr Jörg's comments on the ceramics and the female figures appear below.

The ladies in a garden setting are quite common motifs in this period. They are the so-called "Long Elizas", the long slender ladies, in Dutch "Lange Lijzen" which became Eliza's in English translation later. They walk in a garden with flowering trees, banana trees, large rocks with many holes specially collected for garden architecture and often you see a small dancing boy, in Dutch traditionally called a "zotje" (a fool). It is a standard motif, and on these pieces executed with great care and nice detail. It was certainly good quality stuff, not just the ordinary run-of-the-mill object and can be regarded, I think, as a personal belonging of someone like Dampier himself, or one of the ship's officers. (Christiaan Jörg to M. McCarthy, 21/05/01).

Figure 30: Detail on the ceramics (Photo M. McCarthy).



The clam

While clearly Indo-Pacific in appearance, and similar to those found near Shark Bay and further north, expert comment on the provenance of the clam and the possibility that it was native to the Island was obtained from Ms Shirley Slack-Smith and Dr Paddy Berry of the Western Australian Museum's Division of Natural Sciences. Ms Slack-Smith stated that:

From that character and from its general shape and size, I can say that it belongs to the genus *Tridacna* and possibly to the species *Tridacna squamosa* Lamarck, 1819.

Therefore I can be certain that the shell would have been collected (by whoever) in the Indian Ocean or in the western part of the Pacific Ocean. The genus *Tridacna* has a distributional range within the tropical and sub-tropical waters of the Indo-West Pacific Region as far south as about Shark Bay and southern Queensland in mainland Australia, northern South Africa, and Lord Howe I and Pitcairn I in the Pacific. Northwards the genus extends up the E coast of Africa and reaches the north of the Red Sea, south and south-east Asia and Southern Japan. To the east, its range extends to the Line Islands, the Marquesas and Pitcairn.

If the clam is of the species *T. squamosa* then it would have originated within a more circumscribed area. This probably doesn't extend southwards beyond the Ningaloo Reef and the southern groups of the G B Reef in Australia, Mozambique in the west, halfway up the Red Sea, southern India, the SE of SE Asia and southern Japan in the north, and eastwards only as far as the Marshall Is, Samoa and Tonga. These limits may be a little out of date but the pattern would hold good.

So, the shell did not come from the Atlantic, for sure.

As indicated in the account of the *Roebuck* voyage reproduced earlier, there is no doubt that clams and other shells were on board and that many were lost when the ship was wrecked at Ascension Island. Dampier recorded the loss of the shells thus, for example:

I brought away a great many of them; but lost all except a very few, and those not of the best. (Wm Dampier, voyage to New Holland, Reproduced in Wilkinson Edition, 1906: 87).

It is also known that Dampier collected shells at Shark Bay and LaGrange Bay on the Australian coast. When in the vicinity of the north-west end of New Guinea (Irian Jaya) not far from what is now known as Selat Dampier the crew also recovered a variety of 'cockles', which from their description are clearly clams, varying from 10 pounds through to 258 pounds weight (Callander, 1768, Vol. 3:113-115). There is little doubt then that this particular shell is part of Dampier's lost collection.

Figure 31: Views of the clam during and after excavation (Photo M. McCarthy).



The Bell

Firstly, and most importantly, of the vessels expected to have carried a bell with a broad arrow, only HM Ship *Roebuck* is known to have been lost in the vicinity of North West (Clarence Bay) on Ascension Island.

Secondly, and as expected, a comparison of archaeological and other data indicates that the lesser importance given to a Royal Navy vessel, the more spartan were its decorations and fittings.

Figure 32a: The Roebuck Bell conserved. The Broad Arrow is visible just right of centre (Photo: Courtesy of Charles Barker, Mary Rose Archaeological Services Portsmouth.)

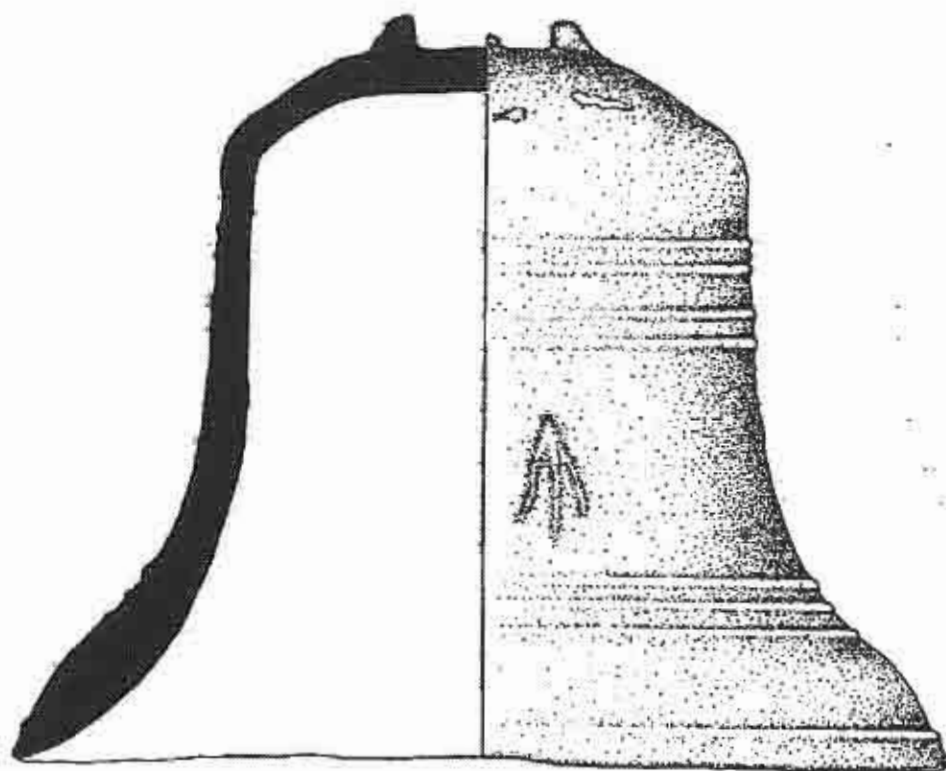


In respect of the sort of vessel indicated by the Ascension Island find, reference is made to the bell of the contemporary 'fifth rate' *Dartmouth* wrecked off Mull in 1690. It was 394 mm in height and it carried the broad arrow or 'pheon' and the inscription DH 1678 (Adnams, 1974:269-274; Martin, 1978). As indicated above, this 266-ton vessel, which was constructed in 1655 underwent a major overhaul in 1678 when the bell shown below was fitted.

Further pertinent comparisons can be made with the bells recovered by the Thanet Archaeological Unit from HM ship *Stirling Castle* (1703) and possibly the *Northumberland* (1703) wrecks on the Goodwin Sands. Brought to the author's attention as this report was in its penultimate stage, these two bells carried the date 1701, while that of the *Stirling Castle* also bore the broad arrow (J. Bingeman to M. McCarthy, 14/10/2001).

The unadorned Clarence Bay bell (300 mm high by 340 mm wide) with a broad arrow, but with no other inscriptions, indicates that a Royal Navy vessel of lesser import than HM ship *Dartmouth* was lost in the vicinity of the find in Clarence Bay. (See discussion on *Roebuck* as a 5th or 6th Rate ship above). Of importance are the similarities in the form and size of the broad arrows on each bell.

Figure 32b: Geoff Kimpton's record of the Clarence Bay bell



0 8 cm

ROEBUCK

Figure 30c: The Dartmouth Bell (Adnams, 1974:271)



Figure 30d: The Broad Arrows on the Dartmouth (LHS) and Roebuck Bells compared.



Discussion: The *Roebuck* site

The wreckage 'plume'

Shipwrecks generally consist of

#1 a 'striking point' at which materials can be lost overboard when the ship first hits or from a pierced hull, leading to...

#2 a grounding point at which the main wreck comes to a final stop after proceeding on from #1, and then ...

#3 a wreckage plume emanating from one or both points depending on prevailing sea conditions and/or a violent event such as a hurricane or cyclone. The latter can lead to a plume that is often contrary to the prevailing seas and swell.

These three elements appear present at the *Roebuck* site.

The bell, clam and the ceramics, at least, are considered part of the wreckage plume. Given that the bell lies at the foot of a shallow reef at the northern end of the bay, and given that there were no cannon, anchors or ballast evident on the exposed rocks to the north and east of it, or along the exposed rocks at Bates Point to the north-west, the evidence indicates that HM Ship *Roebuck* lies under sand in the south-west quadrant from the bell. This particular piece of evidence needs to be treated with some caution, however, in that it can be a false pointer to the location of the site. For a bell on its belfry of wood, or even for much larger objects such as anchors to travel quite some distance on a buoyant section of the hull is commonplace, for example. Further, it is evident for that the northern end of Clarence Bay is a trap for wreckage and in that respect it varies markedly from the southern end of the bay.

As there was no evidence of cannon, anchors, or ballast on the exposed reef lying just to the east of it, the clam, which also could have been carried off the ship attached to timbers or similar floating object, and which also is proven to have been able to roll inshore in heavy swells, also provides a useful delineator. Its proven direction of movement in the waves was clearly from west or south-west inshore i.e. towards east or north-east. It can be considered a pointer towards what remains of the ship's hull.

Though it is of the expected size and form, the chain plate found exposed at the base of the sandstone reef south of the concrete block in the middle of the bay is inconclusive, given the other ships that are known to have been lost in the bay.

If it is accepted that by virtue of its projecting above the seabed sufficiently to catch the hull of the *Roebuck* when she grounded in three and a half fathoms (or 21 feet) of water, then the 'picket fence reef' marks the line of rocks on which *Roebuck* first struck and then subsequently sank. This line of reefs lies barely 100 metres from the clam find.

As it is now accepted that they have emanated from Dampier's ship, Mr Young's ceramics are another clue, given their intact status and relatively un-eroded state. It is postulated that they could not have travelled far to be in the condition in which they are found.

The projected whereabouts of the main wreck

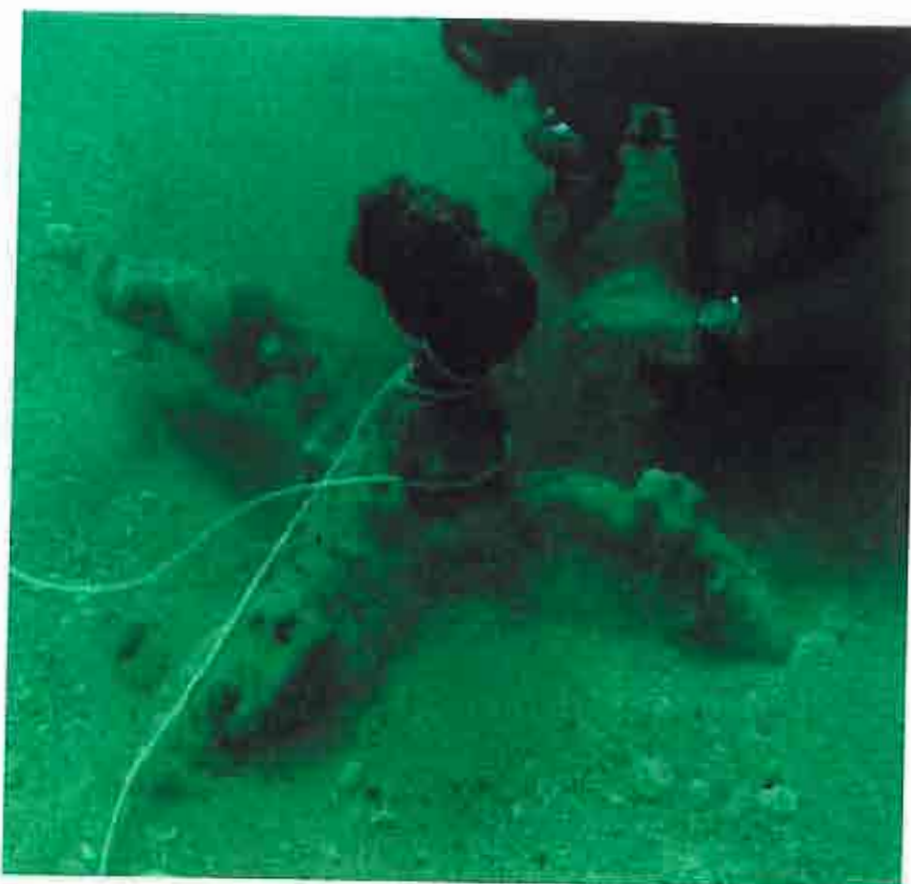
If these deductions hold true, then the heavy elements of the wreck itself (e.g., ballast, most cannon, anchors) must lie on the picket fence reef or just inshore of it, thereby providing the outer (seaward) limits to the 'Roebuck site'. While a search of the reef presented no conclusive indications of 18th century wreckage at the exposed base of any of its individual components, there was substantial sand cover throughout that could hide a ballast mound, cannon and other indicators of the main site.

It is deduced that the remains of Dampier's ship also lie south or southwest of the bell site and west of the clam site, both parts of its 'wreckage plume'.

If it is not to be discounted, the once-tangled grapnel found near the clam is also a possible indicator of the position of the cable that once stretched from the *Roebuck* to the anchor rowed ashore in order to warp the stricken vessel in to shore.

The ancient grapnels (outer and middle grapnels) located on the sand to seaward of this grapnel are considered a likely focus for *Roebuck's* final grounding point as its shattered hull was forced through the reef into the shallows, where it would have further disintegrated in similar fashion to the ship *Hall* in 1834. In measuring across two flukes uncovered by hand fanning it was ascertained these are buried in a layer of sand that was at least 1 metre deep at the time of the inspection in March 2001. The inner grapnel, unidentified tapering cylindrical objects and the chain plate are also possibly part of the plume.

Figure 33: The grapnel exposed by hand-fanning (M. McCarthy)



Conclusion: The wreck of HM Ship *Roebuck*

It is evident that the first anchoring place of Wm Dampier's HM ship *Roebuck* was close to or at the present tanker mooring just off Long Beach in Clarence Bay, Ascension Island. No other place on the island fits the bearings and descriptions given by Dampier. His rescuers all anchored in a location not far from that same spot.

Dampier's record of having run his vessel in with what appears to have been a short-lived sea-breeze and his having anchored in 7 fathoms before sending a small anchor ashore, allowing him to warp in fasten the ship after it grounded in three and a half fathoms of water a cable's length from shore, would place the initial grounding point of his stricken vessel on or against the line of submerged rocks lying c. 200 metres offshore in North West Bay. These rise 1-1.5 metres off the seabed lying in that same three and a half fathoms or c. 6-7 metres (21-24 feet) of water and they would have prevented the waterlogged ship being warped in any further.

While John Penton's evidence at the court martial (See Appendix 2 following) shows that *Roebuck* was 'full up to ye hatches with water' when it grounded, Charles Harbree's use of the words 'having gott wthn a cables length of ye shore in sum short time after ye ship sunk' at the same hearing indicates that the grounding and the sinking as the water flowed over the coamings into the ship were two separate events. Robert Sexton's advice to the author that if one adds the c. 12-14 foot depth distance from the bottom of the keel to the lower deck to the c. 5-6 feet distance from there up to the next layer of plank on the upper deck with the lip of the hatch coming a foot or so atop, then a distance of 21 feet from keel to the top of the hatch coaming is realistic.

This provides some indication that *Roebuck* lay on top of the rocks a cables length from shore and a short while after, apparently when the hull was pierced by the rocks, it settled down onto the seabed a metre or so below. This also indicates why it is not necessary to further consider the possibility that *Roebuck* drifted back out so sea after it was abandoned, despite the fact that the cable holding it eventually parted, or was cut as described above.

The ship *Hall* being 'dashed to 10,000 pieces' in the swells on the same beach in the August of 1834, provides a useful clue why *Roebuck* was not seen by the rescuers and this could also provide some clue why the cable would have parted as the stricken ship 'worked' back and forth in the swells before totally breaking up.

The unadorned bell with a broad arrow indicates that a substantial, yet not a major, Royal Navy vessel was lost in the vicinity or to seaward of the find. Of all those service vessels lost on or near the island, only William Dampier's vessel HM Ship *Roebuck* is known to have been grounded and abandoned in Clarence Bay, and from all deductions this occurred a short distance south and west of the bell find.

Mr Young's late 17th century Chinese ceramic finds, his report of timber, the other grappnels, assorted wreckage, fastenings, other ceramics, the chain plate, and the Indo-Pacific clam in shallow water inshore (east) of the last

calculated position for William Dampier's ship *Roebuck* are all consistent with materials expected from that vessel.

The rolling of the clam soon after it was freed from the rocks to which it was attached, even in the moderate swells experienced by the Museum team, attests to the strength of the seas, even on good days, and to the ability of materials, even those as heavy and compact as a clamshell, to move inshore from a location to seaward.

It is concluded on the basis of this evidence that the assemblage emanates from HM Ship *Roebuck* and that the main portion of the wreck lies under the sand, abeam the bell which lay to the north and west and slightly to seaward of the other finds reported above that are located inshore and to the east. The area containing the large grapnel and from there back to the 'picket fence reef' is considered the most likely place. There is a distinct possibility that the grapnel lies on what remains of the wreckage mound, which will include the iron ballast that Dampier records loading into *Roebuck* before it departed England. Some of Dampier's shell collection, including the 258 pound specimen recovered near what is now *Selat Dampier* off north-west Irian Jaya, may also lie nearby. As is the case with many sites in similar depths, while some anchors and cannon are thrown into shallow water atop buoyant bow or stern timbers, the majority will lie on or near the ballast mound itself.

Having agreed with both the Admiralty and the Island Administrator to perform a non-disturbance study only, this conclusion was not tested and the site report that follows needs be considered in that context.

The beach sands return

Finally it also needs be noted that a few weeks after the Museum team departed, the beach began to return to its normal configuration—and within a few months the site was again totally covered in sand.

The fortuitous timing of the Museum team's visit, coinciding with the Dampier Tri-centennial celebrations and the temporary movement of sand from the beach, again needs be remarked on.

This combined with a rare and short-lived gust from the sea in March 2001 that mirrored the conditions experienced by Dampier almost 300 years ago to the day. This equally fortuitous event allowed the Museum team in the *Ascension Frigate* to retrace the course of HM Ship *Roebuck* from its 1701 anchorage point to the vicinity where Dampier, beset with a change back to offshore conditions, sent an anchor ashore in order to warp his ship into the beach against the breeze.

As is so often the case with such ventures, luck, good management and enormous help from the Island Administration, divers, researchers and people, combined to produce a satisfactory result.

The transfer of the artefacts to the *Mary Rose* Archaeological Services, Portsmouth

Initially, the Dampier materials were stored in an on-site facility on Ascension Island until a decision was made on their conservation. While the Department of Materials Conservation at the Western Australian Maritime Museum had made a prior commitment to the conservation of materials that might require treatment as a result of the Museum's fieldwork to the Falkland Islands and to Ascension Island, it was considered that in the *Roebuck* case Britain should be first offered the opportunity to conserve any materials requiring treatment.

Hearing of the finds, Mr Charles Barker, Managing Director of the Mary Rose Archaeological Services Ltd of Portsmouth offered to conduct the work and by consensus of the Island Administration and the Museum team it was agreed that the objects be sent there for treatment. There they were treated and managed by Conservation Scientist, Ms Sue Bickerton and Head Of Collections, Dr Mark Jones, with Mr Barker providing the necessary liaison between the Island, the Admiralty and the Western Australian Maritime Museum.

Figure 34: The Dampier materials being inspected at the Mary Rose Laboratory by HH Geoffrey Fairhurst and Mrs Wendy Fairhurst (Photo: Courtesy of Charles Barker, Mary Rose Archaeological Services Portsmouth).



The site inspection report

Technical data

Site Name: The site of H.M. Ship *Roebuck*
Date lost : 23 February 1701 (Julian Calendar)
Finder(s): Mr Jimmy Young & the WA Maritime Museum Team

Date of Inspection: 16-20 March 2001.

Personnel:

WA Maritime Museum team

Mr C. Amalfi
Mr H. Edwards
Mr G. Kimpton
Mr J. Lashmar
Mr L. Moss
Dr J. Williams
Dr M. McCarthy OIC

Ascension Island Divers

Flight Lieutenant Richard Burke (RAF)
Phil Chechowitz (USAF)
Joe Lomseck (CSR)
Paul Philpott (SERCo)
Mr Jimmy Young (Island resident)

Approximate Location : c. 50 metres from the north end of Long Beach, Clarence Bay, Ascension Island, c. 50 metres offshore.

Chart No: South Atlantic Ocean. St Helena Dependencies. Ascension Island BA 1691

File No: 365/00

File Name: Dampier/de Freycinet

Sailing Directions: Proceed from the Pierhead at Georgetown north into Clarence Bay. Anchor c. 200 metres offshore in a depth of c. 6m of water. Be aware of the swells inshore.

Alternately proceed to the site from the beach c. 100 m south of the hut at the north end of Long Beach. Again be aware of the swells.

Compass Bearing:

N/A

Visual Transits

N/A

Selected GPS Fixes

Bell... 7° 55.203'S., 14°24.401'E

Clam... 7° 55.273'S., 14°24.395'E

Grapnel (the first)... 7° 55.252'S., 14°24.997'E

Grapnel (2)... 7° 55.270'S., 14°24.407'E

Grapnel (3)... 7° 55.255'S., 14°24.409'E

Grapnel (4)... 7° 55.239'S., 14°24.419'E

Jimmy's Rock (ceramics)... 7° 55.262'S., 14°24.404'E

Timber with treenails... 7° 55.302'S., 14°24.472'E

Line of submerged reefs...

Stretching from 7° 55.189'S., 14°24.420' E to 7° 55.259'S., 14°24.435' E

Site Photographs:

Colour: Dampier/deFreycinet project.

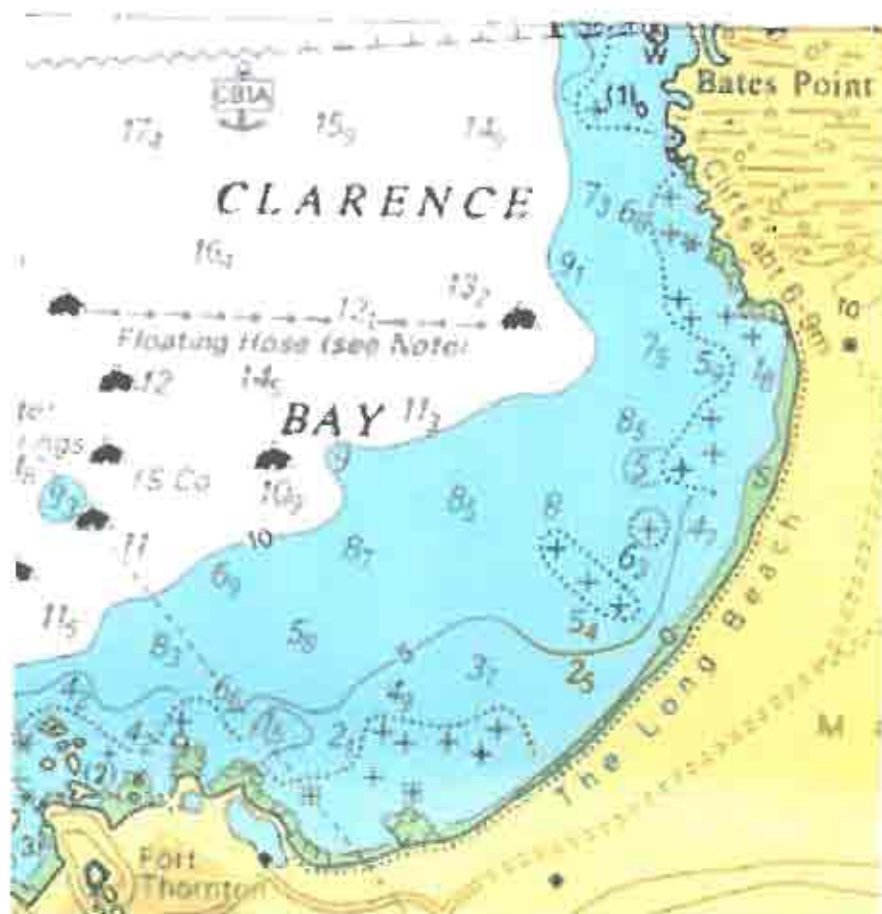
Transparencies: Dampier/deFreycinet project.

Prints; Dampier/deFreycinet project

Transit Photos : Nil

Video: Dampier/DeFreycinet.

Figure 35: Chart Excerpt: From BA 1691. Ascension Island



Site Conditions on inspection:

Sea and Swell: Smooth seas generally with moderate swell.

Winds: Predominantly offshore

Surge: Strong surge on the seabed in shallow water.

Visibility: Variable, with the north and south ends of the bay producing 1-2m maximum on days two and five, contrasting with the situation mid bay which was often 5m plus.

Current: Light

Sea-bed coverage: Sand offshore, loose water worn rock in the northern end of the bay, flat exposed reef in the middle of the bay, rocky outcrops elsewhere.

Biological Data :

A distinct line of weed c. 50 cm above the present sand line was visible on inshore reefs and rocks, indicating that the sand level had dropped in recent times. Bare rocks without weed were visible throughout, especially inshore. The rocks above the bell were also bare, indicating that they too had also just been uncovered. The bell also had a distinct line along its outer edge, again indicating a drop in sand level.

Site Condition and Integrity :

The survey was proposed, accepted, and conducted as a non-disturbance search and survey, precluding the removal of the sand layer under which the wreck lies. Only materials lying exposed were recorded, obviating any assessment of buried wreckage. On the basis of the integrity and condition of Mr Young's finds, these are now thought to be substantial.

Description of the Site

Materials indicating that the wreck of HM Ship *Roebuck* lies under sand nearby have been found. These are a bell, a clam, ceramics, fastenings, a chain plate, and other materials including a tapering, formerly cylindrical object that is possibly an eroded cannon or iron bilge pump section. A grapnel that was once clearly snagged on a small, submerged reef fits the description of one that was lost from HM Ship *Hastings*. The other two grapnels located in the sand nearby were found with only the fluke of one of their four arms visible above the sand also possibly emanate from the loss of HM ship *Roebuck*, though they could equally have some other provenance. The timbers seen by the Museum team, ASI divers and Mr Young may be significant, especially those seen with treenail holes, but again they can possibly have another source.

Of significance, however, is the fact that when the upper section of one of the grapnels found on the sand was excavated by hand fanning, it became apparent that in total from fluke to fluke it measured c. one metre across. This indicates that there was a layer of sand around one metre deep over this object at the time of our visit and perhaps there was significantly more in previous times. Whether the lower flukes of the grapnel rested on a rocky sea-bottom,

on wreckage or on iron and or stone ballast was not tested and it still remains a matter of conjecture. Dampier records the removal of guns, and ballast from his ship at Batavia in order to careen it and these together with the chain and bilge pumps mentioned in his account of the loss of the ship, possibly an anchor or two and a substantial part of his collection are expected to form the basis of the wreckage mound lying under the sand. As indicated this is expected to lie near or under the grapnels at 7° 55.270'S., 14°24.407'E., and 7° 55.255' S., 14°24.409'E.

Management considerations :

(i) Natural Forces

Mr Young, the longest-serving resident on Ascension Island, advised that the marked exposure of the beach that resulted in the drop in sand levels had not occurred previously during his 40-year residence on the island.

In May 2001, Flt Lt Burke advised that the sand levels had returned to the level that was experienced previous to Mr Young's and the Museum's dives two months earlier. In September of the same year HH Geoffrey Fairhurst also commented on the sand cover, indicating that the site was then totally covered in vast quantities of overburden.

Unless there is a return to the apparently abnormal situation that resulted in a drop in sand levels resulting in the finds detailed above, the site will not be at risk from natural forces.

(ii) Present and future Human forces

Recreational divers, keen to salvage materials from the site, will continue to pose a risk, especially if the sand cover across the site or in any one specific part of it recedes. For example, while the WA Maritime Museum team was on the beach an unidentified vessel arrived on site with its occupants apparently prepared to dive until they sighted the team. At this point they hastily departed.

High sand levels, such as those that were experienced before and after the Museum's visit would presently preclude further non-disturbance examination of the site, i.e. excavation tools would be required. If it were unauthorised, the presence of a vessel with divers and excavation tools could not be missed at a location that is so close to the town and Pier-head.

(iii) Projected General site Stability in view of the above

Now that the sand cover is returned, it is anticipated that the site will remain stable unless there is an event that results in a drop in the seabed or in the removal of the protective sands over the site, similar to the occurrence in February/March of 2001.

Material Raised

JY 1: Earthenware Pot

JY 2: Blue and White Ceramic lid

JY 3: Blue and White Sherd

(JY=Jimmy Young)

JR 1: Earthenware sherd
JR 2: Blue and White Sherd (with concretion)
JR 3: Blue and White Sherd (base)

(JR=Jimmy's Rock)

LB 1: Bronze Bell
LB 2: Clam Shell
LB 3: Assorted rocks and shells from the bell interior
LB 4: Wood Fragment from the Bell interior

(LB=The Long Beach Site)

Ownership issues

The remains of HM Ship *Roebuck* at Long Beach were claimed by the team for its owners, the Royal Navy, Britain and Ascension Island, paving the way for their declaration as one of the world's most significant and virtually untouched maritime archaeological sites and precluding any claims that might be made by others with monetary considerations in mind. Further, the team also indicated that it would only exercise any rights due to it as the finders, should the wreck and the relics be the subject of a competing claim that serves to cast any doubt on the rights of the Royal Navy, Britain and Ascension Island (File 356/00. Dampier/deFreycinet, WA Maritime Museum).

Assessment of Site Significance

(i) Archaeological: Of its lost exploration ships HM Ship *Roebuck* is one of England's most significant. The vessel provides tangible links to Dampier, one of the world's recognised explorers and literary figures and it carried materials collected from around the world as Britain and other European countries searched for knowledge about the Great Southland and for new dominions. The wreck is of great significance to Australia with respect to its links to Dampier and in regards to the collections he made.

(ii) Technological: The wreck, its fittings and fixtures will provide useful information and insights into HM Ship *Roebuck* and the manner in which it was configured and prepared for its exploration voyage.

(iii) Scientific: Apart from the usual comparative studies, e.g. corrosion measurement, organics analyses, site formation studies, etc that are now part of most major shipwreck studies, the materials gathered on Dampier's voyage and subsequently lost in the sands off Long Beach will prove of interest to many specialists. Two examples are the ceramics and clam found by Mr Young.

(iv) Educational: The wreck provides a focus on William Dampier, his times and travels. Already an educational broadsheet has appeared in a leading Australian newspaper and a Portsmouth newspaper carried the headline 'The giant clam that proves Cook wasn't the first to land in Australia'.

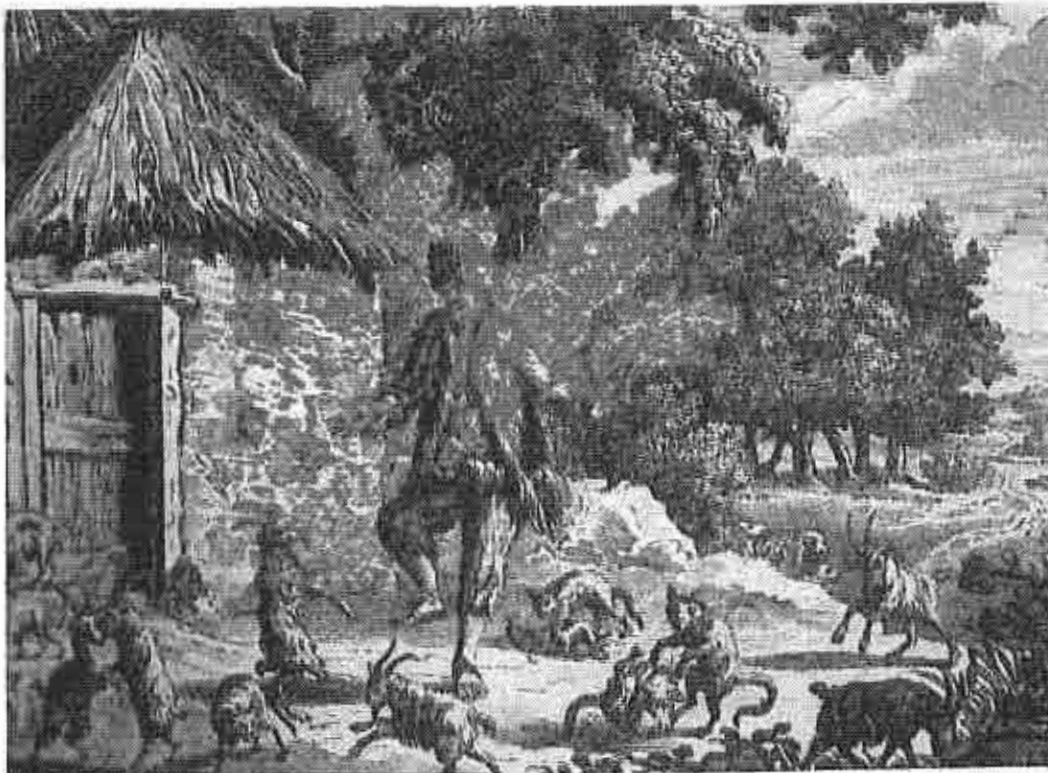
(v) Recreational: The area in which the wreck lies is subject to heavy swells and it does not lend itself easily to recreational diving. Further, when the sand on the beach and the adjacent seabed is in its usual configuration, there is nothing to be seen on the seabed.

(vi) Cultural: Dampier's legacy is multi-faceted as indicated earlier. While the events surrounding Alexander Selkirk occurred on voyages for which Dampier provides no record, many have made comment on Dampier's role as an inspiration for Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and also on Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, a work, appearing in 1726, that appears to lend heavily on Dampier's works. Some believe that he also influenced Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* and numerous other works. These notions are best examined in recent times by Marchant (1988: 88-96).

Notwithstanding the views of his detractors, few doubt the literary value of Dampier's works and few would argue about the importance of the man as a seafarer and natural historian. As one commentator states:

'...to place him exclusively in one domain is misleading. Buccaneer, explorer, mapmaker, navigator, natural historian, [and] early ethnographer-the list goes on; and in virtually everything he did he was an innovator' (Beken, 1998: 1).

Figure 36: A depiction of Alexander Selkirk at Juan Fernandez Island (From the Beken Edition of Dampier's 'New Voyage').



Recommendations

#1 That area of seabed and inter-tidal containing the remains of HM Ship *Roebuck* be afforded legal protection by the declaration of a restricted zone encompassing the area south of Bates Point to mid Clarence Bay and out to the inner mooring buoy prohibiting the use of excavation materials and allowing compressed air diving only with a permit.

#2 The site be left undisturbed until a natural uncovering to the depths that began to reveal materials in early 2001 again occurs. At that time consideration needs be given to further minimal disturbance analyses of the site unless a test excavation in order to gauge the full extent of the remains is deemed to be of value and is requested by the Admiralty and the Ascension Island Administration. If this were to occur, a prior commitment to the conservation of any materials raised would need be made, as would a commitment to the stabilisation of the site subsequent to the test excavation. If requested to do so, the Western Australian Maritime Museum would be pleased to lead and facilitate this work in association with British and Ascension Island interests.

#3 The materials gleaned and developed by the Western Australian Maritime Museum's team be forwarded in CD and video form to Ascension Island and to the British Admiralty for use in the interpretation and presentation of the site and its story at the Island and in Britain.

#4 That educational institutions in Britain, Ascension Island and Australia be provided easy access to these materials for non-commercial uses.

#5 That authors Hugh Edwards, Philippe Godard and others in Britain, Ascension Island and elsewhere be encouraged to write accounts of the wreck and its discovery. To that end the Western Australian Maritime Museum's team will provide every assistance in the provision of information and materials.

#6 The finds (bell, clam etc) be exhibited to the satisfaction of the Royal Navy and the Ascension Island people and its Administration. They are considered 'priceless' and will need be housed in the long-term in a secure, safe and climatically-controlled environment.

#7 Consideration should also be given to travelling the materials to Western Australia for temporary exhibit at the Western Australian Maritime Museum, at Shark Bay, and at the north-west towns of Dampier and Broome on Roebuck Bay. Consideration also needs be given to their travelling to the National Maritime Museum in Sydney, if that is considered appropriate.

8 In respect of the historic links, William Dampier and HM Ship *Roebuck* have with Australia, it is hoped that the Royal Navy, Britain and its dependencies would consider HM Ship *Roebuck* and its contents, as part of a shared maritime heritage and thereby involve Australia, and the State of Western Australia in particular, in all future management issues at the site and in respect of the artefacts raised.

In that context, an offer to return to the site, to conduct further analyses, to conduct an appropriate and archaeologically sustainable test-excavation and to conserve any materials raised is made by the Western Australian Maritime Museum.

#9 The British Government formally recognise HH Geoffrey Fairhurst and Flt Lt Richard Burke RAF for their pivotal role in bringing matters to such a satisfactory closure.

#10 Mr Jimmy Young of Ascension Island be afforded recognition as the first to locate materials from the wreck. He should also be recognised for his civic-mindedness in bringing the ceramics to the attention of the Western Australian Maritime Museum's team and in then offering them on loan to the Island Museum once their significance was recognised.

#11 Consideration be given (through attention to items #2, #7, & #8 above to the notion that the Western Australian team be duly recognised for having located the materials and then having unreservedly claimed them and the site, itself for Britain, the RN and Ascension Island in accordance with modern archaeological practice.

Concluding Note:

On 9 April 2002, Mr Peter MacDonald of the Ministry of Defence advised that, after due consideration of the many issues involved it was decided that the bell and clamshell were to become the property of the Ascension Island's Government.

This clarification has paved the way for discussion on the provision of replicas and possible loan of the originals for travel to Australia as requested.

From a purely personal perspective, Mr MacDonald advised that he also saw merit in the proposal that the relics travel to Australia, writing as follows:

From my point of view. . . your proposals seem to have merit and would allow a wider audience to see the items, which clearly are of considerable archaeological and historical importance to the people of Western Australia as well as to those of Ascension Island

In accordance with modern archaeological practice in line with the agreements that the WA Maritime Museum's team made with the Admiralty (as owners of the wreck and its contents) and with the Ascension Island Government before embarking on the search for HM Ship *Roebuck*, this decision and the personal sentiments expressed by Mr MacDonald represent a satisfactory result. It remains now for the recommendations above to be given due consideration and to secure permission from Ascension Island for the objects to travel on loan to Australia.

William Dampier's life after the loss of HM Ship *Roebuck*

The court martial

Though exonerated for the loss of his ship, Dampier was roundly criticised for 'beating' Fisher, for 'confining him in irons' and afterwards 'imprisoning him on shore in a strange country'. Dampier was fined all the pay accrued from the voyage and it was concluded that 'Captain Dampier is not a fit person to be employ'd as Commdr. Of any of Her Majesty's ships' (Court Martial, Quoted in Wilkinson, 1929:186). This is not the place to provide details or to proceed further than in providing this précis or to detail the subsequent voyages undertaken by Dampier, rather it is pertinent to advise that Wilkinson notes that 'The verdict did Dampier no harm' for just 10 months later the *London Gazette* contained a note that read:

Captain William Dampier, being prepared to depart on another voyage to the West Indies, had the honour to kiss her Majesty's hand, being introduced by His Royal Highness, the Lord High Admiral' (*London Gazette*, No 3906, quoted in Wilkinson, 1929:187).

The *St George*, the *Cinque Ports* and Alexander Selkirk

Apparently the War of Spanish Succession had just broken out and with English privateers being readied for the fray against French and Spanish interests, Dampier was appointed with official approval to the 26-gun privateer *St George*, with a crew of 120 men.

Dampier does not appear to have kept an account of this voyage designed to seize a number of Spanish galleons. They sailed on 30 April 1703 and were joined by the 16-gun galley *Cinque Ports*. En route, he again had problems with his 2 I.C. who was put off the ship and they also unsuccessfully engaged a French ship and captured three small Spaniards and one vessel of 550 tons. At Tobago, the two ships parted and captain of the *Cinque Ports*, Thomas Stradling subsequently fell out with his mate Alexander Selkirk, who insisted on remaining ashore at Juan Fernandez Island, becoming the recognised 'original' of Robinson Crusoe. As indicated above, the Moskito Indian who was also abandoned there and who was first greeted by his colleague named Robin, also needs consideration in that regard.

Meanwhile Dampier continued on in what is described as an 'unhappy voyage' in which the discipline steadily deteriorated. They then engaged a powerful Spanish warship and in repairing their vessel found that like the *Roebuck* its hull was rotten. Many deserted him soon after. Later they captured a small Spanish barque and then found and unsuccessfully attacked a well-armed Manila Galleon. Dampier was blamed for not pressing an advantage he had earlier obtained and the vessel escaped. (Wilkinson, 1929:

186-200). Further dissension and desertions ensued. Dampier successfully sacked a town on the coast of South America and then captured a Spanish ship to which they transferred to leave the *St George* adrift and sinking. They sailed to the East Indies where they were arrested, apparently because Dampier's commission had expired, and after an eventual release they made their way home. Dampier was again penniless, though royalties from his works would still have been forthcoming.

According to Wilkinson, his friends rallied around him and Dampier was presented to the Queen to provide an account of his adventures. He then wrote a *Vindication* of his voyage to New Holland in response to a personal attack by the steward on board the *St George*, William Funnell, one of Dampier's detractors, to whom we owe much of the credit for the account of this particular voyage (Funnell, 1707).

Though it was not successful in the eyes of the merchants who backed the voyage, Dampier continued to maintain his scientific patronage, partly due to the success of his *Discourse on Winds* etc. Further his reputation amongst the beleaguered Spanish in the West Indies remained such that he 'his name had become a terror in those waters' (Wilkinson, 1929:204).

Dampier with Woodes Rogers

As a result of this and his reputation as a navigator, Dampier was offered the post of 'pilot' in a voyage by two Bristol-based privateers the *Duke* and the *Duchess* commanded by Captain Woodes Rogers. When this, his last voyage of circumnavigation occurred Dampier was 56 years of age and he is listed in Woodes Rogers' list of officers on the *Duke* as 'William Dampier, Pilot for the south Seas, who had already been three times there and twice around the world' (Wilkinson, 1929: 207).

They sailed from Bristol on 2 August 1708 on a voyage notable for Woodes Rogers' democratic management, the capture of a 'Manila Galleon', and the repatriation of Alexander Selkirk from Juan Fernandez Island early the next year.

In a somewhat tantalising note Wilkinson records that Captain Cooke, one of the second officers who also chronicled the voyage, stated that when invited to return with them, Selkirk

...first enquired whether a certain officer that he knew was aboard; and hearing that he was would rather have chosen to remain in his solitude than come away with him, till informed that he was not in command' (Wilkinson, 1929:218)

While Dampier was apparently on friendly terms with Selkirk, it is possible that the officer referred to is Dampier, and though to the objective eye it certainly appears so, Wilkinson has offered the opinion that, 'in fact, we are left guessing' (Wilkinson, 1929:218). Dampier again fails to provide an account of this incident and of any voyage after the *Roebuck* adventures, but both Cooke and Woodes Rogers detail Selkirk's life in their subsequent

accounts, with Woodes Rogers' work entitled *Cruising Voyage round the World* appearing to great acclaim a short time after they returned home.

Later they stormed a Spanish town and also captured one 'Manila Galleon' but were badly mauled by another far larger. They then proceeded home with their prize arriving after further adventures in October 1711. The three-year voyage proved lucrative for all involved, including Dampier (Wilkinson, 1929: Chapter XII).

In November, 1714, at 63 years of age, his health destroyed after 42 years at sea, and still wrangling after receiving over £1350 for the voyage (Wilkinson, 1929:237-238) Dampier made out his will and died in the following March—the whereabouts of his grave still unknown.

Figure 37: Chasing the Manila Galleon (From the Beken edition of Dampier's New Voyage).



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Appendices

Appendix 1: Chronology of William Dampier's life

Reproduced with kind permission of the author from: Alex George, 1999: *William Dampier, Australia's First Natural Historian*. (Pages: xviii-xix).

- 1651 Baptised at East Coker, Somerset, England (15 September)
- 1658 Father died
- 1665 Mother died
- 1669 Apprenticed to shipmaster in Weymouth, sailing to France, Newfoundland and Java
- 1672 Enlisted in the Royal Navy; saw service in the battle of Texel against the Dutch (August 1673)
- 1674 Sailed for Jamaica to work for William Whaley, manager of a plantation
- 1675 Joined privateers in the Caribbean
- 1678 Returned to England; married Judith
- 1679 Sailed to Jamaica and joined a group of privateers
- 1680-81 With privateers crossed the Isthmus of Panama; sacked towns on the Pacific coast; captured a ship and sailed to the Juan Fernandez Islands, then returned to Darien and crossed back to the Caribbean coast at La Sounds Key
- 1682 Lived for more than a year on a tobacco plantation in Virginia
- 1683-84 Joined John Cook in the *Revenge* and sailed across the Atlantic to Sierra Leone where they seized a Danish ship which they renamed the *Batchelor's Delight*; rounded Cape Horn and sailed up the Pacific coast of South America and spent many months attacking towns and ships
- 1685 Transferred to the *Cygnets* under Charles Swan
- 1686 Sailed across the Pacific from Mexico to Guam; Swan replaced as captain by John Reed (Read)
- 1686-87 Cruised the China Sea, visited Canton, Thailand and various islands
- 1687 Sailed south past Timor
- 1688 Reached north-western New Holland (January) and landed near Swan Point, east of Cape Leveque
- 1688 Sailed west into the Indian Ocean, past Christmas Island, to the Nicobar Islands where he was put ashore (May), then sailed in an open canoe to Achin (Sumatra); then made his way back to Achin (March 1689), joined ships to Malacca and Madras; briefly in charge of a fort at Bencoolen for the East India Company; acquired an Indonesian slave, Jeoly
- 1690 Left for England in the *Defence* under Captain Heath, calling at Cape Town and St Helena; reached the Downs, off Deal (26 September 1691)
- 1697 Published *A New Voyage Round the World*
- 1698 Submitted proposal to the British Admiralty for a voyage to the East Indies and New Holland

- 1699 Published *A Supplement to the Voyage Round the World and A Discourse of Trade-winds, etc.*
- 1699 Sailed from the Downs in the *Roebuck* (24 January); at Bahia, Brazil (March-April); approached west coast of New Holland (August); anchored in Shark bay and landed on Dirk Hartog Island (17 August); landed on East Lewis Island, Dampier Archipelago (1 September); landed at Lagrange Bay (9-15 September); at Timor (October-November)
- 1700 Sailing around New Guinea, New Ireland, then headed home via Cape Town
- 1701 *Roebuck* foundered off Ascension Island, South Atlantic (6 March)
- 1701 Picked up by British ships (14 April); arrived in England (August)
- 1702 Court-martialled for his treatment of Fisher and Norwood, and for the loss of the *Roebuck*; cleared on last two charges, fined on first.
- 1703 Published *A New Voyage to New Holland etc in the Year 1699*
- 1703 Left England in command of the *St George* for a privateering voyage to the Pacific; at Kinsale, Ireland, teamed up with the *Cinque Ports*, Captain Charles Pickering; then to Cape Verde Islands, Brazil, Juan Fernandez; took several ships but missed the prize of a 'Manila ship' (December 1704); sacked the Mexican town of Puna, then captured a Spanish ship for the voyage home across the Pacific—but no details remain of this part of his adventures
- 1707 Arrived back in England
- 1708 Left on his final voyage (September), as navigator under Woodes Rogers in the *Duke* and the *Dutchess* (Captain Stephen Courtney), again privateering—via Grande, South America, Falkland Islands, Cape Horn, Juan Fernandez (picking up Alexander Selkirk), taking several Spanish ships and a French one; sacked Guayaquil (April 1709)
- Continuation of a New Voyage to New Holland etc in the Year 1699* (the later part of the voyage of 1699-1701) published in London
- Crossed the Pacific (January), arriving at Guam (11 March), then via The Philippines, Celebes, Batavia, Cape Town, St Helena, Ascension, around the north of Scotland to Amsterdam (24 July 1711)
- 1711 returned to London in September
- 1715 In March William Dampier died at the Old Jewry, London, England (His will was 'proven' on 3 April).

Appendix 2. *Roebuck*: clues to its location and identification:

**Excerpts: from a research paper produced by M. McCarthy
& Philippe Godard (2001)**

Utilising William Dampier's own accounts and the logs of various
Captains and Masters of

HMS Anglesey
HMS Hastings
HMS Lizard

Together with the accounts of
John Hughes, Master
John Penton, Carpenter's Mate
Mark? Doyd? Boatswain's Mate
Stephen Dolling
Charles Harbree.

From the originals housed at the Public Records
Office. London⁵

⁵ These primary sources were located and photocopied at the PRO in London by Ms Hannah Cunliffe of Wiltshire, England, a researcher commissioned in February 2000 with the task of locating these logs. The full report appears in the references list.

Note: Clues relevant to the location or identification of the wreck are presented in bold. Where appropriate a footnote provides explanation of the compiler's thoughts on the relevance of the text.

From: William Dampier's unpublished account of the loss of the "Roebuck." (Public Record Office, Admiralty 1/5262)

Dated; 29 September, 1701

An account of the loss of His Majesty's Ship Roebuck Feby 21st 1700/1. At three a'clock in the afternoon being in Sight of the Island Ascension, and not having Light enough to carry us into the Bay where design'd to anchor, ...we stood to the Eastward, At half an hour after 8 in the night we sprung a **Leake on the larboard bow about four Strakes from the Keele**, which oblig'd us to keep our **Chain pump**⁶ constantly going, at twelve at night having a moderate gale, we bore away for the Island and be daylight were close in with it, at nine a'clock in the morning **anchored in the N.W. bay in ten fathom and half water, sandy ground about half a mile from the shoare, the S. point of the bay bore S.S.W. dist. one mile and a half and the northermost point, N.E.1/2 N. dist. two mile**, Being come to anchor I ordered the Gunner to clear his Powder roome, that we might there search for the Leake, and endeavour to stop it within board if possible, for we could not heele the Ship so low, **neither was there any convenient place to haul her ashoare...**I ordered the Carpenter's Mate...with the Boatswain and some others to goe downe and search for the Leake, the Carpenter's Mate and the Boatswain told me that they could not copme at it unless **they cut the Ceiling**, which I bid them doe, which done they found the Leake against one of the foothook timbers, it was very large, and the water gushed in with great violence... **after the cutt the timber...** the leake so increased...I ordered a **bulkhead to be cutt open** to give passage to the water, and withall ordered to **cleare away abaft the bulkhead**, that we might beale...But about 11 a'clock at night the Boatswain came to me, told me... that the **Plank was quite rotten**, and that it was now impossible to save the Ship...I therefore hoysted out the boate, and next morning, being the 23rd, **we weigh'd anchor and warped in nearer the shoare, but to little purpose till in the afternoon we had a Sea breeze by which we gott in within a Cable's length of the Shoare**, then made a Raft to carry men's chests and bedding ashoare., and before Eight at night most of them were gott ashoare, **She struck not before nine a'clock at night, and so continued, I ordered some sailes to be cut from the yards to make us some tents, etc, and the next morning being the 24th myself and Officers went ashoare**⁷...

⁶ Remains of the chain pump will prove a useful identifying feature. They are described at length in T. J. Oertling, 1996. *Ship's Bilge Pumps: A history of their development, 1500-1900*. Studies in Nautical Archaeology, Number 2. Texas A& M.

⁷ Dampier appears to have been offloading his men as the ship was being warped in. An hour elapsed between 8pm when they got to within a cables length of shore and a depth of three and a half fathoms and when 'she struck not before 9'. As expected in the depth given by Dampier, the sails and yards were accessible, though there are no clues about the angle of heel of the wreck.

'On the 21st we made the Island of Ascension, and stood in towards it. The 22d between 8 and 9 a-Clock, we sprung a Leak, which increased so that the **Chain-pump** could not keep the Ship free. Whereupon I set the **hand-pump**⁸ to work also, and by 10 a-clock suck'ed her:...the Chain-pump just kept her free. At 5 the next Morning we made Sail and stood in for the Bay; and at 9 anchored in 10 and a half Fathom, sandy ground. The South-point bore South-South-West distance 2 miles, and the North-point of the Bay, North-East half North, distance 2 Miles.... [as per the original hand-written account above then]...

The Ceiling being cut, they could not come at the Leak; for it was against one of the foot-hook-timbers, which the Carpenter's Mate said he must first cut, before it could be stopp'd....my men were all employ'd, pumping with both Pumps;...I presently went down, and found the Timber cut away... I ordered the Bulkhead to be cut open, to give Passage to the Water that it might drain out of the room; and withal ordered to clear away abaft the Bulk-head, that we might bail... About 11 a Clock at Night, the boatswain came to me and told me... that the plank was so rotten, it broke away like Dirt; and now it was impossible to save the Ship...

And in the Morning we weighed our Anchor, and warp'd in nearer the shore; yet did but little good.

In the Afternoon, with the help of a Sea-breeze, I ran into 7 Fathom, and anchored; Then carried a small Anchor ashore⁹, and warp'd in till I came into 3 Fathom and a half. Where having fastnd her, I made a Raft....

On the 26th following, we, to our great Comfort, found a Spring of fresh water, about 8 Miles from our Tents, beyond a very high Mountain, which we must pass over: So that now we were, by God's Providence, in a Condition of subsisting some Time; having Plenty of very good Turtle by our Tents....The next Day I went up to see the Watering-place...where we found a very fine Spring on the South-East-side of the high mountain, about half a Mile from its top:...About 2 Mile South-East from the Spring, we found 3 or 4 shrubby Trees, upon which was cut an Anchor and Cable, and the year 1642....¹⁰

[on 3 April] ...appear'd 4 Sail, which came to anchor in this Bay. They were his Majesty's Ships, the Anglesey, Hastings and Lizard; and the Canterbury East-India Ship. I went on board the Anglesey with about 35 of my Men; and the rest were dispos'd of into the other Men of War.¹¹

We sail'd from Ascension, the 8th...

⁸ Remains of both a chain pump and a hand pump should be visible in the wreckage mound.

⁹ This anchor may have been the one recovered later See below.

¹⁰ This clue attests to the grounding being on the NW side of the island at a place frequented by turtles.

¹¹ The bay in which *Roebuck* men had their tents and presumably that in which it was warped ashore was large enough for four vessels at least.

From: ADM 52/135- Master's Log HMS Lizard for 1701.

April 2

Ditto 3...at 10 anch'rd in Ascension road: in 71/4 fathoms the N'th pynt [point?] NbE the So: pynt SWb1?...[?] hill SE1/2S...being the Roebucks men ashore having lost their ship the 23 of February

Winds 3-7 April; SE, ESE, SebE, SE, S, 'fresh gales'.¹²

From: ADM 51/3886- Captain's Log HMS Lizard for 1701

April 3...At anchor at Ascension. In Turtle Bay. The No Point nebn ye So Pt SWbS, the Midle of ye bay ESE1/2S. ... at 9 This morning anchor'd in **Turtle Bay** in 71/2 fa[thoms] when we came to anchor saw sev.[eral] men ashore w[hich] proved to be Roebucks who was lost here by a leak.¹³

April 8... At 9 this morning weigh'd... all the Roebucks men Came on bd [board] the three Men of Warr being glad of a favourable opportunity. Everyone going on bd w. [which] Ship he pleased where of ye m. [men] came on bd of us, 2 of ye m. being Officers, (viz) Chirugion [surgeon] & boatswain, 39 of ye m. went on bd the C..nado [Canterbury?] & 7 on bo [board] the Hastings.

They were lost here the 23'd of February Last, & have lived here ever since in good health, without any man[er] of bread. Din'd [?] upon Turtle, goats, Men of Warr bird & booby, for **Saved no provisions** nor not a bone 20 or 30 Gallons of water..¹⁴ Which not a bone a day but by diligent Sarch & god Great providence found water at ye ascent? Of the highest Mountain where they saw ye Weeds Look green 7 the earth moist dug'd Just ye Rheem of ye earth away & water sprung up which was gods Gr [eat] providence for there was never heard of any found before on ye Island but in ye Rocky Gulley in ...[?] time, this Spring was at least? 8 or 10 miles from ye bay the war [?] Lost in and ye docent of ye Side of ye highest Mountain w.th the ..?.. obliged to go..?.. Every ...?:... or other of y m [ye mountain] for Water but ..?.. first... almost half the ships company fainted by ye way till they ware supp'td by those that ...?.. able perform in ye Journy..

¹² The winds at this time were offshore.

¹³ The ships are anchored in a bay with turtles and while the *Roebuck* men are seen the ship is not.

¹⁴ Dampier indicates that while getting his men, their bedding and chests off, he warped *Roebuck* ashore into three and a half fathoms and secured it there. Dampier's comment indicates that he was unable to access the stores in this ship.

From: ADM 51/3859- Captain's Log HMS Hastings for 1701

Thursday 3. Att Anchor in Ascension road... att tenn This morning Anchord on ye **NW side of y Island**¹⁵ in Tenn fath [oms] the E [eastern] point boar NebN y north point SoWbSo O ye S [of ye ship?] From ye shore 1/2 mile: ...[?]. Sent out boate on Shoar which brought us word off that Cap Dampier and his men where on shore having lost his Maj [esty] s Ship ye Roebucke on y Island.

Fryday 4... Fresh gales and fair weather

Satterday 5.. Wind and Weath Do. In y afternoon came on board seven Of y Roebuck men at 10 at night got on board y **Roebuck anchor being her small bower and fourtenn fath[om] of cable In giting of which o[ur] Longboat Lost her Grapnel:**¹⁶

Sunday 6 ... At anchor in Ascension Road ..Fresh Gailles and Fair Weathr... Sent our Longboat and Pinnois to the SW Bay for more Turtle.

Munday 7... Wind and Weathr Do in y **afternoon got on board a spair Topmast of the Roebucks** in y morning.¹⁷

From: ADM 51/4114- Captain's Log HMS Anglesey for 1701

Thursd 3 ... at 9 this forenoon I anchord in 9 1/2 fatham ye No. most point of ye Bay NEBN ye So. Most SSW1/2W: as I came In ? **Saw many Men ashore Unexpected**¹⁸ w[hi]ch proved to be Capn Dampire of ye Roebuck and men there Ship having foundard in ye Road [?] saved there lives a Shore It being on ye 23 Day of Feb'y 1701 being in number of them 51 a Shore

Satt'd 5... Is noe watter to be gott upon this island only up in ye mountains Is a small Spring

¹⁵ Confirming that the anchorage was on the NW side.

¹⁶ That the longboat had to use a grapnel to recover the anchor and cable indicates that it was submerged and this may not have been the anchor Dampier sent ashore in order to secure *Roebuck*.

¹⁷ Was the topmast recovered from the ship *Roebuck* or from the 'Roebucks' a term used elsewhere describing the crew? This may have been used as a tent ridge pole.

¹⁸ Like the other ships present, *HMS Anglesey* appears to have seen the men first and not the stranded *Roebuck* as one would have expected. This poses the question whether *Roebuck* had broken up in the swells, whether it lay on its side and was lying just submerged, drifted back out or was lost elsewhere.

ADM 51/4114- Master's Log? HMS Anglesey

2a

Sund 6th 1701 ... small gales cont ye long boat for more turtle at ye SW Bay and and Capn Dampire and his men Came aboard me.

Mond 7th... faire weather at 9 this morning weighted... in company with ye Hastings, Lizard and Canterbury Indiaman bound for St Iago...

ADM 51/3859-

Letter October 1701... Admiralty OfficePembroke, Haversham, Mitchell and Churchill.. re delivery of Journal of the proceedings of Roebuck and the payment of Dampier's wages.

List of crew: not reproduced

20184 An account of the loss of his Majesty's Shipp Roebuck by John Penton. Carpenter's Mate. ADM 1/ 15262

On ye 21 of Feby 1700 in sight of ye Island of Ascention we sprung a leak...kept her up till ye 23 in ye aft'noon. At which time with the help of a **Sea breze and warping we got her within a cables length of ye shore. She then being full up to ye hatches with water.**¹⁹ And that night and next morning we provided ourselves for goeing a shore on ye foresaid Island Ascention.

Dated 29 September 1701

20184 An account of the loss of his Majesty's Ship Roebuck by Mark? Doyd? Boatswains Mate. ADM 1/15262

On the 21 of Feby 1700 in sight of ye Island of Ascension about eight A clock at night we sprung a leak on our larboard bow... All we could do with pumping and bailing she still gained? of us **which when we came in she being full of water forced** us a shore on ye 23 in ye Evining...? in a short time after sunset.

Dated 29 September 1701

20184 Charles Harbree ADM 1/15262

[as above]...this night the 23 we warp'd in and in ye even[ing] **having gott wthn a cables length of ye shore in sum short time after ye ship sunk.**²⁰

¹⁹ An indication of the depth of water in the ship and why they recovered so little. If the masts were cut down for use ashore, this would help explain why the rescuers saw nothing of *Roebuck*...a major problem still in locating the ship.

²⁰ The ship did sink, casting doubt on the possibility it could have floated back out to sea.

20184 An account of the loss of his Maj's Ship Roebuck by Stephen Dolling ADM 1/15262

[nothing new]

Dated 28 die Sept 1701

20184 Acc'nt of the loss of his Ma's Ship Roebuck by John Hughes Master ADM 1/15262

[As per Dampier],... At nine a'clock...? Anchored in the NW Bay in ? & half fath. Water Sandy ground **about half a mile from the shoare...** ye 23 in ye evening at which time by ye help of a sea breeze and warping **we gott her within a Cables length of the shoare, and she soon struck for?** that night we made provision to save our lives and next morning Capt Dampier and his Officers went ashore...

Dated 29 September 1701

J. Wilkinson, 1929. William Dampier.

On page 157, Wilkinson names the senior men thus;

Jacob Hughes Master

George Fisher Lieutenant

Phillip Paine gunner

R Chadwick & John Knight mates

Doctor William Borthwick

James Brand Captain's clerk

From: H 1310/87- Hydrographic Office File: Royal Airforce Sub-Aqua Association

Report of the Joint Services Expedition to Ascension Island 15/10-3/12/1985.

Roebuck was a **26 gun**²¹ 5th Rate ship built in 1690 by Edward Snellgrove of Wapping. The ship was originally built as a 'fire ship'²² and was **96 feet long** 'on the gun deck', 25'6" in beam²³ and depth of hold **10 feet**²⁴ and of 292 tons.²⁵

²¹ The number of guns on an exploration voyage is expected to be less than 26.

²² Fire ships may also have some archaeologically-recognisable characteristics. One is the hinging of the gunports.

²³ The length is expected to be reflected in the remains on the seabed and will be an important identification tool, while the breadth is dependent on factors such as angle of heel and depth buried in sediment.

²⁴ The depth of hold is an important clue at 10 feet (from the underneath of the deck to the top of the ceiling) i.e. *Roebuck* probably had a draught of 10 feet at most. When this is considered with the account that, while the vessel was warped in a cable length from shore and fastened to shore in a depth of three and a half fathoms (21 feet) at 8 o'clock, she did not strike the ground until 9 o'clock, *Roebuck* was either sinking or was warped in further in the

Appendix 3: Neill MacFall's Article from 'The Islander'.

WHERE IS THE "ROEBUCK" ??

William Dampier had the misfortune to lose his ship off the coast of Ascension Island in 1701 and tradition says that it was wrecked near South West Bay and that the crew survived on the island by following a goat to a supply of water at the place that is now called Dampier's Drip. According to Dampier's own log they lived on crabs, boobies and goats until they were rescued some six weeks later. In fact this log of Dampier's will bear closer inspection because if it is read carefully it will reveal that the "Roebuck" is very unlikely to be found off South West Bay at all. With a diving party expected on the island to search for the wreck I thought it might be a good time to open a discussion on where the ship may now lie and therefore offer my theory to (hopefully) open this forum.

In 1701 the area around the present Clarence Bay was known as "English Roads" and would be where any incoming ship would head for, especially one in trouble and the "Roebuck" was already leaking as it approached the island. The area around South West Bay would not offer a safe or even convenient anchorage. Dampier's log for 23 February 1701 states:-

"at 9 anchored in 10 and a half Fathom, sandy Ground. The South-point bore South-South-West distance 2 Miles, and the North-point of the Bay, North-east half North, distance 2 Miles"

The sighting of a point of land two miles to the southwest straightaway rules out South West Bay. The only area where this could apply would be on the north eastern side of the island between Bottle Point and North West Point - or in "English Roads". The second point of the description "2 Miles to the North-east, half North" could apply to anywhere on the south coast or the west coast from South East Bay to "English Roads". Therefore the only place to fit both descriptions would be "English Roads" or as we call it Clarence Bay.

The precise spot, as far as I can tell from a study of the maps of the time would be about three quarters of a mile to the Northwest of Bate's Point, where the 10 and a half fathoms or 63 feet depth would also apply.

This of course was their first anchorage. After repairs had proved unsuccessful the ship was then run in to 7 fathoms (42 feet) riding on a sea breeze and then warped in to 3 and a half fathoms, where she finally sank on 25 February 1701. This would put the wreck of the ship off the northern end of Long Beach, just to the southwest of Bate's Point at a depth of 21 feet, though of course the currents may have subsequently moved her away from that position.

intervening hour. Unless the anchor dragged and the wreck floated out in the south easterly 'gales' that appear to have been prevalent after *Roebuck* was lost, she lies at, or inshore of, the three and a half fathom (21 foot) line mentioned by Dampier.

²⁵ The tonnage will be reflected in anchor size and this should prove an important tool in identifying the remains.

The rest of the traditional story is also open to debate, my own theory is that they never went near to Dampier's Drip but made their second camp in Breakneck Valley. From there they would have been able to see ships passing on the "weather side" of the island as Dampier describes.

References.

"Dampier's Voyages", edited by John Masefield, 1906. "Ascension Island" by J.E.Packer, 1968. Ordnance Survey map of Ascension island, 1992, Various old charts in the Heritage Society Gallery.

Figure 38: The full First Day stamp cover with designer Neill MacFall.

*Tercentenary Of The
Sinking Of H^MS 'Roebuck'*



**Ascension
Island**



Official First Day Cover



Appendix 4: Ceramic assessment. By Dr M. Flecker

Firstly I must point out that my knowledge on ceramics is limited to the types that I have excavated from various shipwrecks throughout Southeast Asia and the western Pacific. Fortunately, the illustrated examples that you have sent are familiar.

Storage Jar

Nine jars of this type were recovered from the Manila Galleon, *Nuestra Señora de la Concepcion*, which wrecked off Saipan in 1638 [1]. Most of these had a Chinese character stamped into the clay, beneath the glaze, between two of the lug handles. The three legible characters meant money (*qian*). Although it is not particularly clear, there seems to be a chop between the handles (almost touching one) of your illustrated jar. Several of the *Concepcion* jars also had the co-joined initials of their owners, or symbols such as an anchor, chiselled through the glaze on the shoulder or waist.

Clay and glaze adhered to the rims and bases of the *Concepcion* jars, indicating that they had been stacked one on top of the other for firing in the kiln. The bases and most of the rims were left unglazed with this aim in mind, but from the markings, many still stuck together. It is hard to see on the photograph, but the rim of your jar seems to show signs of stacking.

These jars are quite common. They have been found on the *Witte Leeuwe*, which wrecked off Saint Helena in 1608 (?), and on the *San Diego*, which was lost of Fortune Island, south of Manila, in 1600 [2]. I have also seen them at antique shops in the Philippines.

This type of jar seems to have been manufactured for some time with little change in form. Shipwreck evidence shows that the form remained the same throughout the first half of the 17th century, and in all probability it changed little right through to the 18th century. They were most probably produced at kilns in Guangdong Province, southern China.

Blue-and-White

The blue-and-white jar lid and the shards are products of the Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi Province, China.

The jar lid is very similar in form to hundreds of jar lids recovered from the *Vung Tau Wreck* of c. 1690 [3]. The distinct panelled decoration brings to mind kraak porcelain of the early 17th century, although this technique carried on through the transition period at the end of the Ming Dynasty and, in a less

severe form, right through the Kangxi period of the Qing Dynasty (1662-1722). Christiaan Jørg comments that the wide rim of this type lid, which broke the smooth vertical curves of the associated jar, did not widely occur until the Kangxi period [4]. The knob of your example has broken off, but from the configuration of the break, it was almost certainly a lion (see feet and long tail). A similar lid with a lion knob (although detachable) of the mid 18th century is held by the Rijksmuseum [5]. While your lid is no where near imperial quality, it is of fairly high export quality.

While painted decorations such as the two women with child in a garden with rockwork, do not specifically occur in the *Vung Tau* cargo, the floral 'jardinières' on a fenced terrace do [6]. I would be inclined to believe that your lid is also of the Kangxi period.

There is a possibility that the two shards are slightly later. The geometric rim decoration on shard JR2 is the same as that on many of the ceramics recovered from the *Gotheborg*, which was lost in 1745 [7]. The thick blue band around the caveto of shard JR3 is characteristic of even later pieces, but I could not confidently assign a later date to it. The central decoration is bamboo.

1. Mathers et al, 1990, *The Recovery of the Manila Galleon Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion*, Pacific Sea Resources, pp.439-440. (Myra had a copy).
2. Goddio et al, 1994, *Le San Diego: Un Tresor Sous la Mer*, Reunion des Musees Nationaux, pp. 248-249.
3. Christie's catalogue, 1992, *The Vung Tau Cargo*. For background see Flecker, 1992, IJNA Vol. 21(3).
4. Jorg, C., Flecker, M., 2001 (hopefully), *Porcelain from the Vung Tau Wreck*, Sun Tree Publishing, Singapore.
5. Jorg, C., 1997, *Chinese Ceramics in the Collection of the Rijksmuseum*, Amsterdam, p.122.
6. Christie's catalogue, p.82.
7. Wastfelt et al, 1990, *Porcelain from the East Indiaman Gotheborg*, Wiken.

Appendix 4: Assessment of the Clam: By Dr Shirley Slack-Smith

For a positive identification, I cannot see enough detail of the shell in the view of Jimmy and the clam, but the group photo shows a little of the outside of the valve. It appears to have worn scales on the convex ribs. From that character and from its general shape and size, I can say that it belongs to the genus *Tridacna* and possibly to the species *Tridacna squamosa* Lamarck, 1819.

Therefore I can be certain that the shell would have been collected (by whoever) in the Indian Ocean or in the western part of the Pacific Ocean. The genus *Tridacna* has a distributional range within the tropical and sub-tropical waters of the Indo-West Pacific Region as far south as about Shark Bay and southern Queensland in mainland Australia, northern South Africa, and Lord Howe I and Pitcairn I in the Pacific. Northwards the genus extends up the E coast of Africa and reaches the north of the Red Sea, south and south-east Asia and Southern Japan. To the east, its range extends to the Line Islands, the Marquesas and Pitcairn.

If the clam is of the species *T. squamosa* then it would have originated within a more circumscribed area. This probably doesn't extend southwards beyond the Ningaloo Reef and the southern groups of the G B Reef in Australia, Mozambique in the west, halfway up the Red Sea, southern India, the SE of SE Asia and southern Japan in the north, and eastwards only as far as the Marshall Is, Samoa and Tonga. These limits may be a little out of date but the pattern would hold good.

So, the shell did not come from the Atlantic, for sure.

Hopefully the video to come will show more detail of the external characters of the clam valve so that I can be more sure of my identification of the species.

Until then, my congratulations and best wishes. We have all been basking in your reflected glory.

Shirley (Slack-Smith)
Department of Natural Sciences
WA Museum.

Appendix 5: Preliminary notes on HM Ship *Roebuck* . By Robert Sexton

PRELIMINARY NOTES ON HM SHIP *ROEBUCK*

R.T. Sexton, Adelaide, February 2002

The following notes give the results of a preliminary investigation of readily available sources of information about the *Roebuck*, built as a fire-ship in 1690. The paucity of draughts, models and illustrations of small vessels in the late 17th century makes it difficult to trace the stages of development in naval architecture during that period when a fundamental change in the appearance of ships was nearing completion. Two plans of fire-ships similar to the *Roebuck*, one an Admiralty draught and the other based on a dockyard model, have been located, but resolving questions over the manner of converting such a vessel to a fifth rate ship awaits accounts of the voyage being studied and a further review of shipbuilding practices of the day being undertaken.

Basic details of the Roebuck

Although it is inconvenient to consult original manuscript records for information about early Royal Navy ships such as the *Roebuck*, the importance of the vessel ensures that she is mentioned in many secondary sources. One of the most thoroughly researched and reliable of these is *The Sailing Navy List: All the Ships of the Royal Navy—Built, Purchased and Captured 1688-1860*²⁶, written by David Lyon of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, and compiled from details shown on Admiralty draughts and in written records including their Progress Books and Dimension Books.

The *Roebuck* was built prior to the introduction of the 'Establishments' which laid down standardised details for the various classes of man-of-war, and appears for the period 1689-1705 under the heading 'Small Fifth Rates (Two- and one and a half-deckers)'. She is listed as being of 24 or 26 guns, built by Snellgrove at Wapping, and launched on 17 April 1690. Her length on the range of the lower deck was 96 feet, length on the keel 84 feet 5 inches, beam 25 feet 6 inches, depth of hold 9 feet 9³/₄ inches, and her burthen 292 tons. The tonnage calculated from these figures²⁷ is in fact 291 93/94 tons, and it will be noted that the stem rake is not a nominal two-thirds of the beam. The vessel's complement was normally 125 men, or 90 in peacetime. Commenced as a fire-ship, there was slight doubt whether she was completed as a fifth rate, or converted in 1694. It was further commented that this was Dampier's ship, which foundered off Ascension on 24 February 1701 after springing a leak in the bow, and that searches for the wreck had as yet been unsuccessful.

²⁶D.J. Lyon, 1993, *The Sailing Navy List: All the Ships of the Royal Navy, Built, Purchased and Captured 1688-1860*. Conway, London

²⁷Keel length by beam by half-beam all divided by 94

The *Roebuck* had earlier appeared in *Lists of Men-of-War 1650-1700, Part I, English Ships 1649-1702* compiled by R.C. Anderson²⁸. The various classes of vessel were grouped together for each year, and the *Roebuck* appears amongst the twelve fire-ships built in 1690. She is recorded as being built at Wapping with a gun-deck length of 96 feet, beam of 25 feet 6 inches and burthen of 292 tons, to have been classified as a fifth rate (26 guns) in 1695, and to have been lost at sea in 1701. Like all the other fire-ships, she was noted as having eight guns.

The *Jolly Prize*, which had been first offered to Dampier but rejected as inadequate, was also listed by Dr Anderson as a 10-gun sixth rate, taken as a prize in 1694. Her burthen of 113 tons is compatible with the gun-deck length of 67 feet and beam of 19 feet 6 inches, allowing two-thirds of beam for stem rake.

Fire-ships

Although standardisation of classes of ships was yet in the future, Dr Anderson's lists make clear that this was the first year in which fireships were purpose-built rather than converted from older naval ships, prizes, or vessels obtained by purchase. Nobody seems to have commented on the decision to do so, but it may have been in response to the build-up which led to the Comte de Tourville's victory over an Anglo-Dutch fleet at the Battle of Beachy Head in June 1690, his superior fleet including 71 ships of the line and 22 fire-ships²⁹.

The twelve fire-ships of 1690 were named *Dolphin**, *Fox*, *Griffin*, *Hawk*, *Hopewell*, *Hound*, *Hunter**, *Roebuck**, *Speedwell**, *Spy*, *Vulture*, and *Wolf*, of which the *Roebuck* was marginally the largest at 96 feet by 25 feet 6 inches, the *Griffin* the least beamy at 24 feet 8½ inches, and the *Spy* the shortest at 91 feet 6 inches, the average being in fact 93 feet 9 inches by 25 feet. The following year a further eight were built with much more aggressive names, *Blaze*, *Etna*, *Flame*, *Lightning*, *Phaeton*, *Strombolo**, *Vesuvius*, and *Vulcan*, and in 1694 a second *Blaze*³⁰ and the *Firebrand*, *Phoenix* and *Terrible**, all with much the same range of dimensions. Of the twenty-four, the six marked with an asterisk were at some time fifth-raters. The fire-ships of 1690 were ordered on 6 December 1689, all but one from different builders in the evident haste to procure them, and they were all launched between 29 March and 29 April, half of the number in fact in the four days 15 to 18 April 1690. It seems likely from such uniformity with regard to production, dimensions and tonnage that firm guidance if not an actual design draught was provided.

²⁸R.C. Anderson, 1966, *Lists of Men-of-War 1650-1700, Part I, English Ships 1649-1702*. Society for Nautical Research Occasional Publications No. 5, second edition, London

²⁹J. Fincham, 1851, *A History of Naval Architecture*. Reprinted by Scolar Press, London, 1979, p. 66

³⁰Listed as 'bought' by Anderson, but probably purchased during construction as one of the series according to Lyon

David Lyon has one further fire-ship, the *Griffin*, built at Sheerness Dockyard (Surveyor: Allin) in 1702 to replace the earlier *Griffin*. Of 263 tons, she measured 94 feet 7 inches on the gun-deck, 78 feet 9½ inches on the keel, 25 feet 1½ inches beam and 9 feet 6 inches depth in the hold. Thus not only in dimensions, but like all the other fire-ships having eight guns and a complement of 45 men, the *Griffin* is clearly to be considered as one of this grouping, and the lines plans and profile believed to represent this, and the other fire-ships, are of the greatest importance in assessing the probable details of the *Roebuck*.

Fire-ships are described in William Falconer's *Universal Dictionary of the Marine* of 1780³¹, and the entry may well date back to the first edition of 1769. A fire-ship was 'an old vessel filled with combustible materials, and fitted with grappling-irons to hook, and set fire to, the enemies ships in battle, &c'. There was nothing unusual in their construction, except the fire-room in the forward part of the between-decks, and the illustration of such a compartment with its seven ports each side showed that the bulkhead aft separated off a further four ports adjacent to the working space and cabins of captain, lieutenant and master. The inflammable materials were held in a system of troughs supported at a suitable level on cross-pieces and stanchions, and two extensions of the trough system led through holes in the bulkhead back adjacent to each sally-port, an enlarged gun-port on either side by which the various personnel and finally the captain made their escape. When the ship was fired, the flames spread to two metal canisters against each port lid which in exploding blew them open. To ensure that the ports remained unobstructed and fed air to the flames, these port lids were hinged downwards. Helping spread the conflagration, funnels each side opposite the fore and main shrouds and several large deck scuttles spaced between them carried flames up into the rigging from fire-barrels placed below the openings. These fire-barrels were filled with bundles of reeds and the usual mixture of sulphur, pitch, tar and tallow. All openings were normally covered with canvas to prevent accidental ignition. While some trace of these arrangements may have been evident on the *Roebuck*, such things as the grappling irons affixed to yard-arms or grappnels fitted with chain, not hawsers, to hold the vessels together would not remain in place once she had been converted to a fifth rate.

The Roebuck compared with other ships

Fincham in his *History of Naval Architecture* reviewed technological progress in the context of the naval situation. In 1652, the time of the first Dutch war, the largest fifth and sixth rates listed in 'Pepys's Miscellanics'³² were respectively the 24-gun *Nightingale* (300 tons), 88 feet on the keel, 25 feet 4 inches beam and 12 feet 8 inches depth in the hold, and the 18-gun

³¹W. Falconer, 1780, *Universal Dictionary of the Marine*, new edition, T. Cadell, London. Reprinted by David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1970.

³²Fincham, 1851, p. 57

Greyhound (120 tons), measuring 60 feet on the keel by 20 feet 3 inches by 10 feet. In 1684, three years after Deane had retired from a commission for executing the office of Lord High Admiral, an inquiry reported³³ that the dimensions of fifth rates were 103 feet 9 inches on deck and 28 feet 8 inches beam, with a draught of 12 to 13 feet, and of sixth rates 67 feet 8 inches and 23 feet 6 inches beam, with a draught of 9 feet 8 inches to 10 feet 8 inches. In 1688, just before the abdication of James II, the largest fifth rate was the 32-gun *Sapphire* of 333 tons, 86 feet on the keel, 27-foot beam, 11-foot depth, with a draught of 13 feet 2 inches³⁴. The largest sixth rate was the 18-gun *Lark* of 199 tons, keel length 74 feet, beam 22 feet 6 inches, depth 9 feet 2 inches, and draught 9 feet. Unless some record of the *Roebuck's* draught can be found, a figure of about 12 feet seems reasonable on the basis of the above.

Of all the fire-ships, the armament was recorded in the case of the *Hunter*, *Firebrand* and *Phoenix* as comprising 6 minions and 2 falconets. Minions were 4-pounders about 7 feet long, and falconets primitive cannon throwing a ball of 19½ pounds³⁵. Of those altered to fifth rates, only in the case of the *Dolphin* is it known that her 1703 establishment was four 9-pounders on the gundeck, twenty 6-pounders on the upper deck, and four 4-pounders on the quarterdeck.

Contemporary information, plans and models

The obvious source of information for this period is Sir Anthony Deane's *Doctrine of Naval Architecture* of 1670, to be found amongst the Pepys manuscripts in Cambridge. Included in this document are sail plans of a fifth rate of perhaps 48 guns and sixth rate of 16 guns. Thus the one is at the upper and the other the lower end of the range of sizes when it comes to a comparison with the 26-gun fifth rate *Roebuck*, and there is little guidance as to how her gunports would have been distributed around the decks. The other problems are that as noted by Laird Clowes, 'Deane's draughts may be regarded as illustrating the last phase of the long beak'³⁶, and while the square tuck of earlier years has given way to the round tuck, the form and decoration of the stern has a distinctly old-fashioned appearance.

Also amongst the Pepys collection are Edmund Dummer's draughts showing the longitudinal section and perspective views looking forward and aft from the mid-ship section of a first rate man-of-war of about 1685³⁷. Although of a very large ship, these views provide details of construction not shown on plans at the time of the *Roebuck*. Another draught of great interest because it depicts a smaller vessel in unusual detail is that of the Royal Yacht

³³ Fincham, 1851, p. 64

³⁴ Fincham, 1851, p. 66

³⁵ W.H. Smyth, 1867, *Sailor's Word Book*. Reprint Conway, London, 1996, pp. 286 & 480

³⁶ G.S. Laird Clowes, 1932, *Sailing Ships: Their History and Development, Part I, Historical Notes*. HMSO, London, p. 60

³⁷ Reproduced for instance in M.E. Leek, 1991, *The Art of Nautical Illustration*. Sandstone Books, Leichardt. pp. 44-45

Carolina, built at Sheerness as the sixth rate *Peregrine Galley* (20 guns) in 1700³⁸. Included are lines, sheer plan, inboard profile, mid-ship section and stern plan. The next draught of interest in point of time is the sail-plan of the 30-gun ship of the 1719 Establishment³⁹. No ships were built to the design and therefore it is of significance only in showing how the profile had developed by the early 18th century, and how it was proposed that the guns be distributed in a smaller ship with two decks. There were ten gun-ports on the upper deck each side, two on poop, and on the lower deck three forward and three aft, with one, a ballast port?, in mid-ships. Also on the lower deck was a series of ten sweep ports.

There is the model of a fire-ship believed to date from the period 1720-1740 in the Rogers Collection at the Naval Academy, Annapolis, and plans of it have been prepared by Merritt A. Edson, Jr.⁴⁰. Claimed to be of 650 tons on dimensions of 126 feet by 34 feet 3 inches, perhaps on the basis of the number of gunports suggesting equivalence to a fourth rate of 48 guns for which these dimensions were typical, this vessel has twice the tonnage of any pre-1700 fireship and has an incredible 8 feet between decks in the poop. This height reduces to a much more likely 6 feet if the drawing corresponds to the size of the model and is at a scale of 1:48, and it seems possible the model represents one of the *Roebuck* group since the length then becomes 95 feet, the draught (12 feet) and depth of hold are appropriate, and only the moulded beam of 25 feet 6 inches is slightly excessive since the extreme beam of the broadest (in fact the *Roebuck*) was this figure. The general appearance is of an English ship, but unless the model represents a projected design there are no alternatives to this identification if it represents an actual ship since Lyon has no record of any further purpose-built fire-ships, other than a re-build of the *Phoenix* in 1707, until the 397-ton *Incendiary* in 1778 and the 422-ton *Tisiphone/Pluto* class from 1780.

The model has seven fire-ports, a sally-port, and two ordinary ports each side in the between-decks, and ten gun-ports on the upper deck. There are two funnels opposite each mast and three deck scuttles. The fire-ports are the usual proportions of gun-ports, but the two canisters can be seen mounted in the upper part, leaving an opening 2 feet by 15 inches (if at 1:48), close to the 18 inches by 15 inches suggested by Falconer.

Perhaps the most relevant model as a guide for rigging details of the *Roebuck* is that of the 70-gun third rate *Breda*, built at Woolwich in 1692, and featuring in a number of photographs in James Lees' *Masting and Rigging of English Ships of War, 1625-1860*.⁴¹

³⁸Lyon, 1993, p. 28; Anderson, 1966, p. 58

³⁹Traced by Edson from an original in the Science Museum, London

⁴⁰Rogers Collection; plan drawn in 1978 and based on lines and details taken off the model at the Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, by John R. Stevens

⁴¹1979. Naval Institute Press, Annapolis

Appendix 6: Robert Marx's competing claim to the location of the site

Robert Marx's claim that he found HM Ship *Roebuck* was received at the Western Australian Maritime Museum on 29 May 2001. In a letter to the author's colleague and Head of Department Jeremy Green Mr Marx stated that, as he had discovered the *Roebuck* in 1973, he would 'appreciate getting credit where credit is due' (R. Marx to J. Green, 29/5/2001).

Enclosed was an article entitled '*Ascension—an island surrounded by treasure*'. Penned by Mr Marx himself, it was from an edition of *Argosy Magazine* dated September 1973. Written with a focus on treasure, Mr Marx refers to an American serviceman's location of coinage apparently from a Portuguese carrack *Nossa Senhora da Estrella* lost on the south east coast in 1568 and the recovery 'around 1960' of an 'undisclosed amount of treasure' from a 'large chest of gold and silver coins' at English Bay, all reputedly emanating from the Portuguese ship *Sao Tomé* wrecked in 1598.

In referring to Dampier's reputed burial of a hoard of treasure at the time of the loss of *Roebuck*, Robert Marx explained that it was '...loot that he [Dampier] had allegedly hidden elsewhere when he was a pirate and recovered on the Naval voyage, but reburied on Ascension fearing the rescue vessel's crew might seize it'. Mr Marx indicated that 'to this day people are still after his treasure, which may or may not exist'.

In respect to his claim to have located the remains of HM Ship *Roebuck*, Mr Marx stated that

Dampier left such a vivid and accurate account of the area in which his ship was lost, that I was able to find it in less than 20 minutes of diving. With the assistance of several amateur divers from the missile tracking base, we recovered a large number of interesting artefacts which we donated to the local museum.

Given that on the occasion of the Western Australian Maritime Museum's visit in March 2001 the Ascension Island Museum carried a sign indicating that *Roebuck* most likely lay in South West Bay and given that it was still then an 'island tradition' that the wreck lay in those waters, as indicated in the text above, then Robert Marx's site was apparently found in that Bay. Further, it does appear that he was mistaken in his wreck identification procedures, for he goes on to state that

If the two Portuguese ships had been lost on the same side of the island, we would probably have been picking up gold and silver instead of wooden pulley blocks and brass fittings.

Brass fittings are not a common indicator of any but mid-19th century sites (McCarthy, 1996) and the curators of the Island Museum apparently shared this opinion for there were no artefacts on exhibit from the *Roebuck* prior to

the March 2001 fieldwork. Further, no mention of these events appears in the RAF account.

Given that in the period February to March 2001 the sand level at Clarence Bay had dropped to levels not hitherto seen in the 40 years Mr Jimmy Young (finder of the ceramics mentioned above) was resident on the island, and given that they were returning in the next month and had returned to their normal levels a few months later, it is evident that the material reported by Mr Marx is not from the site under consideration here.

Further, Commander John Bingeman (RN, Ret'd), leader of the 1979 British service team in search of *Roebuck* has indicated that Mr Marx appears to have dived on the *Maeander* (1870) site in nearby Comfortless Cove. He also advised that in 1973, when Marx visited the island, *Maeander* had not been correctly identified. He also advised that many pieces of it were located in the museum on the occasion of his visit six years after Robert Marx's dive. Commander Bingeman also advised that the 'wooden pulley blocks and brass fittings' referred to by Mr Marx in the quotation above 'sound just like the 19th century material recovered from *Maeander* over many years' (Bingeman to McCarthy, 14/10/2001).

Further Commander Bingeman advised:

When I was there in 1979, the Islanders knew I was looking for *Roebuck*, see 'The Islander' for 23rd November 1979, and no one advised me that Marx had found her only six years earlier. Wing Commander Kenneth Pickup RAF (Ret'd), the Island's dentist and chairman of Ascension Island Historical society certainly knew of my efforts. The Wing Commander had been on the Island since 1976; I went to dinner twice at his house and definitely not mention was ever made that Marx had found the *Roebuck*. Similarly Jimmy Young who, as you say had been on the island since 1960 and works for the Americans, would have known about it. (Bingeman to McCarthy, 14/10/2001).

Appendix 7: *Willdampia Formosa*: the Sturt Pea from New Holland

Manager Ms Serena Marner with one sheet of Dampier's plant specimens housed at Fielding-Druce Herbarium, Department of Plant Sciences in the University of Oxford (Photo: Hugh Edwards). The form of the original appearing on the next page (Photo by K.F. Kenneally) and the sketch appearing in Dampier's account are from George, 1999:82).



Tab. 4.

in New Holland & Timor.



Appendix 8: Ownership of 'State vessels'

(Reproduced from Roach, 1996: 84-5)

Warships, naval auxiliaries, and other vessels owned or operated by a State and used at the time they sank only on government non-commercial service, are State vessels. Aircraft used in military, customs and police services are State aircraft. International law recognises that State vessels and aircraft, and their associated artefacts, whether or not sunken, are entitled to sovereign immunity.

In addition, such shipwrecks and sunken aircraft are historical artefacts of special importance and entitled to special protection. Many such ships and aircraft have unique histories making them important parts of their country's traditions. In addition, these ships and aircraft may be the last resting places of many sailors and airmen who died in the service of their nations.

The practice of States confirms the well-established rule of international law that title to such vessels and aircraft is lost only by capture or surrender during battle (before sinking), by international agreement, or by an express act of abandonment of government property. Once hostilities have ended, belligerents do not acquire any title to such vessels or aircraft through the act of sinking them. Likewise, title to such vessels and aircraft is not lost by the mere passage of time.

A coastal State does not acquire any right of ownership to a sunken state vessel or aircraft by reason of its being located on or embedded in land or the sea-bed over which it exercises sovereignty or jurisdiction. Access to such vessels and aircraft and their associated artefacts located on or embedded in the sea-bed of foreign archipelagic waters, territorial seas or contiguous zones, is subject to coastal State control in accordance with international law. It is the policy of most Governments to honour requests from sovereign States to respect, or to authorise visits to, such sunken vessels and aircraft.

Access to sunken state vessels and aircraft and their associated artefacts located on or embedded in the continental shelf seaward of 24 miles from the baseline is subject to flag State control and is not subject to coastal State control. Access to sunken state vessels and aircraft and their associated artefacts located on or embedded in the sea-bed seaward of 24 miles from the baseline is subject only to flag State control.

Except for opposing belligerents while hostilities continue, no person or State may salvage or attempt to salvage sunken state vessels or aircraft, of their associated artefacts, wherever located, without the express permission of the sovereign flag State, whether or not a war grave.

Once hostilities have ended, sunken state vessels and aircraft containing crew remains are also entitled to special respect as war graves and must not be disturbed without the explicit permission of the sovereign.

The flag State is entitled to use all lawful means to prevent unauthorised disturbance of the wreck or crash site (including the debris field) or salvage of the wreck.

Disturbance of any shipwreck or crash site is necessarily a destructive process. In virtually every instance, once recovery activities are undertaken, the site cannot be restored or replicated. Any recovery effort which disturbs the site denies other properly authorised persons the opportunity for scientific discovery and study.

Accepted principles of marine archaeology, naval history and environmental protection require thoughtful research design, careful site surveys, minimal site disturbance consistent with research requirements, adequate financial resources, preparation of professional reports, and a comprehensive conservation plan before artefacts should be permitted to be recovered and treated. These principles apply particularly to sunken state vessels and aircraft.

These rules do not affect the rights of a territorial sovereign to engage in legitimate operations, such as removal of navigational obstructions, prevention of damage to the marine environment, or other actions not prohibited by international law, ordinarily following notice to and in cooperation with the State owning the vessel or aircraft or otherwise entitled to assert the sovereign immunity of the wreck.

FROM: Roach, J.A., 1996. Appendix: sunken warships and military aircraft, Underwater archaeology and the *Titanic*: The legal considerations, in Jarvis, A., et al., 1996. *Proceedings, IXth International Congress of Maritime Museums*. National Maritime Museum, UK.

Mr John Lashmar



Cr Les Moss



Island Cruiseways
P.O. Box 100, 2714 - 1000 1000
Department of the South Coast and Islands
Wildlife Management - 1000 1000
1000 1000 1000 1000
1000 1000

Dr John and Mrs 'Eddie' Williams



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A discounted 'duty fare' was obtained for travel on the RAF Tristar service from Britain to Ascension Island, the Falkland Islands and return by Mr Robert King, Receiver of Wreck, Falkland Islands Government.

Flt Lt Richard Burke (RAF), through The Administrator, HH Geoffrey Fairhurst and the Ascension Island Heritage Society, organised accommodation on the island, dive support, a vehicle and a boat, the Ascension Frigate. These represent very substantial savings to the team.

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