

THE *DUYFKEN*: AN EXPLORATION OF THE ROLES OF A REPLICIA SHIP

On 11 January 2012, in a press release headed “*Little Dove*” to return home to WA’, Western Australia’s Deputy Premier and Minister for Tourism, Kim Hames, announced that the *Duyfken*1606 Replica Foundation would receive government support to bring the *Duyfken* replica back to the state. The release went on to say that the support would take the form of a \$263,000 grant for the *Duyfken* to sail from Sydney to Perth, with an additional \$125,000 per annum (indexed) for 10 years for it to be home ported in Perth. Two state government staff members would also be provided to assist with managing the project.¹ Dr Hames said the funding would provide the *Duyfken* with a permanent home, while also creating a new tourism attraction and educational experience for West Australians and visitors.

The press release and subsequent comments from the Foundation and community groups have celebrated the initiative to bring the vessel back to the place where it was built. Not surprisingly, it has been presented as something of a victory to win the *Duyfken* replica back from the East, where it had most recently been on display at the National Maritime Museum in Sydney. However, one only has to go back some eighteen months, to mid-2010, to find evidence that getting the *Duyfken* replica back to Western Australia might not have been such a hard-fought victory. In June of that year an article headed ‘*Duyfken* looks set to sail into Port Douglas’ appeared on a local web site announcing that a final decision would be taken within the following fortnight as to whether the *Duyfken* 1606 replica would remain in Cairns or move its regular anchorage to Port Douglas.² In the article the Mayor of Cairns, Val Schier, indicated that neither she nor her council would have approved

the Cairns based contract, which had been in place since 2007 when the vessel was moved from its original home in Western Australia. She believed that the vessel would be better hosted at the marina in Port Douglas, where it would stand a chance of generating sufficient income as a tourist attraction to fund itself.

The story, which went on to deal briefly with the original *Duyfken*'s voyage of 1606 and the importance of its place in Australia's history, was not picked up by any major newspaper or broadcast news service. It was considered a matter of local significance only, in which two regional Queensland centres debated which could best (or least) afford the cost of maintaining and operating the little ship. Indeed, the vessel was subsequently moved to Port Douglas until late 2011, when she was moved to the National Maritime Museum in Sydney as a replacement for the HMB *Endeavour* until early 2012 as that vessel circumnavigated the continent.

Even before the *Duyfken* replica set sail for Sydney to perform this role, there were indications that she would not be returning to Queensland on any permanent basis, and during her time in Darling Harbour, negotiations were being held to find someone with the financial support and desire to provide the 'Little Dove' with a new home.³ Sadly, the *Duyfken* reflects the situation for many so-called 'replicas' or 'reconstructions' of historic sailing vessels that, initially surrounded by all the noise and patriotic fervour of some national celebration, so often end their life looking for a home. It is therefore worthwhile exploring the story of the 'Little Dove' in order to better understand some of the key issues that have contributed to her current situation and relate them, not only to her own future, but also to those of other replica ships now in Australia and those that may be built in years to come.

At least the *Duyfken* still seems to have some kind of operational life, unlike the replica of Henry Hudson's *Halve Maen* (Half Moon), built in the Netherlands in 1909 and presented to the American people to commemorate the 300th Anniversary of Hudson's voyage to the New World. After a brief period during the celebrations in which she made a few trips around the harbour, the ship was shunted further and further up river until removed from the water altogether, becoming a sanctuary for vagrants and vermin before being destroyed by fire in 1934.⁴

It must be acknowledged that a number of these vessels do survive

to fulfil useful roles as sail training vessels or working museum ships, but it is debatable whether the benefits they provide are commensurate with the cost of their original construction and upkeep. So why do we continue to build so many of these vessels? Raymond Ashley, President and CEO of the Maritime Museum of San Diego, writes:

When we say we preserve or replicate historic or period vessels, seldom are we asked or do we ask ourselves, to what end. The purpose or purposes seem inherent to the act, at least to us. Yet if we were to pause from our efforts to explain our intentions, most of them would likely have to do with education in some fashion or another. The exercise is more than academic. Ships are built and sustained to serve specific purposes, and though these may change over time, clarity of purpose is a necessary ingredient of good planning and sound preservation.⁵

There is little doubt that the builders of every historic ship, whether it be a replica, reconstruction or restoration, would essentially agree with Ashley's sentiments, and most would be able to point to documentation for their project that identified at least one, and sometimes multiple purposes for the resultant vessel. Indeed, it is common for proposals for those vessels not specifically built for experimental archaeological purposes to point to multiple roles as a way of guaranteeing their long-term sustainability. Yet around the world, a considerable number of these ships struggle to remain viable. In terms of this article, 'viable' is taken to mean that a particular vessel is able to meet at least the majority of its nominated objectives on a continuing basis in a largely self-sufficient manner. But many of the vessels require substantial levels of financial support, as well as the labour and expertise by unpaid volunteers, to survive.

Most international lists of practical (operational) historic ship reconstructions include five Australian vessels, ranging from HM Bark *Endeavour* through to the timber-hulled paddle steamer *William the Fourth*.⁶ With the latter not currently operational, this leaves just four practical ship reconstructions in Australia: HM Bark *Endeavour*, *Duyfken*, *Lady Nelson* and *Enterprise*, operating from Sydney, Fremantle, Hobart and Melbourne respectively. Of these the *Endeavour*, completed in 1994, is undoubtedly the best known, serving as an operational museum ship berthed at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney, from which she makes some harbour and coastal trips, as well as major journeys such as the circumnavigation of Australia in 2011 and

2012. Such is her drawing power that on almost all of the twenty legs of the circumnavigation, forty-six crew berths (costing \$1,500 to \$4,000) and four supernumerary berths (ranging from \$5,000 to \$8,000) were fully booked by the start of 2011. In addition to such special events, ticket sales for museum tours and various money-making activities such as tours along the east coast, birthday and cocktail parties mean the vessel is able to contribute at least something to its upkeep, although it still requires some \$750,000 per year in financial support from the Federal government.⁷

The *Enterprize*, launched in 1997, is a Melbourne-built replica of the original 1830 vessel that brought the first settlers to Melbourne, and was intended from the outset to serve as a museum/charter vessel. The twenty-seven metre, two-masted topsail schooner is operated by the *Enterprize* Ship Trust, a not-for-profit organisation that relies on donations, sponsorships and a range of integrated activities including fully-structured educational school visits and charters to survive. Although not sharing *Endeavour's* fame, the *Enterprize* appears to be meeting its objectives at a consistent level of support and must therefore be regarded as possibly the most viable of all four operating vessels.⁸

The *Lady Nelson*, built in 1988, has had a more troubled history. Despite being involved in various re-enactment voyages and celebrations in Tasmania and Victoria over her first twelve years, her future was in serious jeopardy due to increasing debts. Fortunately, these were cleared in 2001, and refitting enabled her to take up her primary role as a charter/sail training vessel. Although the Tasmanian Sail Training Association, which now operates the *Lady Nelson*, continues to seek volunteers and sponsorships in order to keep her afloat. The vessel's web site advertises a range of charters, from one-and-a-half hour sailing trips on the Derwent to overnight trips and school holiday 'Pirate Sails' for six to ten-year-olds as a main feature. It is not known just how much these activities contribute to her operational costs, but the fact that the Association's 'Our Sponsors' page on the site is empty suggests that she is in a less stable position than the *Enterprize*, and potentially in a somewhat worse situation than the *Duyfken* and the *Endeavour*, which at least have the continuing financial support of the Western Australian and Commonwealth governments respectively.⁹

The *William the Fourth*, mentioned earlier as being non-operational,

is a replica of the first ocean-going paddle steamship built in Australia, and is the most extreme example of the difficulties facing replica ships in this country. Like the *Endeavour*, the paddle steamer was built as a Bicentennial project, and launched in 1987. For approximately a decade, it operated public and charter tours off the coast of Newcastle and on the Hunter River, but then ran into financial difficulties and eventually ended up on a slip in a suburb of Newcastle, slowly deteriorating despite the best efforts of volunteers. In 2007, the Newcastle Council transferred ownership to a community-based group, William the Fourth Inc., whose intention was to raise funds and sponsorship to return it to its original condition. Although there have been a number of announcements of proposed dates for the vessel to be completely refurbished, it is only recently that the necessary funds have been acquired to hopefully have the vessel restored to operational condition by November 2013.¹⁰

In such cases, it is pertinent to ask whether the problems associated with the long-term viability of such ships lies with changing public awareness and interest, in the nature of the vessels themselves, or with the original objectives of the instigators of the projects. In relation to these questions it is worth discussing the design, construction and subsequent utilization of the *Duyfken*.

The motivation for the *Duyfken* project was in many ways a reaction to the completion of the *Endeavour* replica, which had been built in Fremantle, and its departure for its permanent home in Sydney.¹¹ There seemed to be an opportunity to take advantage of the timber shipbuilding expertise that had been imported for that project and the support that could be generated as a result of public disappointment that the *Endeavour* replica was effectively 'lost' to its home state. There was also a belief that undertaking some form of historic shipbuilding project would maintain the tourist interest in Fremantle that had begun with the America's Cup defence in 1984 and continued with the *Endeavour* replica project. As a result of the financial difficulties experienced by that project, it was felt that a smaller vessel would be appropriate, and the search began to find a relatively small vessel that had contributed to Australia's maritime history and of a type that had not been built before. The *Duyfken*, a Dutch 'yacht' that had made the first definite European contact with Australia on the western shores of Cape York in 1606, seemed an ideal candidate. In 1994 a committee was formed to

research and plan for its construction.¹²

The ‘replica’ was to be built in the Lotteries *Duyfken* Village Shipyard in the grounds of the Western Australian Museum – Shipwreck Galleries in Fremantle by the *Duyfken*1606 Replica Foundation. This was consistent with the Foundation’s stated aims as listed below in an article entitled ‘Tallships and Replicas’, written by one of the key figures in the vessel’s construction, Nick Burningham:

To build a reconstruction of the ship *Duyfken* of Maximum Practicable Authenticity.

To increase awareness and appreciation of the Dutch Exploration of Australia in 1606.

To maximise the project’s potential for Research and Learning, and to make all aspects of the project Accessible and Interesting to Schools and to the Community.

To enhance Fremantle’s reputation for Replica Ship Construction, and as a site of great Maritime Heritage Significance.

To Forge Links and Friendship, through experience of Mutual History, between the Indigenous and European peoples of Australia, Indonesia and the Netherlands; and to Honour their Histories.

To Work Closely with the Western Australian Maritime Museum in Achieving this Mission.¹³

In fact, one of the prime reasons for selecting a Dutch vessel was actually as an exercise in experimental archaeology, although this is only hinted at in the first of the Foundation’s aims: ‘to build a reconstruction of the ship *Duyfken* of Maximum Practicable Authenticity’. In this context, the term ‘Maximum Practicable Authenticity’ actually means that the reconstruction would be designed to replicate the original *Duyfken* as closely as possible while conforming to requirements (such as an engine and modern sanitation) that would allow it to operate commercially. In terms of the experimental archaeology, the project was used by Nick Burningham, a nautical archaeologist who has built a number of vessels in his specialist area of the ethno-archaeology of Asian watercraft, to explore the theory that Dutch vessels of the Age of Discovery had been built using a ‘plank-first’ method of hull construction rather than

the 'frame-first' methods used by later shipwrights.¹⁴ This exercise in experimental archaeology, which lies at the core of the project, goes so far beyond the concept of 'Maximum Practicable Authenticity' that it really should be added to the list of the Foundation's aims.

The keel was laid in January 1997, and the completed hull was launched two years later in January 1999. During this period, the history of the original *Duyfken* was presented as part of the project, but the fact that the construction was presented as a working-museum exhibition, focussing on the authenticity and uniqueness of the methods and materials used in the process, plainly emphasised the archaeological experiment as a principal reason for building the vessel.¹⁵ In January 1999, tens of thousands of Western Australians crowded the streets of Fremantle, and even more followed the *Duyfken* replica live on television as she was towed from her construction site to Fremantle Harbour for the launch festivities. Significantly, as there was no direct correlation between the launch date and any event in the history of the original *Duyfken*, it was a major event in the history of the reconstruction itself that was being celebrated. For those involved in the construction - the community leaders and sponsors, the archaeologists and master shipwright, the thousands of volunteer shipwrights and guides - it was also an opportunity to celebrate the success of the project to that point.

After her launch, the *Duyfken*'s hull was towed to Fishing Boat Harbour for rigging and final fitting out prior to sea trials. Not surprisingly, after the enormous publicity of the launch, and with no special celebratory event on the horizon around which to build public awareness, interest in these concluding stages of the archaeological project appeared to wane, with volunteers reporting that the number of visitors to the ship fell well below the 200,000 people who had visited her during construction.¹⁶

This certainly impacted on plans for the *Duyfken*'s activities, as it was through visitor fees and donations that the project organisers planned to finance the sea trials and subsequent voyage of re-enactment. Public interest in the replica picked up again once she was completed and the sea trials began on 10 July 1999, largely due to the local coverage of that event in both electronic and print news services.¹⁷ It is questionable, however, whether there was any widespread understanding of the significance of the sea trials to the experimental aspect of the project, which was to test the sailing performance of the hull shape that resulted

from the plank-first method of construction in combination with the hypothesised mast and sail configuration.

Eventually, the *Duyfken* replica set sail for Indonesia, Cape York and Sydney in April 2000, in what was referred to as a voyage of re-enactment. The organisers had been forced to forgo the idea of a largely self-funded expedition to one that was primarily funded through grants and contributions from national and state governments and bodies, members of the community and corporate sponsorships, most notably that of the naming sponsor, the Chevron Corporation.¹⁸ The fact that it took such a large number of contributors to finance the voyage illustrates the difficulty organisers had in selling the idea to potential sponsors as an effective vehicle for publicising their businesses. This was largely because the voyage of re-enactment did not align with the anniversary of any major historic event related to the original *Duyfken* or Australia's maritime history. Without the sustained levels of public anticipation that characterize such special anniversaries, the *Duyfken* replica's journey was largely a case of 'out of sight, out of mind' for most Australians.

The voyage included a re-enactment of the original contact between the *Duyfken*'s crew and the local Aboriginal people in 1606 at the Pennefather River on Cape York. However, whereas the original contact was made in January of 1606, the re-enactment took place on 9 August 2000. Although the local mining and indigenous communities, the premier of Queensland and the head of Chevron Petroleum Overseas attended, it was not rated as a major event by the media, which provided only limited coverage. As a result, most Australians were not aware that it occurred, even though the re-enactment was considered by those involved to be an important step in building community and indigenous relationships.¹⁹

Marcus Gilliezeau, from Firelight Productions, joined the crew for the entire voyage, posting clips, or 'mini-docs' on a website throughout the journey as a living record of his adventures, and then using feedback from those clips to structure the resultant documentary, *Little Dove, Big Voyage*.²⁰ Even with this web coverage, the voyage itself failed to capture the hearts and minds of Australia until the *Duyfken* sailed into Sydney Harbour, when a high level of traditional media exposure finally raised public awareness of her achievement.

In 2001, the *Duyfken* replica set sail from Sydney for the Netherlands. This voyage did have a celebratory basis for its timing, which was the 400th anniversary of the formation of the VOC (Dutch East India Company). This was a major celebration in the Netherlands, in which the *Duyfken* played a significant role. Despite attracting high levels of interest in ports along her route, once she left the local waters off Fremantle, she again simply disappeared from the minds of most Australians.

This illustrates the disconnect between the public perception of the vessel and her archaeological importance, because the voyage to the Netherlands was the longest ocean voyage made by any replica ship from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. Although the *Duyfken* replica was fitted with motors, they were only used when entering or leaving port and at the end of the journey when she needed to meet the deadline for the celebrations. This, together with the fact that she was built using such authentic techniques and materials, meant that a great deal was learned about the handling, sailing characteristics and sail management of vessels from that era in a range of conditions, as well as issues to do with the health and well-being of their crews.²¹

Having arrived in the Netherlands in April 2002, the *Duyfken* participated in the celebrations with other replica VOC ships for approximately five months. In August, with the celebrations drawing to a close, the *Duyfken* 1606 Replica Foundation announced that it had been unable to find sponsorship for the return voyage to Australia under sail. Under an agreement with the VOC 2002 Committee, she would be dismantled in Rotterdam and shipped back to Fremantle aboard a Dutch freighter. In the same press release, *Duyfken* Project Director Graeme Cocks acknowledged the uncertainty of the vessel's future, saying:

We now have the challenging task of finding a permanent home for the ship. Our goal is to re-establish *Duyfken* as a part of the Western Australian community, to make the ship financially independent, to keep sailing her, and to make her a major international tourist attraction in the old port city.²²

By early 2003, the *Duyfken* had been reassembled and recommenced limited operations from the Fremantle Fishing Boat Harbour. However, unable to secure State or Federal government support and lacking the resources to guarantee her continued operation, the Replica Foundation was forced to take desperate action. It published the following

advertisement in the *Weekend Australian* newspaper in May of that year:

The *Duyfken* 1606 Replica Foundation Inc. seeks expressions of interest from communities, organisations and individuals interested in securing the sustainable long-term future of the Foundation's vessel by hosting, home-porting or taking over the operation of the vessel.

Duyfken was constructed to tell the story of the first European explorations of the Australian continent and it is anticipated that expressions of interest will address this objective as part of the submission.²³

The advertisement went on to stipulate the Foundation's preferred options for the vessel as:

1. For the ship to be home-ported at the *Endeavour* shed in Fremantle.
2. If this is not possible, then for the ship to be located and operated somewhere else in Western Australia.
3. If a Western Australian bid does not emerge then for the ship to be re-located to elsewhere in Australia or overseas.

Preference will be given to bids which include sailing operations and develop a program to educate the public about the early European explorations of the Australian continent (one of the objectives of the *Duyfken* Foundation and the reason the ship was built).²⁴

The ship's future hung in the balance for most of the year before another collective effort by business and the community enabled her to remain in Western Australia through the development of the *Duyfken* Traineeship Program, a concept that was promoted as including 'an ambitious sailing program from Geraldton to Albany helping young West Australians.'²⁵ As part of the plan, the *Duyfken* was sailed up the Swan River to be moored at the Old Swan Brewery near Perth, an exercise that involved removing her masts and rigging in order to pass under the Fremantle rail and traffic bridges, towing the hull from Fishing Boat Harbour to the Navy jetty in East Fremantle, and re-rigging her for the short trip up the river. This complex and lengthy process would have been necessary every time the vessel was required to move from her mooring to sail to the various ports mentioned, which must throw some doubt over the seriousness of the commitment to such a sailing program.

In fact, the vast majority of excursions made by the *Duyfken* prior to the 2006 'Australia on the Map' voyage consisted of river trips for 'unique corporate cocktail functions and exclusive dinners onboard'.²⁶

In between these she was open to the public. In both these roles she was manned by volunteers, whose dedication was critical to the survival of both the ship and the Foundation. Although the Old Swan Brewery site was considered advantageous because of its proximity to Perth and its visibility to passing motorists, the number of visitors were not sufficient to make the vessel viable, even with organised visits by schools around the Perth metropolitan area. The situation was made worse when in 2005 the *Duyfken* was refused insurance, which brought her commercial operations and school visits to an end until she was returned to a satisfactory condition, a process that again took some six months.²⁷ Throughout this period, the *Duyfken* provided a telling example of the problems facing replica ships, particularly when forced to take on multiple roles.

It is quite apparent from the activities planned for the vessel, the narration of tour guides and the publicity of the Foundation that her origins as an archaeological experiment had been assigned to the past. The cultural roles of museum ship and ambassador for the proposition of the Dutch discovery of Australia were now firmly established as the major reasons for the *Duyfken*'s existence, despite her not being located in a museum or historic precinct. If moored adjacent to the Fremantle Maritime Museum, she could have benefited by being part of an overall cultural, historical and educational environment in which the different elements would serve as attractions to the overlapping interests of different publics. However, moored some twelve kilometres upstream adjacent to private apartments and restaurants, she was perceived more as a novelty; a quaint little ship that had lost much of her historical significance and become irrelevant to many Western Australians.

The opportunity at last came for the *Duyfken* to participate in an event that celebrated the anniversary of her 1606 contact with the Australian coast. As part of the 'Australia on the Map 1606 – 2006' activities, she was once again to sail from Fremantle to Sydney, a journey of some eight months, during which she would visit a number of ports along the way. After another refurbishment, she set sail for Sydney in April, but, in yet another irony, her journey took her around the southern coast of Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania and northward along the east coast of New South Wales and Queensland as far as Townsville, rather than around the northern coast where the original *Duyfken* had operated.

There was to be no re-enactment at the Pennefather River, no calling at the traditional VOC ports, and no retracing of the route of the original *Duyfken*. After all, those things were old news; they had all been done years earlier. So this was a strange voyage. For a replica ship to celebrate a specific event, especially the voyage of the very vessel it replicates and to not retrace the route of the original ship is almost unheard of, but it demonstrates the extent to which the initial, potentially conflicting reasons for building the *Duyfken* and the subsequent timing of her construction impacted on her viability in each of her anticipated roles.

Despite repeated statements by the *Duyfken* 1606 Replica Foundation that the primary reason for building the ship was to educate the general public about the early Dutch explorations of Australia, the fact is that the three major voyages of the vessel had done little to achieve that goal. Given the efforts the Foundation had put into finding the sponsorship and support for those voyages as well as maintaining the vessel in the periods between them, this result must have been particularly disheartening. But if the voyages themselves had little effect on the general acceptance of the Dutch role in discovering Australia, perhaps the *Duyfken* replica had been able to achieve more in its role as a museum ship. During the period from 2003 to 2005 there were a number of organised visits by schools, and in 2006, as part of a work towards a Master of Arts in Cultural Heritage, the author of this article surveyed a number of children involved in such visits to ascertain if it had altered their understanding of the European maritime discovery of Australia.²⁸ The survey included almost 100 students, ranging from ten to fourteen years of age, which provided both an adequate number and spread for the survey to draw conclusions for extrapolation across similar demographics.

In addition to those who had participated in school visits to the *Duyfken*, students in a similar age range from several schools who had not been on organised educational visits to the vessel were surveyed in order to establish a comparative measure, and in this respect it should be noted that some students in both groups had been introduced to the topic of Australia's maritime history in their formal schooling while others had not. In both cases, the survey consisted of a questionnaire with support material that had been adapted for each group of students, and the survey process was managed by their teachers rather than

people unknown to them. The questionnaires also asked the participants whether or not they had been to the Maritime Museum at Fremantle in order to determine whether those participants who had visited the museum had an increased awareness of the original *Duyfken* and its relation to the *Duyfken* replica.

The first sections of the questionnaire provided both cohorts of students with the opportunity to give a short answer and to expand on that answer if they wished, while the final section simply consisted of a list of Dutch, French and English navigators and another list of their vessels, with students asked whether or not they had heard of the names on either list. This section was designed to provide an immediate overview of the students' awareness of Australia's maritime history, but when cross-referenced with each student's responses in the earlier sections, it also provided a mechanism for verifying the quality of those answers.

The survey produced a consistent image of each group's broad understanding of Australia's maritime history and of their ability to identify key elements and characters of that history, including the *Duyfken*. In addition, it produced a definite impression of how the children viewed the *Duyfken* replica in relation to the original in terms of understanding the concept of a replica and their direct experience of the vessel. Overall, the results were interesting, although not particularly reassuring for the *Duyfken* 1606 Replica Foundation in terms of its stated objectives in building the vessel, or, for that matter, anyone concerned with the education of an informed Australian public with a general understanding of both national and local maritime history.

The survey revealed that despite the fact that the *Duyfken* replica had completed two of its major voyages up to that time and was in the middle of its 'Australia on the Map' celebratory voyage, none of the surveyed students who had not actually visited the replica were aware of its existence. Of those who visited the replica, 35% did not know why it had been built, while the majority of those who responded positively thought it had been built either 'because it was historic' or 'to show people what it looked like'. It is also interesting to note that when asked what they had learned from the visit, the range of responses was extremely broad, indicating that any structured focus to the tour had either been lacking or had been overshadowed by individual emotional

NAME	Students who visited the <i>Duyfken</i> replica	Students who had not visited the <i>Duyfken</i> replica
Cook	98%	100%
Jansz	24%	0%
Flinders	52%	49%
Dampier	52%	76%
Vlamingh	10%	29%
Tasman	30%	31%
Baudin	3%	2%
Hartog	30%	43%
<i>Cygnets</i>	7%	37%
<i>Geographe</i>	14%	22%
<i>Endeavour</i>	52%	78%
<i>Investigator</i>	24%	20%
<i>Esperance</i>	34%	41%

Table1: Table showing percentage of positive responses to a selection of names of navigators and their vessels from the respective groups of students

responses to specific and primarily physical aspects of the vessel.²⁹

What was more significant, however, was that in terms of the broader understanding of Australian maritime history, there was very little difference between the response ratios between the two groups, revealing that visiting the replica had made virtually no impact on what the students knew about that history. When asked if they knew which European navigator discovered Australia, 35% across both groups indicated Cook, with a further 11% identifying the British, and 15% the Dutch. Of the latter, it is interesting to note that a higher percentage (19%) of those who had not visited the replica suggested the Dutch than those who had visited it (11%).

Asked if they knew who explored the Australian coast, less than 50% of respondents in either group replied in the affirmative, while the same question relating to the Western Australian coast elicited an even lower positive response, with follow-up questions providing wildly variant responses. One surprising result of the survey is that while approximately 66% of respondents from both groups had been to the West Australian Maritime Museum in Fremantle, such visits had not

produced any major shift in the students' overall understanding of the subject matter.

In summary, the survey indicated that, regardless of whether the students had visited the *Duyfken* replica or not, their understanding of both Australian and Western Australian maritime history was extremely limited. Despite the on-going efforts of the *Duyfken* 1606 Replica Foundation, the vast majority of the students still regarded Cook as the European discoverer of Australia. If, as stated, the primary objective of the construction and operation of the *Duyfken* replica was to change the public perception of Australia's maritime history and to promote the position of Janszoon, the original *Duyfken* and the Dutch contribution in general, it has seemingly achieved very little in the case of the students surveyed. Of course, such a judgement has to be made against the background of the overwhelmingly pro-British history of the nation, including Cook's 'discovery' of Australia, presented in most Eastern States school history materials and reinforced by the general media. Indeed, it would probably take an armada of *Duyfken* replicas to have any real impact on such entrenched ideas.

If one can identify one outcome of the *Duyfken* replica story that the Foundation and those involved in its building could claim as an achievement after the initial experiment in hull construction, it is that the overwhelming number of surveyed students and the community in general accept the vessel as a 'replica'. That is, that the *Duyfken* replica and the original *Duyfken* are seen as identical in every way. So ultimately, her one real achievement may have been to establish a definitive image of what scholars believe the original *Duyfken* looked like, and to anchor that image as authentic and exact (see Nick Burningham's analysis below). Yet in some ways this could be regarded as the antithesis of the objective of genuine experimental archaeology.

As Peter G. Stone asserts in his introduction to *The Presented Past: Heritage, Museums and Education*, that objective should be 'more concerned with questioning the validity of any (static) interpretations or presentations of the past' by suggesting possibilities and alternatives rather than providing a single, immutable and indisputable representation of an event, phenomenon or physical entity from that past.³⁰ Certainly, this position seems to be supported by Nick Burningham when writing about his role in the *Duyfken* replica reconstruction:

Fortunately for me, we are extremely unlikely to ever get any firm data on the hull form of *Duyfken*. The design is a reconstruction which will never be more than a possible interpretation. My hope is that we help to advance the understanding of ship design through designing and building reconstructions such as *Duyfken*.³¹

In this respect, Burningham acknowledges that the *Duyfken* replica, like other vessels that have resulted either from experiments into shipbuilding techniques and materials or from attempts to re-create particular historic ships from limited iconographic and written sources, is just one possible interpretation of what the original may have looked like, and as such, is a unique and individual creation in its own right.

Perhaps, like the exquisite philatelic forgeries of François Fournier that are collected in recognition of their uniqueness and the quality of their craftsmanship, replica ships such as the *Duyfken* should be valued as powerful expressions of the desire of an era to create living reminders of an irretrievable past. But, unlike the works of Fournier, they are not simple, discreet items that can be sealed in controlled environments and viewed behind protective glass. Rather, they are complex, functioning constructions that will inevitably deteriorate from the effects of time and the elements as an unavoidable consequence of the very reasons for their existence.

This is particularly true of ships that are built for experimental reasons, where the desired authenticity of form, construction and scale certainly contribute to the very nature of the vessels. This is in stark contrast to the situation with replicas such as the *Endeavour*, where there is no experimental component. In that case, the plans of the original vessel were available, so it was purely the physical verisimilitude of the replica that was important. As a result, the materials used in its construction were primarily local timbers chosen for their longevity, with the hull being made from Western Australian jarrah, a very dense hardwood treated to withstand prolonged submersion and marine conditions. Galvanised steel was also used instead of the original 18th century black steel where not visible, meaning that the *Endeavour* replica was effectively ensured an extended operational life. In addition, the size of the *Endeavour* meant that the replica is large enough to accommodate a reasonable number of passengers and crew when operating commercially, not just for short journeys, but also for longer national and international voyages, contributing to an increased financial potential.³²

The *Duyfken*, however, was a very different matter. From the start, the organisers were aware of budgetary limitations, and were therefore looking for a vessel of much smaller dimensions and preferably Dutch for their replica project. The *Duyfken* was, by any standard, a small vessel: a *jacht*, designed originally to provide a fast, light and manoeuvrable escort for larger trading ships. It was therefore the ideal size for the project: large enough for the archaeological experimentation to be carried out, but small enough to be built within the Foundation's budget and within the grounds of the Maritime Museum's Shipwreck Galleries rather than at a slipway. The initial benefits of the *Duyfken*'s size in terms of the scale and overall cost of the construction, however, have seriously compromised its later commercial viability as there is virtually no room for passengers other than as crewmembers. Even when open for public display, educational visits or for sailing trips on the Swan River, restrictions on the number of visitors have limited its potential income.

Nothing has contributed as much to the 'nature' of the *Duyfken* replica as the archaeological experiment at the core of the project. In order to determine whether or not a plank-first construction technique would produce a workable hull shape, the replica had to be built from essentially the same materials used for sixteenth and seventeenth century Dutch ships: European oak, flax and hemp. Despite the use of some modern caulking and sealing compounds and regular interventional maintenance, the *Duyfken* can therefore be expected to have a life span only a little longer than that of a Dutch 'Age of Discovery' vessel, very few of which survived beyond twelve to fifteen years, and even less in tropical regions where the timber was particularly susceptible to attack by marine worms.³³ Launched in 1999, the *Duyfken* replica is therefore possibly a third or even half way through her probable life and, despite the best attentions of volunteers and shipwrights, she is undoubtedly already deteriorating.

So, like many of the world's replica ships, the *Duyfken* replica lives a precarious existence, balancing between the profound and the trivial; between the ability to contribute to our understanding of aspects of the past and the potential to confuse them; between being something which is valued and something that experiences a brief period of notoriety before being consigned to an inglorious and forgettable demise.

Perhaps the fact that the *Duyfken* replica was built to achieve a range of outcomes which have in retrospect proven to be largely incompatible has compromised her capacity to achieve the majority of those aims.

The decision by the Western Australian government to provide the injection of funds needed to return the vessel to her home state and maintain her for a number of years to come has certainly been welcomed by those connected with her construction and operation, but whether or not she will create the 'new tourism attraction and educational experience for West Australians and visitors' that Dr Hames spoke of in his media release is yet to be determined. She is currently moored in the Fremantle Fishing Boat Harbour, not far from the Western Australian Museum's Shipwreck Galleries, and if she remains there, it is certainly possible that she will enjoy greater success in her educative role than in the past. However, if her role as a tourist attraction is seen to incorporate functioning as an operating vessel, her life is definitely finite. Undoubtedly, her role as a museum ship could be significantly extended if she was removed from the water and housed in a protective environment before further substantial deterioration occurs.

Equally undeniable, however, is that a large part of the *Duyfken*'s perceived attraction lies in her *being* operational, and that would be lost by such a move. Indeed, the State government's funding support is based in part on her playing a major role in the 400th anniversary celebration of the landing by Dirk Hartog on the Western Australian coast in 1616. In perhaps one final irony, the *Duyfken* will finally have the opportunity to participate in a celebration of Dutch discovery in her home state, albeit of a completely different vessel. However, soon after the 2016 celebrations are over, decisions will have to be made about her future, before that future is determined by the effects of seawater and worms.

Judging by past examples of replica ships, those decisions will not be easy to make. On the positive side, *Viking*, the first Gokstadt replica built in 1893, has fared better than most. Removed from the water after the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, it was displayed in a park for many years before being moved to a warehouse near Chicago. There it has survived largely intact until 2008, when stabilization of the ship was commenced by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.³⁴ On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, the 1909 replica of Hudson's 1609

jacht, *Halve Maen*, languished for more than twenty years in various locations until arguments about who wanted her and who should take responsibility for her were ended when she was finally destroyed by fire.

It would be a sorry end for the *Duyfken* replica to suffer a similar fate, but it is not impossible. If she does, will she be remembered as the embodiment of a major archaeological experiment into shipbuilding techniques of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; as the flagship of Dutch hopes to redress the instilled beliefs of an Anglo-centric view of our maritime history, or as a quaint little ship on which someone's friend or relative once attended a fancy-dress cocktail party?

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Endnotes

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