

Pilbara Local History Studies Program

Maritime History of the north-west coast of Australia

Internet Searches:

Western Australian Maritime Museum

<http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/maritime/>

Maritime Archaeology

<http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/collections/maritime/march/march.asp>

Databases: The Maritime Archaeology Department has four data bases;

Western Australian Shipwrecks: Allows you to look up information on Shipwrecks that were found off the coast of WA.

Bibliography: Publications written by various staff from the Maritime Museum and other sources related to maritime history and archaeology.

Artefacts: Records of Artefacts found at Wreck sites.

Strangers On The Shore: Contains records of all known European and Asian shipwrecks around Western Australia's where survivors have had indigenous social contact.

The bibliography database lists about 6000 maritime archaeological and associated references, almost all of which are available in our library. It is not intended, at present, to be a comprehensive listing of all maritime archaeological references.

This search system was established on 23 December 1995 as a test for WebFM. You can search by author, geographical and subject.

Enter author's name in box on the left or leave blank for keyword, subject or geographical searches. You can use combinations of words in all the boxes if you wish:

Putting Roebourne into the database came up with 4 matches:

Roebourne District Youth Club [197-?] A history of Cossack. Roebourne District Youth Club, Roebourne, W.A.

de La Rue, K., 1979 Pearl shell and pastures: the story of Cossack and Roebourne, and their place in the history of the North West, from the earliest explorations to 1910. Cossack Project Committee, Cossack, WA.

McIlroy, J., 1988 An Archaeological survey of the Asian quarter of Cossack. Human Studies Division, Western Australian Museum, Perth.

Hoey, B. 1997 Cossack : Land of the silver sea Perth : Brian Hoey Books

A similar search for Karratha yielded one:

Karratha Community Library 1995? Aboriginal art and history collection: Karratha Community Library. Karratha Community Library, Karratha, WA.

Western Australian Maritime Archaeological Site Reports

Includes:

Unpublished Wreck Inspection Report Series. Staff Site Inspection Reports in 1969/1970 , 1974 , 1988 , 1992 formats

Major Surveys and Graduate Diploma Course in Maritime Archaeology Reports

MAAWA Wreck Inspection Reports. Maritime Archaeological Association of WA Wreck Inspection Reports

Geographical. Wrecks in Areas (includes wreck trails)

Pamphlets and Maps. Illustrated Wall-charts and Illustrated Information Pamphlets

Maritime Heritage Sites Land Camps. Survivors Camp-sites, Maritime Heritage Sites e.g. Jetties

Inspection Reports (non-sites). Reports that proved to be non-sites

This is a list of some Shipwreck Trail pamphlets close to the Pilbara region (Available in pdf format)

Wrecks in the Abrolhos Islands

Broome's World War II Flying Boats

The Castaway Coast (Port Gregory to Steep Point)

Shipwreck Access to Maritime Sites for People with Disabilities

Wrecks of the Kimberley Coast

The Historic Shipwrecks of Shark Bay

Department of the Western Australian Museum.

These reports are available as Adobe PDF files. Some examples below have reference to ships and incidents in the Pilbara and Kimberley coastal regions of the Western Australian coast

- 035 A Survey of Sites Associated with Early Pearlming Activities in the Monte Bello Islands, Western Australia. By M. Stanbury, 1986
- 098 Port Related Structures on the Coast of Western Australia. By D.A. Cumming, D. Garratt, M. McCarthy, and A. Wolfe, 1995.
- 100 Lighthouses on the Western Australian coast and off-shore islands
By D.A. Cumming, M. Glasson and M. McCarthy, 1995
(includes the Jarman Island Lighthouse)

- 114 Wreck Inspection Report - The 80-Mile Beach unidentified #1. By M. McCarthy, 1996.
- 207 Finding an Ancient Land: an illustrated Research essay for the National Museum of Australia, Canberra. By M. McCarthy, 2005.216
- 216 Aboriginal watercraft depictions in Western Australia. By N. Bigourdan, 2006.

Maritime History

<http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/collections/maritime/mhist/mhist.asp>

Books Relevant to the Local Studies Course

- Jacob, Trevor & Vellios Jim, *Southland – The Maritime Exploration of Australia*, Ministry of Education, 1987
A comprehensive account of the maritime exploration of Australia from first contact to the arrival of the first fleet in 1788
- Henderson, Graeme, *Unfinished Voyages – Western Australian Shipwrecks 1622-1850*, University of Western Australia Press, 2007
A comprehensive account of shipwrecks on the WA coast from 1622 to 1850
- Henderson, Graeme, *Unfinished Voyages – Western Australian Shipwrecks Volume 2 1851-1880*, University of Western Australia Press, 1988
A comprehensive account of shipwrecks on the WA coast from 1851 to 1880
- Hordern, Marsden, *King of the Australian Coast*, Melbourne University Press, 2004
- Nisbet, Anne-Marie, *French Navigators and the Discovery of Australia*, Education Department of Western Australia, 1985
French expeditions to Australia 1766 – 1840
- Preston, Diana & Michael, *A Pirate of Exquisite Mind*, Doubleday, 2004
The life of William Dampier, Explorer, Naturalist and Buccaneer
- Tiley Robert, *The Mermaid Tree*, ABC Books, 2006
How a tiny unknown ship opened Australia's north and west to development, dreams and disappointment



Maritime Exploration on the North-West Coast

Some further resources:

The Dutch, French and English were all involved in exploring the north-west coast of Australia.

The Dutch were the first to make contact. From 1611 ships from the Dutch East India Company, (the VOC), used the Brouwer route from Cape Town to the Spice Islands. Sailing south west to the 'Roaring Forties' they took advantage of the strong westerly winds to cross the Indian Ocean. They were then faced with a critical decision, when to swing north to head for the islands of Indonesia. The point where they changed course was based on an estimate of their longitude which at that time was impossible to calculate with accuracy. It all depended on dead reckoning – measuring the speed of the ship through the water and making estimations for any current that may be affecting them. Using this method it was only a matter of time before a ship travelled too far east and made contact with the Western Australian coast. This first occurred in 1611 when Dirck Hartog in the *Endraacht* made a landfall at what is now Dirck Hartog Island close to the entrance to Shark Bay.

Endraacht was the first of a number of ships to make contact with the coast. Dutch ships from then on were instructed by the VOC to stay clear of the coast but to map it if they came close, more as a warning than a destination. The Dutch crews saw nothing on the Western Australian coast to suggest there would be anything of value to be found. Ironically that same arid coastline stands as the guardian to internationally significant reserves of gold and other precious metals, iron ore, oil and gas.

The French interest in Australian involved 12 different French expeditions from 1768 to 1840. In most cases the expeditions had a strong scientific flavour with naturalists, botanists, astronomers, artists and other scientists providing major contributions to the understanding of the local geography, flora, fauna and Aboriginal inhabitants.

The English contact began in dramatic fashion with the wreck of the *Tryall* in 1622. This is the oldest known shipwreck in Australian waters. William Dampier had more luck and made two trips to the north-west coast, in 1688 and 1699. He was the first person to publish a description of Australian Aborigines and his name lives on in the town of Dampier and the Dampier Peninsula and Dampier Archipelago.

In May 1840, English Captain John Wickham sailing the *Beagle*, made famous by Darwin's voyage (1831-1836), published the first European account of the internationally renowned Burrup rock carvings he found on Depauch Island.

Some of the prominent European sea captains who made contact with the Western Australian north-west coast.

Dutch:

Dirck Hartog	1616
Francisco Pelsaert	1629
Abel Tasman	1644
Willem de Vlamingh	1696

French:

Yves De Kergullen	1771
Francois de Saint Allouran	1772
Nicholas Baudin	1801
Emmanuel Hamlin	1801
Louis de Freycinet	1818

English:

William Dampier	1688 & 1699
Matthew Flinders	1801
Phillip Parker King	1817
John Wickham	1840