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Part 2

# Goemulgaw Lagal: Cultural and Natural Histories of the Island of Mabuyag, Torres Strait

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### COVER

Image on book cover: Pearlshelling station at Panay, Mabuyag, 1890s. Photographer unknown  
(Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology: N23274.ACH2).

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# Two nineteenth century copper ingots from waters off Mabuyag, Torres Strait, Queensland

Peter GESNER, Garrick HITCHCOCK

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In February 2006 two copper ingots were recovered from shallow waters near Mabuyag (Mabuiag Island) in Torres Strait and deposited in the Queensland Museum's Townsville branch, the Museum of Tropical Queensland. Elemental analysis and archival research strongly suggests that the ingots originate from the jettisoned cargo of the 'country vessel' *Hercules*, which ran aground on or in the vicinity of the Orman Reefs in June 1822 en route to Calcutta from Chile, with a load of copper ingots. Many of the ingots were subsequently recovered by Goemulgal in 1887 and their sale funded the erection of the first modern church building on Mabuyag.

□ *Mabuyag, Mabuiag Island, Torres Strait, copper ingots, maritime archaeology, shipwrecks, salvage*

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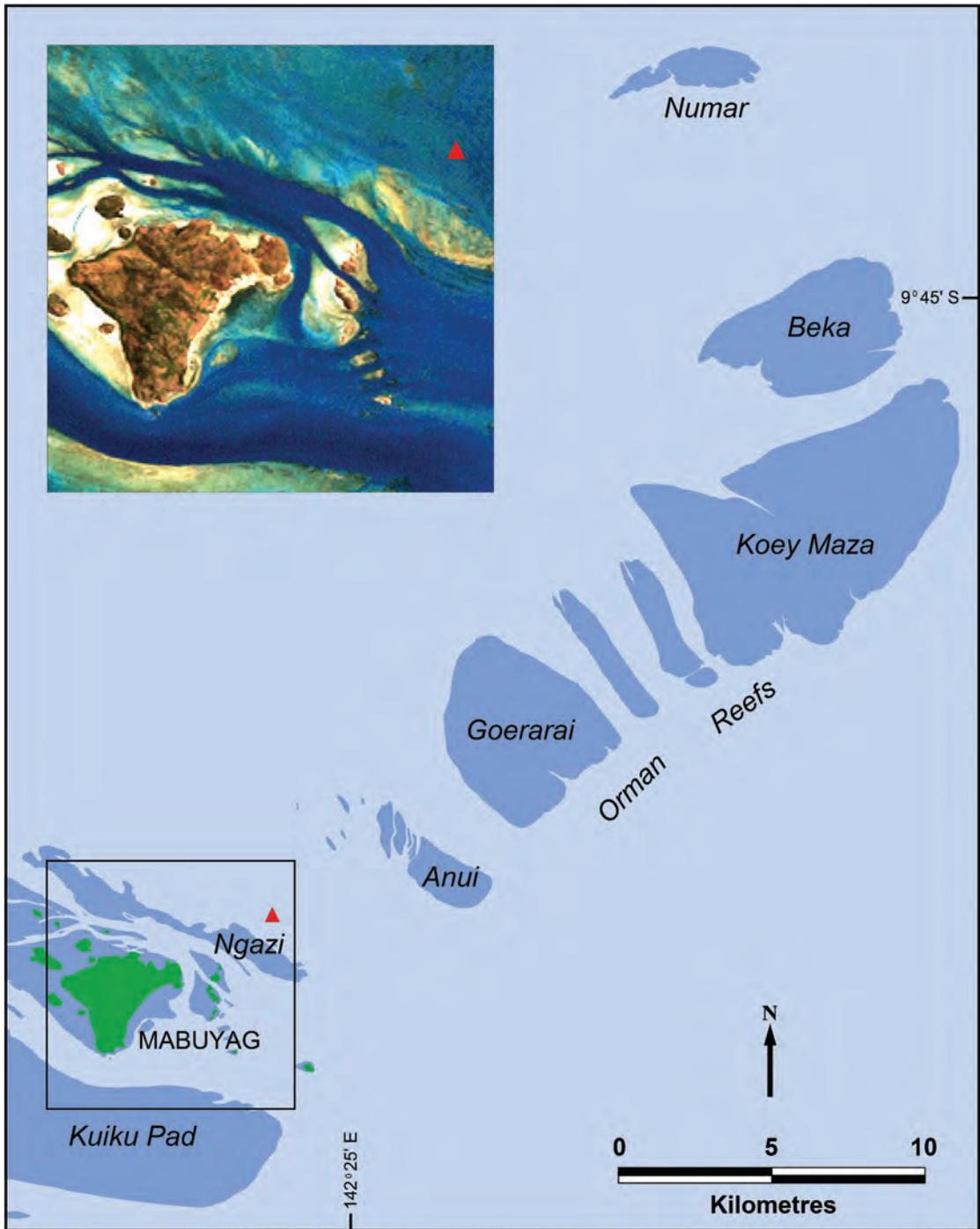


FIG 1. Reported GPS location of the ingots (red triangle) in relation to Mabuyag and the Orman Reefs (inset: LandSat image of Mabuyag and Ngazi Reef).

## DISCOVERY OF THE INGOTS

In February 2006 a resident of the island of Badu, central-western Torres Strait, recovered two ingots while diving in shallow waters off nearby Mabuyag, seaward of the entrance through Ngazi Reef, part of the Orman Reefs (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> Initially the ingots were thought by the finder to be gold, which resurrected a local legend that would have it that a pile of 'golden loaves' – variously described as being a pirate's hoard, an admiral's war booty or lost bullion – existed in Torres Strait waters. News of the ingot find came to the attention of the Badu Community Police, who impounded the ingots in the local station, pending determination of metal type, provenance and ownership (Anonymous, 2006). Because the ingots were found in the sea, they fell under one of two jurisdictions: the Commonwealth's *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976* or the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*. Subsequently, as required by relevant legislation, the Queensland Museum (QM) – at that time the Commonwealth's administrator of historic shipwreck matters in Queensland – was notified of the find.

Under the belief that salvage rights to the ingots could be obtained, the finder engaged a Victorian solicitor to act on his behalf. While the objects were at the Badu police station however, they almost immediately started to corrode, clearly indicating that they were not made of gold. The corrosion product took on the typical *verdigris* sheen associated with corrosion of cupriferaous objects. Regardless of this appearance, however, the finder's lawyer sought independent expert advice from a metallurgist to obtain a characterisation of the ingots, i.e. whether they were likely to be gold or to have a high gold content. The finder was eventually reassured by his lawyer's expert that the objects were not gold but mainly copper.

The finder was contacted by QM's Maritime Heritage Unit and requested to submit an official wreck/isolated relic report, and a GPS

location of the ingots site. He subsequently reported the find as being at 9° 55' 53.6" South, 142° 13' 40.0" East – a location approximately 1 ¼ nautical miles north-east of the channel through Ngazi Reef leading to Mabuyag. In his report, the finder stated that the ingots were isolated finds, i.e. that there was nothing in their immediate vicinity that indicated either a shipwreck location or associated material that may have been jettisoned from a stranded ship.

It was determined that the ingots had been found and recovered from Australian waters and that the Commonwealth's *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976* applied. As the Queensland practitioner for the Act, the QM requested that the ingots be freighted from Badu to its Townsville branch, the Museum of Tropical Queensland (MTQ), for further investigation, including archaeometric analysis, to ascertain, if possible, their provenance and cultural significance.

## AIMS OF ANALYSIS

The aims of the QM's analysis were:

1. Scientific identification of the ingots' major elements;
2. An analysis of each ingot's trace elements to determine whether the two ingots were produced from the same ore body;
3. Linking the ingots to a particular vessel and event in Torres Strait;
4. Determination of the cultural significance of the ingots.

## MULTI-ELEMENT ANALYSIS

**METHODS.** The objects were photographed, measured and labelled at the MTQ's conservation laboratory. The smaller ingot was numbered Unidentified 1 (Un-id1) and the larger, Unidentified 2 (Un-id2). The ingots can be described as sand- or rough-cast, crude

copper ingots, with round corners. Neither ingot shows surface marks or identifying stamps (Figures 2-4). Measurements for the ingots are as follows:

Un-id 1: 570 mm long x 290 mm wide x 85 mm thick, weight approximately 93 kg

Un-id 2: 620 mm long x 320 mm wide x 85 mm thick, weight approximately 98 kg

A 2.5 mm diameter steel drill bit was used to extract samples from the artefacts for further analysis using Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrometry (ICP-MS) technology.

Each ingot was initially drilled to a depth where pure metal was extracted. Following the removal of any possible surface corrosion product, the same hole was drilled into a second time with paper placed under the drill bit to catch the drilling waste. Once sufficient material for analysis was collected, the drilling ceased and the metal waste was poured into an appropriately marked sample container. Mass removed in this way from each object was:

Un-id 1 sample 0.497g

Un-id 2 sample 0.716g



FIG. 2. The two ingots



FIG. 3. Un-id 1.



FIG. 4. Un-id 2.

Semi-quantitative multi-element analysis of the major and trace elements of Un-id1 and Un-id2 was undertaken at James Cook University's Advanced Analytical Centre by ICP-MS using a Varian ICP-MS 820 series instrument. Semi-quantitative analysis is normally the first step in analysing an unknown sample. In conjunction with an interpretive semi-quantitative software package, it scans for some 70 elements, providing semi-quantitative data that is normally accurate to within +/- 50 % of the quantitative values.<sup>2</sup>

RESULTS. The ICP-MS analysis revealed that both objects contain predominantly copper: Un-id1 96.5% and Un-id2 94 %. Iron is the only other significant element in weight percentage, at 0.79 % and 2.57 % respectively (Table 1).

The two ingots exhibit close to identical trace element values. Trace element signatures being unique to individual ore bodies, the similarity in the values from the two ingots strongly suggests they were produced from ore mined from

**TABLE 1.** Results of ICP-MS analysis of the ingots undertaken by JCU's Advanced Analytical Centre (Job # 8498)

| UD 1      |               |               |              | UD 2      |               |              |       |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|--------------|-------|
| 8498-012  |               |               |              | 8498-013  |               |              |       |
| Element   | Concentration | S.D.          | Unit         | Element   | Concentration | S.D.         | Unit  |
| Ag        | 25.4          | 0.5           | mg/Kg        | Ag        | 13.6          | 0.4          | mg/Kg |
| Al        | ≤0.05         |               | mg/Kg        | Al        | ≤0.05         |              | mg/Kg |
| As        | 210           | 6             | mg/Kg        | As        | 203           | 2            | mg/Kg |
| Au        | 143           | 72            | mg/Kg        | Au        | 43.6          | 6.1          | mg/Kg |
| Ba        | 0.0670        | 0.0045        | mg/Kg        | Ba        | 0.0618        | 0.0037       | mg/Kg |
| Be        | ≤0.05         |               | mg/Kg        | Be        | 0.00694       | 0.00450      | mg/Kg |
| Bi        | ≤0.05         |               | mg/Kg        | Bi        | 48.6          | 1.1          | mg/Kg |
| Ca        | ≤0.1          |               | mg/Kg        | Ca        | ≤0.1          |              | mg/Kg |
| Cd        | ≤0.05         |               | mg/Kg        | Cd        | ≤0.05         |              | mg/Kg |
| Ce        | ≤0.05         |               | mg/Kg        | Ce        | ≤0.05         |              | mg/Kg |
| Co        | 480           | 8             | mg/Kg        | Co        | 2590          | 37           | mg/Kg |
| Cr        | ≤0.05         |               | mg/Kg        | Cr        | ≤0.05         |              | mg/Kg |
| <b>Cu</b> | <b>96.5%</b>  | <b>0.6%</b>   |              | <b>Cu</b> | <b>94%</b>    | <b>1%</b>    |       |
| Dy        | ≤0.05         |               | mg/Kg        | Dy        | ≤0.05         |              | mg/Kg |
| Er        | ≤0.05         |               | mg/Kg        | Er        | ≤0.05         |              | mg/Kg |
| Eu        | ≤0.05         |               | mg/Kg        | Eu        | ≤0.05         |              | mg/Kg |
| <b>Fe</b> | <b>0.79%</b>  | <b>0.027%</b> | <b>mg/Kg</b> | <b>Fe</b> | <b>2.57%</b>  | <b>0.04%</b> |       |
| Gd        | ≤0.05         |               | mg/Kg        | Gd        | ≤0.05         |              | mg/Kg |
| Ge        | 2.31          | 0.09          | mg/Kg        | Ge        | 4.57          | 0.10         | mg/Kg |
| Hf        | ≤0.05         |               | mg/Kg        | Hf        | ≤0.05         |              | mg/Kg |
| Ho        | ≤0.05         |               | mg/Kg        | Ho        | ≤0.05         |              | mg/Kg |
| Ir        | ≤0.05         |               | mg/Kg        | Ir        | ≤0.05         |              | mg/Kg |
| K         | ≤0.5          |               | mg/Kg        | K         | ≤0.5          |              | mg/Kg |
| La        | ≤0.05         |               | mg/Kg        | La        | ≤0.05         |              | mg/Kg |

| UD 1     |               |       |       | UD 2     |               |       |       |
|----------|---------------|-------|-------|----------|---------------|-------|-------|
| 8498-012 |               |       |       | 8498-013 |               |       |       |
| Element  | Concentration | S.D.  | Unit  | Element  | Concentration | S.D.  | Unit  |
| Lu       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Lu       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Mg       | 0.186         | 0.009 | mg/Kg | Mg       | 2.00          | 0.05  | mg/Kg |
| Mn       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Mn       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Mo       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Mo       | 5.00          | 0.11  | mg/Kg |
| Na       | ≤0.5          |       |       | Na       | ≤ 0.5         |       | mg/Kg |
| Nb       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Nb       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Nd       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Nd       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Ni       | 199           | 12    | mg/Kg | Ni       | 926           | 14    | mg/Kg |
| Pb       | 10.9          | 0.3   | mg/Kg | Pb       | 6.89          | 0.13  | mg/Kg |
| Pd       | 7.88          | 0.05  | mg/Kg | Pd       | 5.23          | 0.12  | mg/Kg |
| Pr       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Pr       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Pt       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Pt       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Re       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Re       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Rh       | 2.70          | 0.07  | mg/Kg | Rh       | 1.93          | 0.06  | mg/Kg |
| Ru       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Ru       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Sb       | 7.77          | 0.47  | mg/Kg | Sb       | 29.8          | 0.6   | mg/Kg |
| Se       | 37.8          | 1.5   | mg/Kg | Se       | 38.9          | 1.3   | mg/Kg |
| Sm       | ≤ 0.05        |       | mg/Kg | Sm       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Sn       | 15.3          | 0.3   | mg/Kg | Sn       | 10.9          | 0.3   | mg/Kg |
| Sr       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Sr       | 0.134         | 0.008 | mg/Kg |
| Ta       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Ta       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Tb       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Tb       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Th       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Th       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Ti       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Ti       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Tl       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Tl       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Tm       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Tm       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| U        | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | U        | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| V        | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | V        | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| W        | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | W        | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Yb       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Yb       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg |
| Zn       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Zn       | 4.41          | 0.06  | mg/Kg |
| Zr       | ≤0.05         |       | mg/Kg | Zr       | 6.61          | 0.21  | mg/Kg |

the same locality. Cobalt is the dominant trace element, occurring in more than twice the concentration of nickel, the next most prevalent metal. Minor concentrations of selenium, arsenic, gold, silver and several other rare elements were also detected.

#### Geological Source And Historical Context.

Paul Craddock, a materials scientist at the British Museum, was contacted by the Museum of Tropical Queensland's conservator to address the question of the origin of the ingots. Craddock had previously analysed

Chilean copper ingots from the wreck of the Irish cargo steamer *Lapwing*, which sank off the Isle of Wight in July 1872 following a collision with the iron sailing barque *The Abbey Holme* (Wendes, 2006). These ingots were stamped URMENETA-Y –TUAYCAN, which indicates a Chilean mine (Craddock *et al.*, 2010; Craddock & Hook, 2012:65). His analysis showed that cobalt was also a major trace element (0.2 %) in the *Lapwing* copper ingots, and that this ‘may be a feature of such Chilean copper as some smaller bars from the Logan copper company also have this distinctive cobalt trace’. He also noted that he had ‘not encountered such rectangular bars for copper in earlier periods, and so ... it is likely that your bars are (mid-late) nineteenth century and very likely Chilean as being the world’s major supplier by this time’ (Paul Craddock, pers. comm., 13 December 2006).

The quantity of trace elements in the samples from the Mabuyag ingots indicates they were produced by treating copper ore with a pyro-metallurgical process (smelting). This is consistent with early and mid-nineteenth century metallurgical practices in Chile, where ‘primitive’ blast furnaces (*horno de manga*) were used for smelting, producing bars of coarse copper containing 90 to 96 % fine copper (Hall, 1825:14-15; Mayo & Collier, 1998:20; Valenzuela, 1992:509–510).<sup>3</sup>

Copper production and exports from Chile’s Norte Chico region (29–30° S) were expanding in the decades following the country’s declaration of independence in 1810 and by the 1860s it was the world’s leading producer (Culver & Reinhart, 1985:72, 74; Valenzuela, 1992:509). Chilean ingots from the first half of the nineteenth century weighed two *quintals* (approximately 92 kg) and were usually not stamped until after 1845 when Chilean law required identification marks (Luis Valenzuela, pers. comm., 2007). In Norte Chico in 1821, Hall (1825:15) reported that ingots produced for export were ‘about twenty inches long,

twelve wide, and three or four thick’ (508 mm x 30.48 mm x 7.62–10.16 mm).

The first British Consul General to Chile, Christopher Richard Nugent, arrived at Valparaiso in 1824, and reported the following year that approximately 75% of Chilean copper was exported to Calcutta via British or Indian vessels. This was part of a multilateral trade system, with British or Indian manufactures, especially of textiles such as cotton goods, imported into the country in return (Llorca-Jaña, 2012:166–168; Milburn & Thornton, 1825:19–21). However the period of direct exports to Calcutta was short-lived, from 1819 to 1825/6, being replaced in the next decade or so by exports to England, North America and Europe (Llorca-Jaña, 2012:168–168, 229; Mayo, 2001:368, 375).

#### SHIPWRECK DATA

Examination of the QM’s historic shipwrecks database for Queensland identified three nineteenth century wreckings or strandings involving ships carrying a cargo of copper in the northern part of the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait.

Loaded with some 600 copper ingots from Chile, the British East India Company ‘country’ ship *Hercules*, under Captain Heron, ran aground on a sandbank in the Torres Strait in June 1822, somewhere to the north of Prince of Wales Island and to the west of Halfway Island. By jettisoning a large portion of her ingot cargo, the ship was refloated 10 days later and continued on her voyage to Calcutta, via Timor (Anonymous, 1822; Lawrie, 1822).

On 16 July 1861 the Dundee registered barque *Lady Kinnaird*, bound for Calcutta from Melbourne, struck Cockburn Reef, and soon afterwards sank off the nearby Sir Charles Hardy Islands, i.e., before reaching

the actual seaway through Torres Strait proper (Christy, 1861). Her cargo, which included 118 tons of copper, was lost with the ship. However, all but 12 tons of copper was later salvaged by the crew of the barque *Jeanie Oswald*, chartered by the Victorian Marine Insurance Co. (Anonymous, 1862; Anonymous, 1867). In light of the fact that copper mining did not start in Victoria until 1865 (Enever, 2008), this cargo must have originally been transported to Melbourne from a South Australian mine.

A third vessel, the *Oxford*, jettisoned a cargo of South Australian copper in Torres Strait, though accounts about the event differ, albeit slightly. One has her jettisoning copper near Wednesday Island in August 1871 (Junius, 1929). A second account states that she was stranded in Flinders Passage,<sup>4</sup> in eastern Torres Strait, in August 1871, with the vessel subsequently salvaged by the S.S. *Wainui* after her cargo of copper cake had been jettisoned (Stone, 2006:697). A third source states that the *Oxford* jettisoned copper at several locations: Sir Charles Hardy Group, Channel Rock and Turnagain Island (Anonymous, 1897a).

The *Lady Kinnaird's* cargo was considered far less likely to be the source of the Ngazi Reef ingots, on the grounds that she was lost at the Sir Charles Hardy Islands, which are located off Cape Grenville on the east coast of Cape York; i.e. more than 200 nautical miles (in a direct line) south of Ngazi Reef. The *Oxford* was also considered an improbable source: the nearest site, Turnagain (called Buru by the Goemulgal), is situated 23 nautical miles to the north-north-east of Mabuyag, and Channel Rock, near Thursday Island, is 35 nautical miles to the south. Further, the shape and weight of the *Oxford* ingots was noted as different to those found near Mabuyag, and some of them were reported to be stamped with the name 'Wallaroo' (the South Australian port that provided smelting

and export facilities for the copper mines in the northern Yorke Peninsula) (Anonymous, 1897a; see Appendix 2).

Given that the Mabuyag ingots have an identical, relatively high cobalt trace (noted in other nineteenth century Chilean ingots), and their weights, dimensions and purity are consistent with copper ingots produced in Chile in the early nineteenth century,<sup>5</sup> we think it reasonable to assume that they are from the *Hercules*.

The serendipitous discovery of the Lawrie (1822) manuscript (Appendix 5) in the National Library of Australia lends additional support to this conclusion, as does oral history recorded by the QM Maritime Heritage Unit about a stranding event closely associated with Mabuyag Island (Tyrell, 2007). This oral history relates the near loss of a small local vessel around 1915, which nearly capsized off the (reef) entrance to Mabuyag Island, skippered by Mabuyag man Jimmy Tuta Luffman Senior.<sup>6</sup> While fishing from his clinker-built dinghy, he observed 'shiny shapes' on the seabed and eventually managed to get a rope around one of them but, upon attempting to haul it to the surface and into his dinghy, it was nearly capsized. He concluded from this near mishap that a 'sea-spirit did not want to give the ingots up to him' and subsequently he left them alone. He did, however, inform his son Jimmy Junior<sup>7</sup> about his experience and later sketched a 'mud-map' for him of the location of the incident.

Many years later this sketch map was gifted by Jimmy Tuta Luffman Junior to Rita Mills,<sup>8</sup> who advised her that she should remember it because one day it might make her wealthy. Connected with this oral history is another account from Mabuyag which Rita Mills was aware of, through her grandmother, concerning a ship stranding that occurred generations before Jimmy Senior's near

mishap; this account told of a vessel stranded for some days on a sandbank within sight of Mabuyag, around which the islanders observed 'many large splashes' from time to time – and then one day the vessel was no longer there (Tyrrell, 2007). It is not unreasonable or fanciful to suggest that this oral history, with its mention of 'splashes', may relate to the stranding and subsequent refloating of the *Hercules*.

**The Stranding Of The *Hercules*.** The *Hercules* was a ship built in Calcutta, India, by Gilmore & Co. for Fairlie & Co., and launched on 27 December 1814. She had a tonnage of 424 ton, and her dimensions were 104.5 x 20.3 feet (Hackman, 2001:126). In *Lloyd's Register* for 1818 the *Hercules* is described as a four-year-old, two-deck, India teak ship, of 416 tons, sheathed with copper over boards, with a draught of water when loaded of 19 feet (Lloyd's Society for the Registry of Shipping, 1818:456).

Little more is known about the vessel, except her role in the history of the Pitcairn Island community (the descendants of the mutineers on HMS *Bounty*). Under Captain John Henderson, nearby Henderson Island was discovered on 17 January 1819, and when calling at Pitcairn the following day, she was the first vessel to deliver mail to the island.<sup>9</sup> The *Hercules* again visited Pitcairn in May 1822 to deliver supplies including useful hardware and religious tracts donated by gentlemen in Calcutta (Anonymous, 1823:307; Ford 2012:10,12).

According to the *India Gazette* (Anonymous, 1822; Appendix 1), the *Hercules* departed Valparaiso, Chile on 13 March 1822 and arrived in Torres Strait on 11 June 1822. After entering the Strait near the Murray Islands, the vessel apparently followed the sailing directions of Matthew Flinders (1814, I:289-

391), who recommended a course southwest from Murray Islands to Halfway Island, and from there through Prince of Wales Channel, north of Wednesday and Hammond Islands. Two anchors were lost in rough weather, which was a main contributing factor to the vessel drifting off course, and ultimately becoming stranded on a reef, which apparently occurred on 14 June. The only remaining anchor was unable to hold them against the strong intra-reefal tidal currents in the Torres Strait. Firmly aground on the sandbank<sup>10</sup> then, the *Hercules'* crew was forced to lighten the ship by throwing overboard a portion of their 600 ingot cargo. For 10 days the vessel was aground, until 24 June 1822. For the first six of these days, the partially lightened ship re-floated and drifted on the flood tides, but grounded again on the ebb tides. Attempts to re-float the ship were hampered by the vessel not having a full crew because of desertions in Chile, illness and a near-mutiny, and not having the required number of anchors to kedge the vessel into deeper waters; besides, weather conditions were almost constantly adverse (Anonymous, 1822; Lawrie, 1822).

The account by John Lawrie, an officer on the *Hercules*, gives a day-by-day description of their voyage through Torres Strait, including the harrowing ordeal the crew experienced while aground on the 'too horrid, dangerous, and dreadful flat' (1822:167). Although he does not name the ship or her captain, the title of his narrative – 'Torres Straits – visited 1822' – and references to jettisoning her cargo of copper have proved crucial in linking Mabuyag's ingots to a vessel and their place of origin. On account of this, and the manuscript's importance as the first known European description of Mabuyag and the Goemulgal, relevant extracts from it are presented in Appendix 6.

### ISLANDER SALVAGE IN THE 1890S

In early 1897, Mabuyag people discovered the copper ingots while diving for pearlshell on the Orman Reef in their community lugger, the *Little Nell*; a contemporary report on the find described it as being 'some few miles to the eastward of the island...in two fathoms of water' (Anonymous, 1897a). Forty tons were retrieved by swimming diving, and sold to John Cowling (Appendix 5), a trader on the island, realising some £500. Approximately half of this amount was then used to engage a carpenter from Thursday Island to construct a new church on the island, named Etena, which opened in October of that year amid much fanfare (see Shnukal, 2015 (this volume) on Christianity). Over a thousand people from all islands in Torres Strait attended, making it the greatest gathering of people in the region up to that time (Anonymous, 1897b; Chalmers,

1898:4-6; Douglas, 1898:5; Haddon, 1901:122). Some of the money was also used to purchase foodstuffs, as Mabuyag was experiencing a famine at this time (Chalmers, 1898:5).<sup>11</sup> Detailed accounts of the find and church opening appear in Appendices 2-5.

English anthropologist Alfred Cort Haddon, visiting Mabuyag in 1898 as part of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits, took a photograph of a recovered ingot and cannon, with what appears to be a pearling station in the background (Figure 5). The cannon may be the one referred to as being retrieved by local people, although the possibility exists that it could be from one of the other known wrecks around Mabuyag, such as the *Pauline-et-Victoire* (Sheehan, this volume), the 'Jervis Reef wreck' (Illidge *et al.*, 2004:353), or the unidentified wreck mentioned in the Lawrie account (1822:139-140).<sup>12</sup>



FIG 5. Photograph taken by A.C. Haddon of a recovered copper ingot and cannon on Mabuyag in 1898. CUMAA N.78378.ACH2.

## CONCLUSION

Craddock *et al.* (2010:4) have noted how ‘ingots sometimes can be rather anonymous items, but if they form the cargo of a well-documented wreck the details of their date, place of origin and destination are often revealed.’ In this case, however, it is the ingots themselves, in conjunction with the India Gazette article and the Lawrie manuscript, that have revealed the identity of the vessel involved in their deposition on the Torres Strait seabed off Mabuyag.

The available evidence indicates that the two ingots, identified as most likely of Chilean copper, are from the ship *Hercules*, which ran aground (on 13 or 14 June 1822) on an as yet unidentified part on the Orman Reefs, and was refloated 10 days later, after a major portion of her cargo of ingots was jettisoned. The site recorded by the finder of the two ingots is consistent with the reported location of the 1897 find, just eastward of Mabuyag (Anonymous, 1897a).

There can be little doubt that a ‘scatter-zone’ of ingots was created over the 10 days it was grounded on the flat, given the drift of the vessel, with jettisoning of cargo occurring at a number of locations (Anonymous, 1822; Lawrie, 1822:138-139,141). Several of the ingots were possibly overlooked during the 1897 salvage effort – possibly the ones at the end of the reported one mile long scatter-zone (Anonymous, 1897a). It may also be the case that ingots have been periodically covered and uncovered by shifting sands on the seabed; the annotation on modern charts for these waters (to the north and northwest of Ngazi Reef) are ‘numerous shoals subject to change’ and ‘strong tidal streams set between the islands’ (Australian Hydrographic Service, 1984). Alternatively, the two ingots may have been dropped overboard accidentally during transshipment from the find site to Mabuyag in 1897.

Goemulgal, like other Torres Strait Islanders, have a long history of obtaining European goods from ‘wrecking’ – the salvage of objects from shipwrecked and distressed vessels (McNiven 2001:192; Mullins, 1995:26). Their recovery of the *Hercules’* copper ingots sheds light on one such episode, in the post-contact period, which enabled the community to erect a new church and to celebrate this achievement with all other Torres Strait communities. The re-discovery of the ingots in 2006 and identification of the source vessel has also opened a window on what is a largely unknown period of Torres Strait history, the ‘passing trade’ phase, 1790s to 1860s (Mullins, 1992:22), and has also provided a possible explanation for the genesis of the ‘golden loaves’ treasure legend on Mabuyag. The results of elemental analysis, together with a good datable context for the two ingots, has also furnished new information on the archaeo-metallurgy of early nineteenth century copper production in Chile (cf. Craddock *et al.*, 2010:4).

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**APPENDIX 1: EXCERPT FROM INDIA  
GAZETTE (26 AUGUST 1822).**

The *Hercules* sailed from Valparaiso the 13th March and proceeded to Pitcairn I calling at the ports of Coquibo and Gucasoco to take in copper. She reached Pitcairn I on 25th April and was detained there for 5 days by bad weather. Leaving Pitcairn Is. the ship made all sail for Torres Strait, where she arrived on 11th June, but had the misfortune, after passing Halfway Islands, of losing two anchors in a gale of wind and of driving upon a sandbank, having then only got one anchor. Captain Heron was obliged, for the safety of the ship and cargo, to order a great part of the copper to be hove overboard (supposed about 600 pigs). They remained on the bank ten days before the ship could be got off. During this time with the exception of one day, it blew very hard with heavy squalls and rain, the ship floating at high water and grounding at quarter ebb. At times the ship struck very hard, so much so that her false keel was knocked off and fears were entertained lest she should bilge; however, by the strength of the wind and the flood tide cooperating, she drove a good way over the reef into smoother water. As they had no stream anchor, cable or hawser, everyone in the ship despaired of getting her off. They had to add to their misfortune a number of men sick, while some had deserted in Chile and the remainder of the crew were in such a weakly state that they could not weigh anchor or work the ship. At length they succeeded in getting her off on 24th June and arrived at Prince of Wales Island where Capt Heron was obliged to anchor.

**APPENDIX 2: (ANONYMOUS, 1897a)**

The captain of a Torres Straits pearl-shell schooner writes as follows, under the date the 18th March:- About forty tons ingot copper have been picked up by the natives of Badu and Marbiac, on the Orman Reef, some few miles to the eastward of the island of Marbiac, in Torres Straits. The copper was first discovered by some swimming pearl-divers in two fathoms of water, and it is spread over a distance of a mile, almost in a straight line. From its position it appears to have been jettisoned from some vessel, which, getting into difficulties amongst the reefs, had to be lightened by having a portion of her cargo thrown overboard. No wreckage of any kind, except an old iron gun, was seen, and this was so eaten away with rust that a nail could be driven right through it.

The metal appears to be smelted in a very crude manner. Iron and charcoal in considerable quantities are mixed with it. From its general appearance and irregular shapes of ingots it gives one the impression that the smelting was done in a very primitive style.

The oldest natives of the islands have no recollection whatsoever of a vessel being lost in the vicinity of the find, although several were wrecked round the islands, the localities of which can easily be placed by the present inhabitants of the group. Some very old men, who must have been over 60 years of age, were questioned as to how the copper got there, but could give no information whatever on the subject, nor was there any tradition handed down, as is the custom amongst native races when anything important happens.

From the appearance of the metal, the crude manner in which it has been smelted, the corroded state of the gun, and the fact that the natives have no knowledge of a wreck, I think the treasure must have lain at the bottom of

the sea for over a century. Probably it was carried from the South American Spanish possessions to the Philippines, but, of course, such a statement is pure conjecture. One fact is very patent: the vessel must have been bound from east to west, for there are such a number of islands and high reefs to the westward that it would be quite impossible for the vessel to have been bound east.

The discovery of the treasure has been a source of considerable revenue to the natives of the various islands. A trader stationed at Marbiac has paid several hundred pounds to the lucky discoverers. Nearly all the able-bodied men went out in canoes to dive for the treasure. Two men would swim down together, one of them raising the end of an ingot to allow the other to make fast a piece of rope. Both would then return to the surface, and the most difficult part of the work was to get the metal into the canoe. The men are such expert swimmers, and so much at home in the water, that work at a depth of only two fathoms was comparatively easy. When as much as the canoe could carry was secured, sail was made for home.

A very pleasing feature of the find is that the natives have subscribed among themselves nearly £300 out of what they have received. It is their ambition to build a church similar to the Quetta Memorial Church on Thursday Island.

In passing I might say that the London Missionary Society have a station on Marbiac, and a visit there will convince the sceptic that the society has certainly been successful in this locality. The village is a model of cleanliness. The natives read, write, and speak English; the gardens are well kept; no dogs or pigs are allowed to roam about the village; the houses are comfortable and well built; and altogether the place conveys to the visitor the impression that it is a prosperous community.

Since writing the above, a very old resident

of Torres Straits informs me that the ship Oxford, bound from Sydney to Calcutta, was ashore at various reefs in the Straits in 1863. She had a cargo of 800 tons of copper and a large quantity of railway sleepers. The ship appeared to be most unfortunate, finding reefs near Sir Charles Hardy Group, Channel Rock, and Turnagain. Cargo was jettisoned at each of these places, and some of the copper was afterwards recovered. It is supposed that from 60 to 100 tons still remain undiscovered waiting from some lucky man to drop on it. The cakes of copper in the Oxford were oblong, and weighed about 1cwt. each. Some were marked "Wallaroo." They were quite different to what was found by the natives, so that the two lots must have been jettisoned from different vessels.

**APPENDIX 3: JAMES CHALMERS ON  
THE OPENING OF THE NEW CHURCH  
(CHALMERS, 1898:4-6)**

At Mabuiagi a new church has been built at the entire cost of the natives.

When I was in Britain Mr Walker assisted the natives to get a small vessel with which they could dive for shell for themselves. The vessel was paid for by the middle of 1896.

In the beginning of 1897 when diving for pearl shell, they discovered a great patch of copper ingots & bringing a few in sold them to advantage to a trading firm on the island. When all were brought in the natives realised about £600. Part of that was put aside for a church, the people requiring the remainder to get food as it was a time of great scarcity on the island. Mabuiagi is only a great granite block with gullies here & there where small quantities of food are grown, not nearly sufficient to supply the wants of the population. A good supply of pearl shell is obtained by diving & part of the proceeds was from time to time put aside for the new church.

The fund had increased to over £200 & so a contract was made with a Thursday Island carpenter to put up a new church. The necessity for foreign labour arose from the teacher & natives not knowing anything of carpentering.

The church cost just over £250 and was all paid for before opening.

It was opened last October & there were natives from every island in Torres Straits & a goodly number of white friends from Thursday Island.

For nearly a fortnight the natives from other islands had been gathering in & were largely entertained by the Mabuiagi friends who had laid in stores of flour, rice, jams, tea & sugar, and tinned meats

The feast on the opening day was a sight never before seen in Torres Straits. Long tables were laid in a cocconut grove near to the mission house & those were crowded with natives who came in relays. In the teacher's house was a large table at which the white friends were entertained & over which Mr. Jardine of Somerset presided. Outside was a large pile of food such as could be got from the Thursday Island stores & that was all divided out amongst the islanders.

The opening day was a Saturday, and the opening service lasted two hours & there were over 30 speeches. All chiefs, teachers, deacons and several white friends spoke. The inside & outside of the church was nicely decorated with flowers & leaves of many kinds. Natives & whites reported the whole a great success.

The sabbath following was a great day. All the services were crowded & hundreds outside. They have several hanging lamps & that we might see how the church looked in artificial light we had an evening service with much singing. It was a sabbath that will long be remembered by the people.

#### APPENDIX 4 (CORAL, 1925)

About half a century ago old Kiau was out fishing in a canoe, with another man. Their primitive anchor was down, and they were awaiting bites. Presently the old man's line became foul, and, as he had only one hook (for in those days the hooks were of turtle-shell, and there was no handy store from which to replenish at sixpence a dozen), he decided to go down and free it. It was a simple matter to dive over the stern and swim round, but when he returned and spat out the water he told his companion that there was a big heap of some curious-looking blocks down below. They decided to make another investigation, but, by then the tide was running strongly, and the anchor rope gave indications of parting, so they paddled off home. Some 20 years or so later, a native-manned lugger was in about the same spot, Bani, old Tom's son-in-law, swimming round for shell, came upon a strange-looking cairn in the waters, fathoms below the surface. He picked up one of the blocks and brought it to the top. It was heavy, and yet it didn't look like iron, and it certainly wasn't stone. Further investigation proved it to be an ingot of copper, and worth good money. The pile was cleaned up, and, further along the sea-seekers came upon another one. In the vicinity was an old cannon, which they retrieved also. Another ship, working nearby, discovered a third collection. The whole lot went into the market in due course. A few years back, a big anchor was came upon, some little distance away. Probably the vessel of which the ingots had formed the cargo had found herself in difficulties, in a place where she should not have been,

and threw overboard all the heavy stuff available to enable her to float off, perhaps using the anchor as a kedge, as there seem to be no remains of any part of a wrecked hull anywhere about. The old people again have stories of a ship which came in close, and sent out a boat, which cruised round for some time, apparently looking for a passage, then finally disappeared to the northward. One other of those sea-mysteries in which the Straits abound!

#### APPENDIX 5 (ANONYMOUS, N.D.)

One never-to-be-forgotten day, while shelling on the Mabuiag reef, a native diver brought up a most curious find. It was a copper-ingot! There were tons down there, all among the corals at the bottom of the sea, legacy of some ancient wreck. Cowling hurried all his "boys" to work. They dived from day-light till dark deep into those green-crystal waters of the Strait. They salvaged some tons of ingots. One, when sent south for assay, proved to be composed of metals in such proportion as pointed to the probability of the unknown wealth sailed from Mexico. Cowling joyfully sailed with his ingots to Thursday Island.

His joy was short-lived. The Customs people grabbed the ingots as treasure trove! The manager of Burns, Philp, and Co. stuck to Cowling. A law case resulted. The final verdict was in Cowling's favour, as the treasure had been found outside the three-mile limit.

#### APPENDIX 6: JOHN LAWRIE'S (1822) ACCOUNT OF THE STRANDING

John Lawrie's 'commonplace book' was purchased by the National Library of Australia at a Sotheby's auction in 1997, the Library noting that he was 'an officer of the East India Company and an admirer of Robert Burns (the covers are decorated with vignettes relating to Burns)' (National Library of Australia, 1997). His account is at times very florid and melancholy, and accompanied by numerous poems, and its gloomy mood and descriptions of Torres Strait and Islanders reflects attitudes common at that time, including the terrifying fear of shipwreck, and of violent encounters with the inhabitants of the Strait.

Little is known of John Lawrie himself at this time; he is probably the 'John Lawrie' listed in Farrington's (1999:462) index of East India Company Maritime Service Officers, who was born 8 September 1787 in North Leith, Edinburg, son of John, a shipmaster, and Isobel Laidlaw, and in the company's service for 2 years and six months, being a mate on the *Cuffnells* (1806/7-1807/8) and *Marquis of Huntly* (1811/12).

The Lawrie manuscript includes numerous corrections to the original, in the author's hand. It is not always clear which word or phrase the author preferred, and so we have selected those that, in our view, best express the intended meaning. The few errors of spelling in the account have been corrected in this version, and poems and other reflections irrelevant to the stranding of the *Hercules* have been omitted. Words that could not be deciphered are shown as question marks in square brackets.

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Torres Straits – visited 1822.

[Deleted four line poem]

The morning watch had just been relieved, and the call sounded for breakfast, when a voice from aloft loudly proclaimed 'land in sight', and being in charge of the deck at this time, I immediately scampered aloft, with my glass in hand, and having ascertained from the appearance, and bearing of the land, that the point in view, was that which we sought, and soon, all possible sail was made, and the ships head directed towards the spot, when, like a gaudy queen, decked in bridal robes, the noble ship, in seeming pride, danced o'er the bounding waves, more free, and fleet beneath the [?] of her full and flowing robes, shedding the ruffled waters snowy edge in sparkling foam, that laced with bounding surge, her heavy prows.

Noon had now parted, and having ascertained and noted the ships place, we were enjoying our usual meridian, with the largest of Murrays Islands, full in sight, when a wild and fearful looking extent of "the great Barrier Reef", broke upon our view, dashing its snow white columns, to the upper sky and brightening with a horrid glare, the whole surrounding horizon.

The breeze had now freshened to a smart gale, and nearing – yet, more near – sublimely terrible the scene appeared.

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All on board was now excitement, and alarm, and the brief space of approach was filled up by a thousand conjectures, resolves, and hesitations, but the gallant ship held on her course.

It was now a moment of fearful suspense, every eye was strained and every glass in

use, but not a single gap was visible in the whole wild, and wide extent of the dread "Barrier Reef" – through which, we now were doomed to pass, and, were already within a very short distance of the scowling rocks, and apparently running into the very jaws of destruction – and yet, no opening could be seen.

The foretop sail was now thrown "flat aback", but, almost at the same instant, the wind chopped round in a severe squall, blowing dead upon the reef, which, with heavy swell, was rapidly drifting in towards the breakers.

We had no time now to consult or deliberate what was best to be done, not even a moment was left us now to trifle with, and in almost less time than I now take to name it, the fore topsail was filled – and the ship "close hauled" – and trimmed – was again slowly wending her way seaward, along the southern edge of the reef, when, by the captains anxious, eversearching eye alone, a narrow opening was descried, and, to the startling and astonishment of all. "Hard [?] – square away" – was the first stern command that broke the silence of the quarterdeck, and which was obeyed almost as soon as given, for, each brave heart stood ready at his post.

"Meet her! – steady my man – steady as ye go," eagerly, yet composedly, muttered our captain, while, with his eyes riveted on the fearful scene ahead, half kneeling – as in prayer, he arched, with muscular arm, the brass bound railing of the poop – the which, in his anxiety – for fear had neither hold, nor

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share in him – now quivered in his iron grasp, as if half conscious that his noble ship would strike – become a scattered wreck, and leave our bones to bathe and bleach amid those demon rocks. Meanwhile the vessel neared, and all was silent, save the wild song

of the wind and boisterous waves, and [?] elements, that raged around, still nearing – all stood motionless, and still, scarce daring even to breathe aloud, as if afraid the living sound might break in death their every hope, and charm of life.

And entering now this frightful gorge, a numerous group of coral snags upon our dubious path appeared, yet rendered visible, through the tempest, and the torrents rage, wreathing their rugged, ghastly forms in snow white foam, and spray, the while, the vessel oft repelled by the opposing surge, a moment faltering, hung, with her non-flapping wings, and half engorged – like dying fly fish in the all rapacious dolphins jaw – until the following surge her counter struck, arching her creaking deck with foam and spray, propelling her to grope her doubtful way through this dread, treacherous gate way of “the mighty reef”.

Still, all stood “fixed immoveable”, and, save the masters well directed stern commands, no other human sound stirred the air, yet, oh! what distracting thoughts alike of gloom, and glory, swelled each bosom then as each foam-muffled demon of the deep burst on the vessels tracks, and passed astern – ‘twas hard to say – for all seemed wrapt in fate. The while the wakeful [?] – in whose firm and skilful grasp, the ready wheel answered now, to signs, and looks alone – still governed well, and through this hideous ocean gap the noble ship, at length, in pride, and safety found her irksome way, and in comparatively smoother water, and open space among the rocks, “came to” in twenty fathoms, between 2 to 3 miles to the northward of Murrays Islands. While yet busily employed in making all things snug on board, our attention was attracted towards the shore, by several little groups of natives, who had

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already assembled on the beach, apparently, for the purpose of launching their canoes – possibly to pay us a visit, however, from a knowledge of their character, and from the sad fate which former navigators had experienced at their hands, in this same place, we immediately prepared for their reception, by double shooting our great guns, and mustering all our small arms on deck.

Night approached, yet, neither keel, nor savage paddle seemed to wake the surface of “the dark blue sea”, beyond the wild and rocky margin of their “sea girt isle”, hence, after hoisting out our long boat, and making sundry other preparations for an early start in the morning, the accustomed watch was set, and the remainder of the weary crew sent to repose beneath the shelter of the poop awning.

Night had now in darkness closed around, and rain in torrents fell, yet – save in passing squalls – the wind kept moderate, and the better to secure ourselves from observation midst the increasing gloom, for still we feared a visit from the savage Islanders – no lights were shown, and all on board kept silent for the night, yet, neither darkness, rain, nor storm deterred these savage men, from their – perhaps inhuman – dark design, for as the witching hour of night drew near a light canoe was seen to glide across our bow, the which, we hailed and hailed again, but no reply – nor signal – was returned.

A moment after, and the struggling moon, a random glimmering shot across the gloom reflecting to our view, several proas or “light canoes” nearing – still nearing – the ship, doubtless with base intent.

All hands were piped to quarters – and soon “a telling shot” was poured into the fated group, when, almost on the instant, the [?] moon – as if appalled – withdrew her light,

“And left the world to darkness and ourselves” – and ourselves, hence – we saw no more of them.

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Soon after midnight, it blew a severe gale, during which our anchor parted, and we were soon drifted out of soundings, but, fortunately by the faint, and partial light, which the sickly moon afforded, we were enabled – with the exception of two or three light torches – to steer clear of the numerous rocks and shoals on our way, until daylight, when we shaped our course for “the Halfway Islands”, where we came to – a little before sunset, in 28 fathoms.

We observed very few people on any of the islands we passed, but from the number of huts we saw upon passing many of them, fancied most of them to be inhabited – at least, occasionally visited.

The few men we saw seemed to be of ordinary stature, athletic, of a dark copper colour, and, apparently quite naked.

When rounding one of the small islands – while leading the ship through an apparent intricate passage – in the long boat, under sail, we came suddenly upon two of the Aborigines in the act of hauling their canoe out of the water. Upon seeing us they left their skiff to the mercy of the tide and fled. Three of us then landed, and ran after them for a short distance. When on perceiving they were followed, they fell flat on the ground, but just as we were nearing them, they rose, and ran off again. We hallooed after them, but they heeded it not – “nor cast one lingering look behind”, so finding them too “fleet of foot” for us, we returned to the boat – the vessel being then close up with us.

“The Halfway Islands” are so termed, I believe, from being situated about mid way between the entrance, and exit of the

Straits, and, around which is to be found the only safe anchorage and shelter, hence to “Murray’s Islands”. This group comprises several little islands, some of them, probably not more than from one to three miles in circumference. Most of them were covered with verdure, bush wood, and small trees.

Attached to most of these islands, there appeared long tacking banks of growing coral running from them generally in an easterly direction, and, seemingly, abounding in fish. We saw also several turtle around them.

It might not perhaps be altogether unreasonable here, to remark,

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to imagine – from a rapid growing – extension of these islands, their coral reefs and sand banks that, at some distant date, –

“Where now the broad Pacific flows,  
Wide continents may bloom”.

The ship being now at anchor, and all things partially snug for the night, I loitered – as if instinctively – towards the Poop, where I sat me down, to ruminate upon the chequered past, and contemplate the wild, yet sublimely grand ‘melange’ of scenery that now surrounded me, nor shall I soon forget the strange – the fond, endearing feelings, and impressions, which then came over me, for, until then, I had never met, nor calculated upon meeting such a gorgeous treat, the more especially, in such reputed savageness, and solitude, as “Torres Straits”.

The evening now was fair, and fine – blowing a fresh and increasing breeze, which – gently ruffling the surrounding waters into little undulating, billowy waves – came fondly leaping to the shore all tinged with white

[Four line poem not included here]

The falling tide had, now, laid bare the glowing surface of many a glistening sand, and

coral bank – for miles around – studded all with small projecting crags of various hue, sparkling in the bright and dazzling radiance of the setting sun, like fields of variagated [sic]gold.

[Paragraph not included here]

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[Two paragraph not included here]

The boisterous raving of the wind had ceased, and all was still [rest of sentence and accompanying four line poem not included here]

[Paragraph not included here]

[Four line poem not included here]

[Paragraph not included here]

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[Paragraph not included here]

[Four line poem not included here]

[Paragraph not included here]

Ere opening morn had told her earliest chimes,  
On parting midnight left the starry sky,  
A change came o'er the scene-as if 'gainst times  
The lightening flew, and thunder roared on high,  
And hard the gale, and high the surge  
passed by.

Which tossed, and strained our heavy labouring Barque, now the sad sport of warring elements at work. At 3 am our cable parted, and between rocks, and shoals, we drifted on, until the morning dawned, when finding then we were so far to leeward of our course, without the slightest hope of recovering our lost ground, we were induced, or rather forced, to continue to sail on – still northerly – in the hope of we might find an outlet in that direction, which – in so far as we knew, was still unsurveyed – and unknown. About 2 pm we made the entrance of an

apparently fine channel, extending as far as the eye could reach, formed by a continuous ridge of small islands, and sand banks, to the northward, and a continuation of what we considered to be Prince of Wales Island to the southward – and other, detached, small islands, and sand banks running in, nearly the same direction.

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Full of hope, we now ran down this channel, carrying from six to ten fathoms water, until near sunset, when the vessel struck with fearful violence upon a sunken coral rock, and, so sudden, and terrible was the shock, that the man seated upon the fore top sail yard – as a look out – was instantly thrown from his place, and dashed upon deck, where, after a few moments of excruciating agony, he breathed his last.

The top sails were now thrown 'flat aback', but, in the interim a second and a third severe shake ensuing, brought up – alongside – apparently – the greater part of the 'false keel', and a portion of the bottom sheathing, which now scattering, sought the bosom of the boiling surge. Luckily, however with the recoiling wave the vessel rose, reeled, and backing off the shelving bank, once more floated – cleared the reef, and we anchored in six fathoms.

The gig and longboat, were now dispatched to sound and ascertain the extent and nature of this dangerous, and – until now – unknown flat.

The sun had long since left the affrighted sky, and the only light, now reflecting the dark surface of the agitated water, being but a few straggling stars, together, with the faint and sickly glimmerings of the waning moon, the boats were soon lost sight of.

The weather now became more boisterous, with occasional heavy squalls, in one of

which, our anchor started, and having no other to let go, we were soon again drifted up on this horrid flat, where, we kept drifting, and occasionally striking so hard, that – at times, we looked for nothing short of the ship bilging, and going to pieces under us.

The boats – our only hope – being now absent, every endeavour was made to recall them, lanterns were hoisted, Blue lights burned, and guns fired, yet, alas! to no purpose, for none of them appeared or returned our signals.

Dark night had now set in, and it still

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continued to blow, and rain heavily, hence, our dangers and apprehensions, were not now to be brooded over and fastened in silent despair and idleness, as such would only increase, instead of averting the danger, however desperate, or hopeless; so, having mustered the crew, and served out an allowance of grog to each we commenced to lighten the ship by throwing cargo overboard – which consisted of slab copper – also all our deck lumber, and by striking all our lofty spars for which we formed into two small rafts – to serve us in case of need.

As night wore on so wore and waned the angry spirits of the storm gathered, methought from every sea and sky, and ice bound cavern of the universe, such was their force and fury. And now the ocean surge leap'd like living mountains to the sky, as if in joy – to join the frightful revelry, that raged and reigned around the while, our labouring barque. The spirit, sad spirit of the dread power of the storm now tossed, and rolled amid the broken waves, and striking – creaked, and groaned, as if – with all her little world of life, and soul, she were already struggling in the grasp of death.

The thunder rolled terrifically and had the forked lightening cleft the morbid air, and

through the gloomy mantlings of the night, portrayed a sad, and dreary chaos there, on every cloud some grim and dusky demon sat, changeful, and changing, with the bitter blasts – as if gloating on the scene – as seen through fiery channels of the rent sky.

The tide at length, receding, the vessel 'took the ground' and sat, comparatively now, at ease, and when the dawn appeared, we saw the long boat, 'at anchor' – within five hundred yards of the ship. The gig, however, was just visible to leeward, still struggling against the storm, and ebbing tide, and on hailing the long boat, learned she was disabled, and the crew so exhausted, they were afraid to move, against the ebb.

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At about 8 am the gig came side up with the ship, were [sic] we dropped a buoy, with a line attached, and paid out about three hundred fathoms before they were able to pick it up, when the boat was hauled close up astern, but the sea being too confused, and heavy, to risk our taking it along side, the spanker boom was run out a few feet, when all were got safely on board by rope, suspended from the boom. A fresh crew was now dispatched with a sufficient length of small line to reach the long boat, but from the strength of wind, and tide, they failed, and had to be themselves again hauled up to recoil their line, they however at length succeeded, and both boats being hauled up, the crews got safely on board, as before stated.

Being all once more assembled on board, and finding the boats had made no discovery to advantage us, we continued lightening the ship. During the night, the crew of the gig – when out – became quite exhausted at their oars, turned sullen, and disaffected, and despite all admonition, discontinued to row, and hung despairingly upon their oars, while the tide continued drifting us further

upon the flat, to where – we knew not – it being now nearly pitch dark.

While in this dilemma, we came in contact with a quantity of wreck, which was instantly pronounced to be that of one unfortunate vessel, supposed to be now breaking up, for it had long since ceased to be visible. This proved a most unfortunate occurrence indeed, for it tended to confirm the men's worst fears, and they now became still more obstinate, and morose, this however could not be borne any longer, and upon receiving refusals to my orders, accompanied with insolent replies from the man who sat next to me, I instantly withdrew the tiller from its place, for I still held it in my hand, as in the act of steering, and felled him on the spot, where he lay senseless for some time; I half regretted the blow, yet, could not possibly, at that moment,

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hesitate or allow, even, my heart to stay my hand, conscious that the exigency of the case, and my duty, alike, demanded it, for I knew not how soon the mastery might be regained to subdue, perhaps – even a worse spirit than this. A considerable agitation and murmuring now pervaded them, luckily, however, I had my pistols upon me, one of which I drew forth, desiring them to seize their oars, and 'give way', giving them five minutes to consider, and stating that the first who should disobey my order, should have the contents of my pistol. Yet, scarce had I given the utterance to the last word, when a bluelight was seen to blaze in the direction of the ship, and soon after, the report of a gun was heard, as coming from the same quarter. Just at this moment, a large piece of wreck – which I took to be part of the false keel – fell across our bow, to clear which, and save the boat, we necessarily had to use some immediate exertion, and take to

our oars. This was done with such apparent alacrity, and seeming willingness, that I was convinced my threat had had the desired effect, and that any firmness had wrought its own reward, and now, proud of my conquest, I at once stimulated this renewed attempt to exertion by cheerfully following it up with 'a tot' all round of good old Jamaica, of which I had just then, in my blundering, blundered upon a bottle half full – which – probably had been left in the stern locker, on some former boating occasion – and being now somewhat refreshed and in better spirits, things seemed to move once more to the tune of 'All's well'. The tide was still against us but it continued to rain and blow fresh, yet, we 'pulled with a will' for a considerable time, but finding we made so little 'head way' made for the nearest shoal, where two of the crew leaped upon the bank, and by 'the painter' held on the boat – against the strong tide – and thus – by a succession of watches secured our position until day light,

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when to our great joy, and rejoicing, we observed our ship laying within 3 to 4 miles of us, and which, we soon regained, both wind and tide having moderated. The sea had also fallen considerably, and the vessel still resting on the bank, sat comparatively easy until the return of the flood tide, when the vessel again floated, and continued to drift still farther across the flat, the anchor not proving sufficient to hold her. Thus without anything, very particular occurring, we continued thus to rest with the ebb, and float with the flood until the evening of the sixth day – from first striking – when at the fall of tide we grounded abreast of a large island, about a mile off shore, with several smaller ones in right to the southward of us, and in this place – or within the circuit of half a mile – we remained for several days, unable to do anything – save to continue

with lightening the ship, the tide only rising from 2½ to 3 feet.

It was by this time a sad crisis with us indeed, and now, for the first time – since the night on which we struck – our hopes began seriously to flag, for the ship appeared to be – to us – irrecoverably lost. The only alternative – the only hope which rose to fasten our distant view of safety, was to abandon the vessel, and take to our boats, yet the question was, where were we to go? We were now in a land of savages, and cannibals, alike without the means of defence, or subsistence – for any length of time – and, besides, our boats were considered insufficient to carry all, to any civilized spot, or friendly shore, the nearest being ‘the Island of Timor’, distant some hundred miles. Thither we now directed our forlorn hopes, having arranged to break up the poop for the purpose of lengthening the longboat previous, however, to putting this into execution, we resolved in surveying the flats more fully, to seaward with the view of ascertaining whether there was, really, any passage for the ship, through any part of these accursed flats, should she again float and the wind favor us. Having therefore accordingly laid, in provisions, and water for 4 days – with a couple bottles of spirits – I took my departure in the gig – with five Lascars, and steering to the southward, and westward,

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about noon, came pretty close in with the shore, having crossed the flat in from 1½ to 2 fathoms, fell into – apparently – a fine channel which washed the banks of two large islands in which we carried from 3 to 7 fathoms until sunset, when it narrowed considerably taking a more westerly direction, which led towards the main flat, and at 8 p.m. we found ourselves about 6 or 7 miles from the land, here, in many places, it became exceedingly narrow, and obstructed

by the branching reefs of coral, though still deep. An hour more, and we lost all trace of it, but, whether from its having ceased, or, from our having been drifted out of it, we were unable – positively – to ascertain, it had now become so very thick, and cloudy, and considering ourselves to be now 8 or 10 miles from the nearest island, and having alike, a strong wind, and tide against us, and being much fatigued – we resolved upon remaining on the flat, and renewing our search in the morning. Having accordingly dropped our kedge, all hands, save one who kept watch, was soon fast in repose, but ere the second watch was relieved, it came on to blow, and rain heavily, with occasional hard squalls, which compelled us to adopt our old expedient to prevent the boat from drifting – for we had already found the kedge would not hold on – so one of the crew took his station on the banks – in shallow water – as before described, and by his assistance, and the kedge, we kept our place, and soon again, rough cradled on the wave, were rocked to sweet forgetfulness.

I had taken the first look out upon myself, and now at times in drowsy watchfulness, kept nodding my adieus to the wild, and whispering waves, and ‘little shining stars’ whiles, by the boat’s rude rocking, and the ruder hissings of the dashing spray, startled to thought, and thorny recollections, I would wander through ruminations’ darkly throng, perplexed – absorbed – amidst the gloomy present, and the past, sad and silent as yon pale and sickly moon, still struggling through the midnight gloom.

The dawn at length awoke, and stretching

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far o’er the eastern sky, broke gently up, dark midnights gloomy gatherings, which, as an earthly routed field, in severing portions fled, confusing, and confused – back to their

native shades – ‘to chaos back again’, then, at the eastern gate of morn, gay robed in all the dazzling sheen of majesty and power, the King of Day appeared, inspiring, morning with his kindest, highest rays, our cold, and sorrowing hearts, and all around. Yet, small – how small, alas! my share of joy – of hope that morn.

In view – and but a mile, or two, the wide – the blue expanse of ocean lay before us, and oh! how tempting to the sight, as each low crested billow – curling white – came dancing to the beach – as if in mockery of our search – along this savage shore. The channel too, which, so falsely flattering, led us on, had disappeared, had sunk with all our brightest hopes among the shifting sands, or crept into a hundred paltry streams, now murmuring onward to the main.

Our search in this direction now, was closed, and yet, the object sought, was full in sight, but tantalizingly, alas! still barred realization, by this accursed bank, and savage beach, hence, as night came on, we made for shelter, and to wait the tide – a small, and barren rock, which – for the time became our ‘desert home’, on which, no beast, nor bird was seen. A dreary prospect had me now amidst this waste – this weary wilderness of ‘flood and field’ our vessel far away, and doubtful now, if even she remained, and, with our last poor meal spread out before us on the desert rock.

Desponding half – and half afraid, I left my mates, and sought a separate spot, on which I sighed, and gazed, and thought, and gazed again, until my eyes, my very heart was sore, without one solitary ray of hope, or comfort coming to my aid.

This was indeed a time, and place, in which the sorrowing heart ‘might melt, thaw, and dissolve itself into a dew’, yea! moments, when the very soul might weep, and bleed within itself unseen, alike

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The tide has turned, and now, we left – forever left this dream, and dismal rock, this solitary couch of want and woe, and made for the islands we had passed a day or two before. When crossing the flat, however, and when only about a mile from the shore, our boat upset in a heavy squall, and emptying its precious contents upon a sparkling bed of coral – deep sheeted o’er with ocean waves, bade us our goodbye, and, floating bottom up, now drifted rapidly away. But after a long, and serious struggle, along with two of my fortunate companions, I regained the boat, and with much difficulty secured with them a seat upon the keel, where we remained, cold, shivering, and half dead, for several hours, when the boat grounded, and here, again, were we dashed from our dizzy throne, deep into oceans faithless heart, and rolled, and tossed amidst the angry surf, on, to the desert shore, and to forgetfulness, for now, nearly all sense and recollection had forsaken me.

When once again aroused to a sense of consciousness and feeling, I found myself stretched upon an elevated bank of sand still suffering, and alone.

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[Several paragraphs not included here]

Before me – on this margin of the rolling surf, stretched out in death, lay one – the best of all my crew – our shattered boat, too, with the waves, still dashed the desert shore, and the four remaining messmates of my fatal

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cruise, lay also motionless upon the sand, before me, whether in sleep, or in death, I know not, but, on looking round I saw my powder flask, shot belt, and cap close to where I lay and, this cheering circumstance alone, instilled fresh

hope within for well I knew that some one of my crew had placed them there and they – at least, or some of them – must still survive.

I now essayed to rise, but alas! my stiff, benumbed, cold limbs refused their office; I called on my companions, by their names, but – so weak my voice – the sound had failed to reach them and –for a time – I stretched myself and rubbed my frozen limbs but all to no effect, so laid me down again, in silent, sad despair [sic] another hour or so, when my companions came, and by their timely aid, I soon recovered – partially – the use of my poor limbs again.

[Four line poem not included here]

The boat was now secured, and hauled upon the beach, and having collected a quantity of dry sea wood for bedding, we all went to rest under shelter of the boat.

The night passed away, and again the rosy morn appeared but ere we could gather up our weary stiffened limbs, the sun had well nigh thrown his brightening beams, all o'er the desert waste. A single glance, however, now sufficed to urge us from this cheerless shore – this desolate, and barren rock, which showed a surface of only a few hundred yards, and boasted nothing on which, the heart or eye might rest with comfort.

Our boat was much injured, and all that we now possessed belonging to it, were two oars, the others, with mast, and sail, having drifted away across the flat. My fowling piece, however, with two cutlasses, having been well secured 'in bickets', to the boats side – still remained – provisions, we had none, and having already had a two days fast, our aching stomachs sickened,

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sickened at the dread prospect of approaching famine, and starvation. Providentially – however, when just about to leave the place,

our half 'bottle of Jamaica' was descried [sic], riding on the billows front, nodding sweet comfort to our sinking hearts. This was soon secured and having shared 'a 'tot' all round', our hearts, and hopes, again revived, and our boat, being now partially repaired, we interred our late unfortunate companion.

And o'er his lonely grave – in feisty lung

Shed sorrows honest tear – and requiem sung

And then, made the best of our way for the largest island of the group, which, we reached about midnight. As we approached, an hundred fires – as if it were – now seemed to blaze, and flash upon the horizon around, and, in the flickering of their beams, we could descry the savage figures of the dark Aborigines, like ignes fatuis – flitting around in the unhallowed glare. Appalling was the sight, for, now, methought some horrid murder might be perpetrating there – some human being sacrificed to satiate their demon orgies, for under the shelter of the rock we heard – at times even [?] the unearthly howling of the savage [?], sad terrifying screams wailing – from which we judged this nothing short of horrid death [?] these [?] cannibals [?] [?] and suddenly, to memory flashed, the recollection of the sad, and melancholy fates of Cooke [sic], Park, and Le Prouse, and others, with all the wild imaginable horrors of the scene, and, in our disabled, destitute and helpless state, we deemed it best to 'bear away' – and hence –

Sought shelter on a neighbouring rock

Secure – the while – from this dark savage throng

Still – their unearthly howlings, woke

To fear – in horrid revelry, and song

The dawn broke not on our repose, nor did the rising sun now chide our 'slumberings of the morn' for, already we had 'brushed the early dew', and were about to bid farewell to this lone spot.

The dread revelry of the shore had ceased, and the savages had sought the deep recesses of their own dark forest shades, and solitude, and silence now reigned throughout the scene, nought seemed to stir on earth, or air, save one solitary sea gull, which, from a crevice of the rock, just then arose, and fluttering, hovered over head. It seemed a prize, and longing now – starvation craved the sacrifice.

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My gun was ready – loaded – and brought the bird to the ground. Near the spot on which it fell was found its nest, with eggs, which with the bird – half cooked – was soon discussed and proved a most delicious and a welcome meal, for, with the exception of a few shell fish, we had not tasted food for nearly three days.

?, also, we found part of a cocoa nut shell, and which seemed to have been but lately used, and on searching round, we discovered a quantity of rain water in a cavity of the rock. This – I may well add – was prized even more than the Seafool, and Eggs, as the only fresh water we had tasted for days was a little ? stagnant rain – fortunately preserved. – And now, thus amply provided with fish, and fresh water, we ? on ? spending another day upon the Island, for the purpose of putting our boat into a little better repair, before again “breasting? The Ocean waves,” and that we might – here – the better conceal or protect ourselves, in the event of any of the dreaded Cannibals appearing.

The following day, however, and ere we had yet completed our repairs, two of my crew became seriously ill – I next fell sick myself.

And ere dark night had spread her sable cloak around,

We all lay prostrate, on the cold, damp ground.

Without one kind, one kindred soul to watch or wait upon us in this – our helpless state

– and thus we remained that night, and all next day, and though within short distance of each other placed, not one could aid the other, and yet, while stretched in sickness, suffering, and sorrow, thus I lay, without care, or covering, save kind Providence, or other covering than the wild, wide canopy of heaven [rest of paragraph not included here]

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[Continuation of paragraph on preceding page not included here]

[Eight line poem not included here]

We had eaten freely of the raw shell fish, and of other kinds, some of which had been exposed to the malignant moon beams of the proceeding evening – when hung up to dry. To this we attributed all our present indisposition and suffering, from which, however, we were now, fortunately recovering.

From the second day of our landing on the rocks, we had lost all trace, and observation of the wandering savages, and therefore imagined – that for a season, at least – that they must have decamped to some more favourite spot, and that the fearful night on which we saw them was some farewell jubilee. We therefore – under this idea, ventured to the main shore – and to a considerable distance inland, and visited many of their rude huts, and places of savage resort, the principle, and most interesting of which, appeared to be a place of savage worship, from the huge and grizzly form – some heathen diety perhaps – that scowling sat within.

At a considerable distance from the beach, and in the heart of a beautiful, and extensive grotto, stood this gorgeous sanctuary of the dark heathens, however, well knowing the spot to be deeply tabooed, and afraid of being surprised by some of the savages, we cautiously, and carefully examined the whole exterior of the place before entering,

conscious it would have proven a double sacrifice, and added alike fire, and fuel to their implacable revenge, and cruelty, to have been detected rummaging among their deities.

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this house, or rather, this shed, measured about 40 feet long, by about 12 feet broad, the sides of which were formed of rough spars, fixed in the ground, all closely warped with small twigs of brush wood. The roof also, consisted of a similar material, but neatly covered with dry grass, and leaves, ingeniously netted with slender twigs, which made the place impervious alike to wind and rain, fit shelter for a wooden deity to stand, and savages to worship in.

In the centre of this wild sanctuary stood a rough railing about 4 feet wide, and nearly the same in height, extending the entire length of the building, at the farther end of which there stood a touzy tyke, baith, grim and large' a most unsightly and grotesque figure – which, in part only – somewhat resembled 'the human face [?]'.

It was full six feet high, and formed of several pieces of wood all of which evidently bore the marks of having been shaped out by some sharp edged instrument, and in imitation of eye balls two pieces of rough pearl shell, of different sizes, and colour, were stuck into rudely carved holes, not in a straight line nor at equal distance from the nose, and on that part intended to represent the scalp, was placed a sort of wig, formed of black glossy feathers; save this, however, and a daub of a coarse kind of brownish paint, no other covering upon it.

Several other – but infinitely smaller – figures stood within this enclosure, which was 'ornamented' round with a variety of skulls, and bones, many of which we made out to be human.

This inner enclosure, or railing, was also daubed over with the same kind of paint, and every third, or fourth slab – or stace – rose above the other, and bore some ridiculous, or obscene device, carved out and richly decorated with feathers of various colours, and descriptions.

The whole was a scene of horror, and delusion, and to the Christian mind called forth ideas the

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most revolting and sad, the while, he felt in heart, for its wild and wicked worshippers.

Now fully satiated with the sight, we left the scene unmolested, and continued our search, yet unfortunately found neither vegetables nor fruit of any consequence, nor did we observe any cultivated spot near, but from the top of a tree, descried a large open space, about a mile – or so – farther inland. We did not however venture towards it, considering the risk great, particularly, in our present weak, and disabled state, and at so late an hour; for the sun was already verging upon the horizon; we, therefore, returned to our home on the rock, where, after discussing our scanty meal we made ourselves – comparatively – comfortable for the night, and in the morning, having secured a quantity of fish and fresh water from the reservoir on the rock – we once more, track'd our dubious way upon 'the mountain [?]'.

For the first day, we kept close in with the islands, on which – in passing – we saw numbers of huts of various descriptions, but nothing seemed stirring all along the shore, save two, or three large dogs, which followed the boat along the beach for a mile or two.

The grey gloaming stole quietly upon us, ere dark midnight's dusky mantle closed around. The welcome moon – twice welcome now – broke gently on our course, and by her

cold, yet cheering light, led boldly on, until the morning dawned, when the tide in our favour – we snatched a little rest from all our toils, and, happily ere bright noon had past, our vessel came in view, and, seemingly – still slumbering – ‘fixed immovable’ – upon the cursed bank.

Soon as we struck the vessel side, I sprang on deck, in hopes of fondly greeting a brother messmate there – but no one came – all was still – dead silence reigned – nothing moved, save the loose canvas overhead, that fluttered in the breeze. I stood appalled, the while, I came knowing what to do; the ships Ensign lay carefully extended on “the Main Hatch” – before me – I could not

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mistake its meaning, nor did my heart forget to take it up – methought it told a woeful tale. I advanced to raise the covering, but, when just about to touch the martial mortcloth, the eddying zephyr swept it from my hand, presenting to my view – in death fixed features, two favorites of my watch – the only two – but my eye soon fled the sight in search of something happier to rest upon, but where to find it was the question now.

On looking round, I saw a figure rested on the gangway opposite – motionless, staring, methought, direct, and wildly on me, could he be also dead? How he died upon his watch? And was it really now – “death watching the dead”. The thought appalled me, and I stood – transfixed – awhile, amidst the desolation, and the solitude that reigned around in vague and harrowing reverie, but soon my boat companions sprang on deck and broke the torturing spell – and now the dreary watch awoke, and forward also, came my brother officer, when all was soon explained.

Tired with the labours of the day, the weary crew had gone to rest – to wait the favouring

tide, in hopes the ship might float again, and be released from her long entombment.

The setting sun – in all his parting brightness – had now once more just neared the horizon, and now – wrapped in thin cold and “clammy” hammocks, the sad, and last remained of my two – late – favorites were placed upon the open gangway, and then,

The sorrowing crew drew round the dead  
The ghong spoke out their funeral knell  
And praise, and prayer, and ‘service’ read  
As with the sun – they sank beneath the swell

I had not yet seen our worthy captain, but, learning that fatigue, anxiety, and the want of rest, had well nigh worn him out, and that he had not been out of his cabin for the past three days, I entered his apartment, but, nor the hoarse creaking of the turning hinge, nor my own sad figure as it darkened the cabin door, seemed

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to startle, or attract him. I advanced, and spoke to him, yet he heeded not my approach, nor made reply.

He was seated in his couch, the corner of which supported his sorry hands, which closely, now encased his dark, and dizzy brow, the while his craggy form, half arching the rent and shattered rudder case, he gazed with vague, and flaming wild intenseness through the gloomy crevice, smiling – at times – the saddening smile of mental vacancy, upon the answering waves and humming whiles some cheerless ditty as if in sad response to the wild gurgling of the broken surge below. Alas! I felt – I knew it all, and sat me down, familiarly beside him, and placed my hand upon his knee, endeavouring to rouse him from so dread, and dangerous a reverie. He turned, and spoke, but to confused and peevishly, I could make nothing of it, and, as he soon resumed his former melancholy

mood, and posture, I left him to his own sad – sad delirium, and forgetfulness.

The tide had made, yet, still our shattered barque lay, “fixed immoveable upon this island.” Now, for the first time for many days, I hoped to enjoy a little relaxation, and repose – would I [?] have said [?] [?] for, since our first mishap, I had not had a change of linen, and had only, now, a very few articles left, recently all having been swept away on that disastrous night on which we first struck up on the cursed bank.

All our stores now consisted of a few bags of damaged rice, some dried fish, a keg or two of salt provisions, a bag or two of biscuits, curry stuffs, and the crew – from the time we had left in the boat, had been subjected to a very scanty allowance, and now, through fatigue – want, and exposure, were – almost all reduced, alike to sickness and despair. Thirteen of the crew had already paid the last debt of nature, while ten of them still lay stretched, in sickness, scarce making a recovery, while the remainder, worn out, and emaciated, moved about, headless, and dissatisfied, as if existence, itself had become a burden

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and it was with the greatest difficulty we could now stimulate them to either hope or duty.

Little more now remained to be done, the vessel had already been sufficiently lightened, and the flat surveyed and studded over with buoys – for miles round, in doing which we had expended every spare inch alike of spar and cordage, we therefore, now for nearly two whole days, rested from our labours, principally for the purpose of recruiting ourselves, and in making arrangements for abandoning the vessel, for we had now resolved upon adopting that alternative, being so sorely reduced, alike in numbers – and provisions.

Happily our captain was now – practically – restored, so were also the greater portion of our sick, though unable as yet to do much, and on the 14th day – after my last reaching the ship – we proposed starting – in our boats – for ‘the Island of Timor.’ On the afternoon of that day however, it came on to blow a fresh and favourable breeze, and, in the expectation that the ship would again float at high water – which was at midnight – every necessary preparation was made on board, and a kedge anchor laid out to assist in dragging us off the bank. To the end we moored two boats – with a light in each, in the direction we wished to go. This we had previously surveyed, and as the tide rose, we brought a capstern strain upon the hawser, when the ship once more sprang from her coral bed, and danced across the flat, rejoicingly – though now and again striking and resting upon the intervening banks, and shallows – for a while, as if to gain fresh vigour for another start, but at low water we again grounded. During this trip, however, we lost our “jolly boat”, which unfortunately foundered at her mooring when one of the two men placed in her – was drowned, the other being providentially

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picked up by the gig’s crew.

[rest of page 155, and 156-159 not included here]

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[Three paragraphs not included here]

The morning stole away apace, and noon brought up again a favouring breeze, and flowing tide, yet, still our vessel groaning sat upon her cozy bed, and thus – to us – was lost another tide – another day: and, hence, to aid in softening down the spirits dark imaginings, I man’d the gig, and sought once more the savage shore, in quest of water,

fruit, or aught that might alienate despair. On our landing saw a group of savages, a little distance from us, squatted on the beach, who, upon observing our approach, started to their feet, and gazed intensely on us for a time, but, on my firing off a pistol overhead, all started in alarm, and fled along the beach, nor dared to cast "one lingering longing look behind", 'till nearly out of sight, when, we entered the gloomy forest, and

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commenced our search, but the only things we could procure were a few wild vegetables – berries and the like – however, on climbing a large tree, we found a fruit, somewhat resembling a custard apple, and secured a number of them, but, on being opened, to our chagrin, were found to be as hard and sapless, as "a fir top". Our search for water proved a failure too.

The day being not far advanced, we gave up our search to return on board, and while quietly wending our way to the boat, through the thick matted copse wood, and wild jungle, alike to our surprise, and wonder, we fell upon a beautiful, and neatly shaded pathway – evidently the work of art – and which conducted us to a comparatively well cleared plot upon the margin of the forest, where, for some time, I stood amazed at the wild scene before me, and awaiting the furious starting of some daring savage, or grizzly demon of this wild, and wonderous grove, yet nothing living seemed to stir, and I continued my survey.

The area of the place, was thickly studded o'er with graves, and all-or mostly all, enclosed, within a rude railing, formed of the rough branches of trees, closely planted together, and rising from them, to four feet above the ground, and near the centre of this grotesque group, I observed five graves, more handsomely railed in and decorated than the others: at the head

and feet of which were placed – erect – in the ground a rudely painted stick – or staff – about five feet in length, having their upper ends carved out to the semblance of the human face, and in the left eye-sockets of the largest of one of those figures, which was more curiously, and nicely carved than the others, a small piece of shell pearl was indented to represent the eye, the right socket appeared to have been cut out also, but filled up with some soft substance – apparently red clay.

Within the railing, and immediately surrounding the graves, lay, in regular rows, lines of skulls of different descriptions, each grave, however, supported only one particular species attached to it.

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The first seemed garnished round with skulls of some sea animals, perhaps of seal – the second, evidently was that of some large fish, the third, apparently, of the dog, or some terrestrial animal, but, the fourth, and fifth, could not be well mistaken – they were human skulls – still scowling in their native savageness and grin, on some the fleshy features stood still partially disclosed, and on which their raven locks in waving curls, still fluttered to the breeze upon the bleaching bones.

Within the forests shade, and on the grassy margin of this dread sepulchral spot, were strewn, the long fragments of a thousand forms, alike of man, of beast, and bird, while, underneath the dark and gloomy shadow of a few wild shrubs, in agony's dread posture, lay, three human skeletons entire, save, that the arm of one – disjointed – lay across its breast, while round me, creaking, hung – suspended from the arching branches overhead, innumerable bones, still waving to and fro amid the stirring breeze. A few decayed human bones, some [?], some entire, slept, quiet, within the cleft branches of the

trees, clinched firmly in their [?] arms, which long had hug'd them there, for, now, they seemed by timely natures hand encased, and scowling sat, as silent sad mementos of the dreadful past.

A few paces to the left of this gloomy place of tombs there stood a circular bale, some forty feet or so in circumference and about breast high, composed solely of bones of various kinds, amongst which the human was predominant. This place had the appearance of age, and long neglect, for besides, being in a delapidated state, the greater portion of the bones were much decayed, and the inner area quite overgrown with rank grass and weeds.

Having now surveyed this savage

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sanctuary of the wild Aborigines, I shouldered two of the most curious looking figures that adorned the graves, and again made for our boat – and on the way, came upon the spot from which we scared the group of savages, on landing, and found the remnants of a human body, on which these cannibals must have been feasting at the time they were disturbed, and which, still, lay spread out before us. There also lay and, seemingly half roasted, and untouched – the thigh – still crackling on the dying embers, which still shot out a red unhallowed glare upon the blacked sand and scattered bones around us –

The last weary sound of “the dog watch” had scarce died away, when we reached the ship, where we found all bustle and confusion – in preparing to meet the rising tide.

The wind had blown fresh all day from the south-westward, and now increasing, rose with the rising flow of the agitated waters, which swept across the flat, in high, and broken waves, bespangling its desert surface with the snowy leaves of its own wild

bosom, which lashed, and hissed around the labouring barque, until she sprang once more, triumphant on their hoary crest, and, with tightened cordage, and a flowing sheet, now, to the ever watchful moon, listening stars, sang, merrily, her march upon the mountain waves.

We had not, however, enjoyed this blissful hope of safety above an hour, when, crash – again! went the proud ship upon a shelving bank of coral, where she continued to strike, and labour heavily, and to make much water; on sounding, however, we found there was sufficient depth of water astern to float her – even at lowest ebb. The Anchor, was now immediately carried out, for the purpose of heaving her off.

During this operation, however, I was superintending a party in the “lowest hold” who were employed lightening the vessel forward – for it was there alone she hung – and while thus engaged, the carpenter

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reported the water gaining fast upon us, and this was, at once, construed into “the ships bilging” and the echo rang like a death knell on the agitated, and labouring spirits below – for the growing waters – in the lower hold already rolling – lashed their wary feet. All abandoned work, and heedless of all order sought the upper decks. And while I yet stood sorrowfully eyeing their retreat – by the dim and flickering lantern, which I held, I observed a dark and suspicious figure come stealing along towards the hatch, where for a time – he took his stand, and leaning sullenly against the “stanchion”, eyed eagerly the pass throng, each as he scrambled “aloft” – without even attempting his own escape – for which, I marked him.

The bright moon now shone above, and watching wept upon the scene below – while,

now and then a cold and random beam fell on the wretches brow, through which "I searched him", o'er, and o'er," deep on his dread forbidding features sat, the demon of some savage impulse, the while his wild dark serpent soul seemed revealed in the time worn features of his copper face, I knew the wretch – knew that his foul heart was big to bursting with something dark – some hellish plotting – another moment and I saw him seize his victim – as the scorpion would his prey – yet, ere I could not approach the spot, he dragged him down and coolly smiling in his face, exclaimed in his own native tongue "now, that we are going, shall I have revenge" then, drew his knife, and stabbed him in my sight! At such deliberate butchery I for a moment stood aghast, the next, however, saw him felled and writhing at my feet.

The leak continued – still increasing – and seemed to battle all our best exertions, so fearing that – in deepest

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water she might go altogether down, we abandoned for a time the idea of hauling her off the bank, nevertheless, the pumps were kept going and the boats hauled along side, to be in readiness for the worst – the last alternative, however, as the ebb subsided, the weary well plied sounding rod marked out a gradual decrease of water in "the well", and now, from the speedy rate, it lessened in the hold, even to the level of the receding tide, we conceived the injury sustained to be something serious, and that even should she hold together, she must now – or shortly – be abandoned. Hence, our thoughts, and views were now directed to the shore, and, still fancying the possibility of our falling into the hands of these savages ere we should be enabled to effect our final departure, it occurring to us that the removal of "the

images" – if known to them – might tend to incense them, the more deeply against us, and add not a little to their savageness, and implacable revenge, should we, unfortunately, come into contact with them, I was therefore dispatched for the purpose of replacing them.

The still hornless moon, now in meridian glory, woke on the mournful scene, mantling the naked waters, and the desert waste, with all the gorgeous tapestry of the heavenly loom, which – with the curling zephyr flowing, waved in many a rich and fairy fold, on earth, and oceans heart, and as "the star of old" now lighted – led, and cheered us on our weary way, ere yet we struck the wild unhospitable shore, the clamorous ghong spoke out – "the wee short hour [?] the [?]", and silently, we hung upon our dripping oars, catching the sweet, the cheering echo as it fell. A partial cloud had now obscured the moon, still, quiet, and cautiously, we held our way along the shore – to near the spot – while, in the far-grey distance, was observed, a host of blazing fires, with ghastly glare, reflected on the sky. At length we landed, yet, ere we marked a hundred footsteps on the beach, bearing the wooden deities along, a dark

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wild figure was observed, stealing slowly on before us, and imagining it to be that of some straggling cannibal – and that others might be luring near, I immediately retraced my steps, toward the boat, and taking two more of my crew along with me, proceeded to "the wild, and wonderous" scene, having previously placed a "look out", alike, on the beach, and margin of the wood, in case of a surprise – and after having spent about a quarter of a hour discovering the proper entrance to this savage sepulchre, and place of skulls, I advanced – pistol in hand – with my companion – a Manilla man – who "to keep his courage cheery", kept silently

grinding over his "Ave Maries" till at length we found the spot, and stuck the painted Mockeries in the ground.

The freshening breeze had now – in kindness – swept aside the deep midnights mourning veil, and the brightening moon, again threw her sweet, and silvery radiance, on this wild unhallowed spot, the while, I stood still leaning on the heathen god, contemplating the ghastly horrifying objects that surrounded me, which yet, methinks, till swim before my sickened vision.

Unnumbered piles of bleaching bones, and human skulls, and human skeletons, some whole, some half illumined by the moons cold silvery beams, gazed full, and fearfully upon me, the while the cleft clenched human spectacles moaned loud, and wildly in their wooden prisons overhead, and groaned, and shivered in the stirring breeze, as if still writhing in their last dread agonies and woe, and in their death fixed features, shed a deadly haloing glare around, 'till startled by the distant sound of footsteps, and the savage echoings of some human voice, I left this dreary Hades, and wearily we retraced our way towards the boat, when just as we cleared the beach, from ten to twenty of the savages approached, and sent their hideous yellings after us, and fortunately this was all they now could do, and so we left them howling still, and in the early morning made the ship

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where, still we found all trouble, and turmoil.

The maddening spirit of revolt, had broke to open mutiny among a portion of the crew – and, on the poop, "secured by bolt and bar" sat sullenly two of the worst, in one of whom I recognised the dark, foul hearted villain who, for his cold, and blood cruelty, I had struck down and left within the "hold", but

it seemed he had recovered, and was now, the melancholy caused of all the rioting that reigned around.

During the night, and while the others onboard were busily employed in stopping the leak – and other damages – a party forcibly entered the "gun rooms" – all Manilla men, and Spanish Portuguese – and by knocking down, and seriously abusing the gunners, took possession of our only remaining few bags of biscuits, with a quantity of other stores, which they managed to get into the gig along side, and were in the act of putting off – when detected and brought on board, and put in irons.

Having, at length got matters put to rights, and the leak stopped, which had been caulked by the stashing of a butt, on the starboard bow – we hauled the ship into deep water, and as the tide again flowed, weighed anchor, and stretched farther across the flat, and, thus, by dint of exertion, and perseverance, the setting sun of the third day – from this – witnessed the sweet reward of all our toil, and trouble, and, smiling as in joy – left us once more, but this time, to rejoice, now floating clear of this, too horrid, dangerous, and dreadful flat.

The weather having now considerably moderated, and being in somewhat clearer water, we were enabled to work back towards "Booby Island" – making a little progress daily and always anchoring at night.

While on our passage we observed in many different places huts, and occasionally some of the natives, who, in two, or three instances, followed the track of the vessel along the beach for a mile or two, and, at times, making a stand, brandished a staff, or some kind of weapon, in apparently an angry and threatening attitude, but this we were not near enough to determining what it was exactly, nor whether they were – as some others we had seen – in a state of nudity.

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This being now the fourth day since leaving these dismal flats, we were agreeably surprised to find we had "Booby Island" in sight, and towards evening were well up with it, but unfortunately being inside of a very long and dangerous land – or reef – apparently, stretching to an island on the opposite shore, and wind and tide being alike strong against us, we were compelled to "come to an anchor", though in shallow water, and much too near the beach, but with the hope of being able to take advantage of the morning's flood tide, and to clear all the Straits. Alas! there was no such fortune in store for us. Doubt and disappointment followed us still, for, ere the morning dawned it blew a gale, nevertheless we attempted to weigh but, on drawing towards the anchor, found the vessel drifting so rapidly towards the shore that we were compelled to desist and pay out cable to bring the vessel up again; this we did, and just kept clear of the breakers, and thus we were forced to remain in wearisome suspense yet a while longer.

[Deleted four line poem]

Another day and evening passed, yet, still we lay – storm stayed – but, as the sun awoke – through drifting clouds and rain, so woke the threatening spirit of the storm, in fresher, and more frightful gusts, which shook the quivering ship throughout.

We "parted" – the ship now having either broke or dragged her anchor was drifting rapidly along the beach, dragging a long, and lengthened stretch of cable far to windwards, and, which, doubtless kept the ship from going strait on shore. The topsails, however, being only secured by rope yarns were soon cut adrift and set, and in a few minutes more the close reefed topsails also faced the breeze – still seeing no way nor hope of freeing ourselves from our present difficulty and danger, nor of saving the

vessel, had determined to run her upon the opposite shore. By this time, however, I had scrambled to the masthead, and on looking anxiously around, fortunately discovered a dark speck along the sandbank – or reef – some distance ahead. This I took for a break – or opening – and giving intimation of the same – on deck – the yards were at once trimmed and the course altered which with the long stretch of cable, still drifting to windward, aided greatly in keeping us clear of the breakers, which more than once threatened to be our resting place – in death's last sad embrace

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When abreast of the opening, the cable was cut – over the "bit head" – the ready yards swung around, and the vessel entering the passage – which, providentially, proved to be both wide, and clear – went through at a rapid rate, before wind and tide, and in a few hours more, we happily found ourselves off "Booby Island" where we "hove to" to await the return of our long boat, which, under charge of an officer, had started at early morn, to examine a part of the reef, in the hope of finding an outlet – other than the regular passage, which still lay far to windward. Sure enough, an opening was found, through which the boat passed but – in some places – carrying only sufficient water to float her.

The boat being along side, and hoisted in, the crew were summoned "aft", and the three prisoners – still in irons brought forward – the one who stabbed the Lascar - and the two who robbed the "gun room", and attempted to make away with the captain's gig - and being admonished were tied up, and their backs brought into a deservedly, and familiarly warm acquaintance with "the cat o' nine tails". After this they were "cut adrift", and set to work, when we made all

possible sail and shaped our course for the "Island of Timor", in the hope of being able to refit there, and procure provisions and water for our passage to Calcutta.

[Pages 170-173 not included here]

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...[at dock in Calcutta] we found the false keel entirely gone, and the main keel very much chafed and torn, the greater part of the bottom

sheathing off, and a large piece of hard coral firmly bedded between two timbers low down on the starboard bow, and had this loosened, and given way during our passage a long distance from land, the ship must have inevitably gone down, and probably all the crew with her, so, considering all things we have had a very narrow escape, alike from shipwreck, and a watery grave, and for which we are truly thankful – yet, such are sometimes – the sad risks – the "hopes and hazards" of a life at sea.

## □ ENDNOTES

1. Orman Reefs is the European name for the extensive reef complex stretching from Ngazi to Numar (Fig. 1).
2. ICP-MS was used in preference to X-ray Fluorescence (XRF) analysis as the former is much more cost effective for this type of analysis and has superior sensitivity compared to XRF for trace and ultra-trace elemental analyses (Yu Hi, pers. comm., 2014).
3. Improved smelting technology, resulting in improved purity, was available in Chile from about 1830, when reverberatory furnaces were introduced by the British (Mayo & Collier, 1998:20; see also Valenzuela, 1992:511). Electrolytic refining, which removes impurities and results in very high grade copper, was developed in the late 1860s in Britain (Craddock & Hook, 2012:65; Mackey & Wraith, 2004). Additional elemental analyses of the two ingots may shed more light on their provenance and degree of refining (Phillip Mackey & A.E. Wraith, pers. comm., 2014).
4. Wednesday Island's eastern shore is bounded by Flinders Passage. Jimmy Maori, a seaman who worked at Somerset, Cape York, in the 1860s and 1870s, told the Revd. W.H. MacFarlane (c. 1925) that the *Oxford* threw her copper overboard between Wednesday and Hammond Islands (MacFarlane, 1917-1956, Item 7:3).
5. That the weights and measurements of the two ingots vary is perhaps not surprising, as mining and smelting operations in Norte Chico at this time were small, unsophisticated operations, often run by individuals or small partnerships (Mayo & Collier, 1998:7); Hall (1825:13) states that smelting was conducted in 'a rude manner'.
6. Jimmy Tuta Luffman Senior, born Mabuyag, 18 January 1899, died Mabuyag, 4 November 1985.
7. Jimmy Tuta Luffman Junior, born Mabuyag, 30 May 1931.
8. Rita Mills, born Naghir, 25 August 1934, died Thursday Island, 7 December 2004; a member of the well-known musical trio, The Mills Sisters.
9. This was later commemorated with the issue in 1967 of a Pitcairn Island one shilling and sixpence stamp featuring the *Hercules*, in a series commemorating the 200th anniversary of the European discovery of the island by HMS *Swallow*. As no pictures of the *Hercules* are known to exist, the image of the ship is based on a print of an unknown India merchantman in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (Argyle, 1967:251-252).
10. The India Gazette account refers to a 'sandbank', while Lawrie (1822) states the *Hercules* was stranded on a 'flat'. Rasheed *et al.* (2008:2293, 2301) state that while the Orman Reefs have a coral fringe, the inter-tidal reef-tops are covered in seagrass meadows growing in rocky and sandy substrate.
11. In a later paper John Douglas (1899-1900:83), the Government Resident at Thursday Island, stated that some of the funds also enabled the community to buy their own luggers in which to engage in the pearlshell fishery. This may be a mistake on his part; there was likely little money remaining after the construction of the church and its elaborate opening celebration, as well as the purchase of emergency foodstuffs. It is clear from his 1898 report, and Chalmer's 1897 account, that the Reverend Frederick Walker of the London Missionary Society had helped the Goemulgal to purchase the *Little Nell* prior to the discovery of the ingots, and that it was paid off about six months before the find; she was purchased in 1894 for £132 (Mullins, 2012:43).
12. Colin Sheehan (pers. comm., 2014) reports that there is no mention of cannon in any of the accounts relating to the *Pauline-et-Victoire*. Other cannons have been recovered from Mabuyag in the past, including the Maryborough Hour Gun, recovered by John Douglas on a beach on Mabuyag in 1877 (Douglas, 1983:6; Green, 1982:83). A cannon on display within the Mabuyag community, stamped '1799', was apparently recovered some years ago by a local diver.
13. It may be the case, given the continuous shifting of the *Hercules* during its stranding episode, that the reported one mile scatter zone does not in fact represent the full extent of the jettisoned ingots.
14. Bani Mabua, born about 1876, died Mabuyag, 20 February 1954.
15. Tom Nabua, born about 1858, died Mabuyag 1928.