

## RESEARCH ON THE BRITOMART

### Summary:

The 1828 NSW census shows John alias Richard Smith left the colony in 1823. It does not list him as dead. Ships Muster of 1823 and the passenger list of the Britomart 1823 lists John alias Richard Smith free by pardon #412 as a passenger alongside a Mr Miller who came in the brig Ann from The Cape as well as Mr and Mrs Marshall late master of the Elizabeth ? Mary schooner and finally a Chinese.

Lloyd's List has the Britomart arriving in NSW from London in March. It has no entries for arrival in UK between Jan and July 1823.

The Britomart is in the Register of Shipping in 1823 captained by Daniel Peache. The register for 1824 has the same information and Peache as the Captain. By 1825 the Britomart is still listed in the Register of Shipping and the Captain is J White. The only thing that has changed is the second last column from what was Valpariso to Lo. Lima and remains in good order.

Documentation indicates that the Britomart was originally due to leave NSW in early April and Ships Muster records show a departure for John or Richard Smith on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1823 however we know that the Britomart sailed on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1823. We know the voyage was to Mauritius via Timor to pick up horses. I had assumed the ship then went to London but if we look at the timing of it being in Sydney in June and sailing again for Timor on 14<sup>th</sup> June then it is not possible for it to have taken a return trip Sydney to London in 1 month.

We know the voyage was organised by the merchants Messrs Edward Riley and William Walker and that they did trade in horses during this period.

Sydney to Timor is approximately 2074 nautical miles, Timor to Mauritius is 3992.55 nautical miles. That is a total of 6066.55 nautical miles. Britomart is a barque averaging 19 nautical miles per hour. Without stopping it would have taken her 319 hours or 13 days minimum to do a one way trip from Sydney to Mauritius via Timor. She left Sydney on 4<sup>th</sup> May 1823 and assuming she spent 2 days in Timor she would have arrived in Mauritius around 19<sup>th</sup> May 1823. Her return direct from Mauritius to Sydney would have taken 11 days and add 2 days in Mauritius then the minimum time she would have returned to Sydney would have been 1<sup>st</sup> June 1823. We know from Lloyds list in the London papers that she was in Sydney in June and that she sailed again on 14<sup>th</sup> June for Timor.

Robert Scott's diary in 1821 of his voyage from Cape of Good Hope to Sydney indicates that the voyage took the Britomart 86 days ie from 21<sup>st</sup> December 1821 to 8<sup>th</sup> March 1822 when it arrived in Sydney.

Mauritius to London is 5495.36 nautical miles taking a min of 12 days. London to Sydney via Cape of Good Hope is 11937.19 nautical miles taking 26 days for a barque. If the Britomart had sailed to London on its 4<sup>th</sup> May trip it would not have returned to Sydney until 27<sup>th</sup> June:

- Sydney to Timor to Mauritius = 13 days 19<sup>th</sup> May
- Mauritius to London = 1<sup>st</sup> June
- London to Sydney via Cape of Good Hope = 27<sup>th</sup> June

We know that Britomart arrived in Mauritius on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1823 so did it sail from Timor or direct from Sydney? Or do we Lloyds List cites the Britomart arriving on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1823 which is more accurate.

A Sydney-Timor-Sydney sail from 14<sup>th</sup> June would have taken 9 days minimum putting a return in late June around 23<sup>rd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> June. There is a colonial secretary letter from Captain Peache in July requesting employment for 2 people from the Britomart. We don't have detail of this letter but it could be assumed that the Britomart was in Sydney Port. It sailed for Mauritius arriving 31<sup>st</sup> July. Given it takes 13 days to sail direct to Mauritius via Timor without stops it is plausible that the Britomart left early July again. We know it

did go to England on this trip as Captain Peache is expected to sail to Cowes on Isle of Wight on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1823.

In November the Britomart's voyage was reported under the Royal Navy News. Was she commissioned? She was certainly delivering goods to the Royal Marines on this voyage.

The Britomart returned after this to NSW as we have records of its arrival in Mauritius from NSW in late November 1823 and reported on 26th November in the London papers. It then arrived in England either 13th or 14th December which would mean it took 17 days to sail between the 2 ports. We know it travelled via Ascension and it took 42 days. This reference is likely Ascension Island which was taken by the British in 1815. A garrison of Royal Marines was based at Ascension from 1823. So it sailed from NSW to Mauritius then to Ascension Island and on to London over 42 days. This would have put a sail date from Sydney about 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

The Britomart sails in December between Amsterdam and Isle of France. Lloyd's list states Britomart under Peache arrived in Cowes on 13<sup>th</sup> December from Mauritius, Cape and St Helena.

Lloyd's List cites the Britomart due to sail from Cowes to London on 22<sup>nd</sup> December as put back. It has Britomart arriving from Mauritius at Gravesend on 26<sup>th</sup> Dec which is odd.

By 1824 Daniel Peache has a new commission on an improved ship Harvey. The Britomart doesn't reappear in records until 1835. Why did John alias Richard Smith when putting his notice in the papers that he was leaving not ask for claims to be presented?

So where is John alias Richard Smith? What was his passenger destination? He was not listed as crew so did this mean he was not involved as a groom to care for the horses on the trip or was he?

#### **Possibilities:**

- John Richard was commissioned to look after the horses for Messrs Riley and Walker who had advertised in April for a groom after John Richard had indicated he was leaving. John Richard Smith would have been somewhat connected due to his long indenture to J.T Campbell. He did not return because he died on the voyage. Why in 1828 was he not listed as dead? If Frances knew he had died then surely she would have disclosed this in the census?
- John Richard and the other passengers were heading to Mauritius and caught another vessel to London. Presumably their final destination would not have been the Isle of France.
- John Richard travelled on the Britomart on its multiple journeys in May-July 1823 until it reached London in the August –so he would have gone back and forth from Timor / Mauritius presumably transporting horses.

Date	Source	Notes
21 <sup>st</sup> July 1821	Sydney Gazette	Britomart preparing to leave London for the colony.
29 <sup>th</sup> Sept 1821	Sydney Gazette	The following ships are mentioned in The Times of London April last, as about to sail for these Colonies, consequently they may be soon looked for :-The Lusitania; Captain Langdon ; the Mariner, Captain Douglass; the <b>Britomart</b> , Captain Peache ; and the John Bushman, Captain Langden. All those vessels are to proceed direct to Van Diemen's, which happy Land not only now obtains the first choice of mercantile commodities, but also robs her parent Settlement of all the primary interesting European intelligence.- Nevertheless, we are constrained to wish the inhabitants every prosperity.
15 <sup>th</sup> February 1822	Sydney Gazette	The Tiger left England the <b>10th of last October</b> and called at the Cape of Good Hope, at which place she left the ships Castle Forbes and <b>Britomart</b> , both of which vessels are bound direct for Van Diemen's Land. It is stated, that there are 130 passengers on board the Castle Forbes from England.
22 <sup>nd</sup> December 1821	Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemens Land Advertiser	We observe in the Times of the 28th of August, the latest received English Paper in the Colony, that, in addition to the ships <b>Britomart</b> , Castle Forbes, John Bushman, and packet Hope, already reported in our Gazette as about to sail for this Colony, the following vessels also advertised for Van Diemen's Land, with merchandise and passengers :-The ship Tiger, Captain Robert Brush ; and the ship Thalia, Captain John Welsh.-All the above vessels may therefore be shortly looked for in this port.
26 <sup>th</sup> January 1822	Hobart Gazette	Britomart in Cape of Good Hope destined for Hobart with passengers.
30 <sup>th</sup> January 1822	Sydney Gazette	Notice that the Britomart had arrived from the Society Islands [Tahiti] with passengers Mr and Mrs Haywood and Mr Scott of the London Missionary Society.
4 <sup>th</sup> February 1822	Hobart Town	Arrival of Britomart with 30 passengers and cargo
9 <sup>th</sup> February 1822	Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemens Land Advertiser	SHIP NEWS.-On Monday last arrived from England, the ship <b>Britomart</b> , Captain D. Peache, with merchandise and passengers ; viz.  Helenus Scott, Esq. Robert Scott, Esq. Mr. Charles Henry Chambers, Mr. Thomas Midwood, Mr. John Galt Smith, Mr. James Ogilvie, Mrs. Ogilvie, and family, Mr. Maurice Smith, Mr Thomas Abraham, Mr. Matthew Williamson, Mrs. Williamson, and 4 children, Mr. Joseph Williamson ; together with (9 steerage passengers, intending to remain at this place. The <b>Britomart</b> left the Castle Forbes at the Cape of Good Hope, taking in passengers for

Date	Source	Notes
		this port.
23 <sup>rd</sup> February 1822	Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemens Land Advertiser	SHIP NEWS.— The ship <b>Britomart</b> will sail for Port Jackson tomorrow.
1 <sup>st</sup> March 1822	Sydney Gazette	The ship <b>Britomart</b> , Captain D. Peache, from England, arrived at Hobart Town on the 4th ult. with a cargo of useful merchandize. The passengers to these Colonies, by this opportunity, are, Helenus Scott, Esq. Robert Scott, Esq. Mr. Charles Henry Chambers, Mr. Thomas Midwood, Mr. John Galt Smith, Mr. James Ogilvie, Mrs. Ogilvie and family, Maurice Smith, Mr. Thomas Abraham, Mr. Matthew Williamson, Mrs. Williamson and four children, and Mr. Joseph Wil- liamson ; together with nine steerage passengers.  When the <b>Britomart</b> left the Cape of Good Hope on her way to Hobart Town the Castle Forbes was lying there taking in passengers for Van Diemens land
2 <sup>nd</sup> march 1822	Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemens Land Advertiser	On Tuesday sailed for Port Jackton, the ship <b>Britomart</b> , Captain Peache
15 <sup>th</sup> March 1822	Sydney Gazette	CAPTAIN PEACHE, of the Ship <b>Britomart</b> , hereby Cautions the Inhabitants against giving Trust or Credit to any of the Crew of the said Vessel, as he will not be responsible for any Debts by them contracted.
15 <sup>th</sup> march 1822	Sydney Gazette	Lists that on Friday last the Britomart arrived under Capt Peache. Passengers were Mr Robert Scott, Mr Helenus Scott, Mr J.G Smith, Mr Dodds , Mrs Dunn, Miss Dunn and many others. Her cargo consists of sundries.
15 <sup>th</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> March 1822	Sydney Gazette	The Bark <b>BRITOMART</b> Captain Daniel Peache, is about to Sail for London direct; For Freight or Passage apply to the Captain on board
29 <sup>th</sup> March 1822	Sydney Gazette: Letter to Editor on Captn Peache from passengers of Britomart	Dear Sir, Sydney, March 19,18& , We cannot permit you to depart from the Colony without expressing to you the grateful sense we enter*  <a href="#">On page 3</a> tain of the accommodations with which We were provided, in our passage on board your vessel ; and, at the same time, we think it but justice to yourself,- Sir, to say, how much more comfortable and agreeable our voyage was made, by your own attentive and gentlemanlike conduct. Wishing you every happiness and prosperity, in future, We remain, dear Sir,very sincerely and faithfully, * R. Scott, , H. Scott, , J. G. Smith,

Date	Source	Notes
		<p>, C. H. Chambers,</p> <p>To Captain Daniel Peache Ship Britomart, Sydney Cove.</p> <p>the following is .the answer. Gentlemen, ;</p> <p>I have received, with much pleasure and satisfaction, your kind communication of the 19th inst. in which you have been pleased to express your approbation of my conduct during our voyage from England to this Colony.-To promote the comfort of my passengers has ever been an object of the first consideration with me, and, I trust, on future occasions, my friends will find that I endeavour to prove myself equally attentive to their accommodation.</p> <p>Wishing you every success in your several pursuits; believe me-"to remain, Most respectfully, D Peache Ship Britomart, your humble servant, March 20 1822</p>
29 <sup>th</sup> March 1822 and 5 <sup>th</sup> April 1822	Sydney Gazette	<p>CLAIMS ANO DEMANDS.</p> <p>CAPTAIN Daniel Peache, of the Ship <b>Britomart</b>, leaving the Colony, requests all Claims to be presented. ]</p> <p>J. C. Gouldsmith, First Officer of the Ship Britomart, leaving the Colony, requests all Claim» to be presented. 1</p> <p>William Brown, Second Officer of the Ship Britomart, leaving the Colony, requests all Claims to be presented. 1</p> <p>"Mr. William Leggett, Surgeon of the Ship Britomart leaving the Colony, requests all Claims to be presented.</p> <p>Note: This was the same crew as in 1823</p>
30 <sup>th</sup> march 1822	Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemens Land Advertiser	<p>The ships Tiger and <b>Britomart</b>, lately from this port, had also arrived at Sydney ; and "the former vessel was expedted to return in a few days to this port, to take in freight for the Cape.</p>
26 <sup>th</sup> April 1822	Sydney gazette	<p>On Wednesday last Captain PEACHE gave a sumptuous dinner on board the fine barque <b>Britomart</b>, to Captain PIPER, Naval Officer, and a select party of Gentlemen. Departure did not take place till a late hour when the Company returned on shore, highly gratified with the gentlemanly conduct and abundant hospitality of the worthy Commander. A band of musicians attended, and played at intervals during the evening.</p>
26 <sup>th</sup> April 1822	Sydney Gazette	<p>ROBERT HERRON, leaving the Colony in the Ship <b>Britomart</b>,</p>

Date	Source	Notes
		requests all Claims to be presented.
10 <sup>th</sup> May 1822	Hobart Town Gazette	On the Tuesday prior to 10 <sup>th</sup> Britomart had sailed for Valparaiso with 100 ton of colonial wood and 70 tons of coal.
1 <sup>st</sup> June 1822	Hobart Town newspaper	Notice that the brig Britomart had sailed for Valparaiso with a cargo of coals.
6 <sup>th</sup> July 1822	Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemens Land Advertiser	Lists the arrival of the Britomart from England with 30 passengers @ c. Arrived feb 4 <sup>th</sup> Van Diemens Land.
24 <sup>th</sup> August 1822	Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemens Land Advertiser	Estimat of Duties collected by the Naval Officer Hobart Town for quarter ending March 31 <sup>st</sup> 1822: Britomart 30 pound 2 and 3
23 <sup>rd</sup> January 1823	Colonial Secretarys Index	Request by Daniel Peache, master of "Britomart" to discharge M Keay, embarked at Valparaiso (Reel 6058; 4/1770 p.48)
23 <sup>rd</sup> January 1823	Colonial Secretarys Index	Request of Daniel Peache, master of "Britomart", to discharge Shults, embarked at Valparaiso (Reel 6058; 4/1770 p.48)  Request by master, Daniel Peache to discharge Moul, an embarkee from Valparaiso (Reel 6058; 4/1770 p.48) Listed as seaman Britomart
23 <sup>rd</sup> January 1823	Sydney Gazette	Notice to not give trust or credit to any of the crew as Captain Peache will not be responsible for it.
23 <sup>rd</sup> January 1823	Sydney Gazette	Notice of arrival of Britomart Thursday last from Valparaiso
30 <sup>th</sup> January 1823	Sydney Gazette Claims and demands	Captain Daniel Peache of the Ship Britomart leaving the colony is said vessel requests claims to be immediately presented  Also listed in the claims and demands were Mr J.C Gouldsmith First Officer, Mr William Brown second Officer , Mr Leggett Surgeon of the ship,
6 <sup>th</sup> February	Sydney Gazette	Claims being made :  Captain D Peache of Britomart leaving colony in said vessel requests claims to be immediately presented  Mr William Brown Second Officer of the ship Britomart leaving the colony in said vessel requests claims to be presented.  Mr Leggett surgeon of the ship Britomart leaving the colony in said vessel requests claims to be presented.
27 <sup>th</sup> February 1823	Sydney Gazette	Mr Thomas Harrison Chief Officer Britomart leaving the colony in said vessel requests claims to be presented.
13 <sup>th</sup> march 1823	Sydney Gazette	FOR SALE, at the Stores of Riley and WALKER, the REMAINDER of the CARGO, lately im-ported per Ship <b>Britomart</b> ; consisting of yellow bar soap, in boxes of 281bs. each ; best tallow candles, in boxes; salted mackarel, in small barrels;

Date	Source	Notes
		prime salt beef and pork, in ditto, of 200lbs. each; red wine; hemp ; pitch, tar, and rosin ; iron pots, kettles, &c. of small sizes ; and a few bags of cocoa
13 <sup>th</sup> March 1823	John Mellor lists in Sydney Gazette under claims and demands	Leaving the colony by an early opportunity- he does not list the Britomart as the ship upon which he is leaving
13 <sup>th</sup> March 1823	Sydney Gazette	FOR SALE, at the Stores of Riley and WALKER, the REMAINDER of the CARGO, lately im-ported per Ship <b>Britomart</b> ; consisting of yellow bar soap, in boxes of 281bs. each ; best tallow candles, in boxes; salted mackarel, in small barrels; prime salt beef and pork, in ditto, of 200lbs. each; red wine; hemp ; pitch, tar, and rosin ; iron pots, kettles, &c. of small sizes ; and a few bags of cocoa
13 <sup>th</sup> March 1823	Sydney Gazette	Notice that the Britomart is due to sail first week in April for Mauritius. For frieght or passage contact Msser Riley and Walker or Captn Peache.
20 <sup>th</sup> March 1823	Sydney Gazette	<p>Notice that the following were leaving the colony on the Britomart:</p> <p>Mr Read Chief Officer-claims to be presented</p> <p>Wiliam Le Gan, William Cowing, James Bansfield, George Fleming</p> <p>Note the change in Chief Officer from Thomas Harrison in February</p>
5 <sup>th</sup> April 1823	Hobart paper	Britomart sails for Isle of France. Don't think it did sail as JR still putting in notice weeks later.
13 <sup>th</sup> April 1823 and 6 <sup>th</sup> March 1823	Notice in Sydney Gazette. Captain Daniel Peache Commander	Intends to sail first week in April. For freight or passage apply or Messrs Riley and Walker or to the Commander
17 <sup>th</sup> April 1823 and 10 <sup>th</sup> April 1823	Sydney Gazette Notice	<p>John, alias Richard Smith , free by pardon about to leave the colony by ship Britomart, gives this notice of his purpose to all persons concerned.</p> <p>Also in this notice was Claims and Demands for John Collard, John Connor and James Cox who were leaving the colony by the Britomart.</p> <p>Why did John aka Richard have no claims and demands? Just a notification to leave, Is this a sign that he was to return?</p>
17 <sup>th</sup> April 1823	Sydney Gazette notice	Wanted for Messrs Riley and Walker a steady man , carter and groom. This is the same day as John aka Richard notified in Claims

Date	Source	Notes
		and Demands he was leaving the colony. Although he had put in a notice on 10 <sup>th</sup> August.
1 <sup>st</sup> May 1823	Sydney Gazette	William Percival announces he is leaving on the Britomart and requests claims to be presented.
7 <sup>th</sup> June 1823	London Times	Lloyds Lists indicate that the Britomart remains in Sydney. <b>This was from a letter from jacmel in April of that year.</b>
September 1823	Sydney Gazette	Notes the Britomart Peache was in Sydney port when a ship sailed on 9 <sup>th</sup> May
4 <sup>th</sup> May 1823	Sailing via Timor to pick up horses for Mauritius [ Isle of France]	Reported in Sydney Gazette 8 <sup>th</sup> May 1823 as having sailed the previous Sunday under Captain Daniel Peache. Passenger: Mr Melior.  In the actual passenger list it looks like Mr Miller.
8 <sup>th</sup> May 1823	Sydney Gazette	Reported on Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> May 1823 that the Britomart had sailed the previous Sunday for Timor to pick up horses. This was the 4 <sup>th</sup> May 1823.
June	London paper	The Britomart had arrived in NSW in June
14 <sup>th</sup> June 1823	Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemens Land Advertiser	The following vessels had sailed from Sydney :-The ships Venerable and Denmark Hill, for England; <b>the ship Britomart, for Timor</b> ; the ships Lord Sidmouth and Princess Royal, and brig Caroline, for Batavia ; the ship Laura, and brig Caroline, for the Mauritius; and the Mermaid Cutter, for New Zealand.  This could have been a late notice of the 4 <sup>th</sup> May sail or another trip for the Britomart. The mention in the London papers however would suggest Britomart returned in June and this was a new voyage.  Was this a short trip to Timor only as no mention of Mauritius.
July 1823	Colonial Secretary Papers	Request from Captn Peache for employment of 2 people from the Britomart.  Was it in port?
31 <sup>st</sup> July 1823	London Times Lloyds List	Britomart arrived in Mauritius from Sydney via Timor  A 47 day voyage if Britomart left on 14 <sup>th</sup> June.
31 <sup>st</sup> August 1823	London paper	Britomart Peache was to have sailed to Cowes  Know Britomart is in England so did it sail from Mauritius? Probably.
October 1823	London papers	Portsmouth the sloops Arachne and Britomart are preparing for commission at this port.  Note they are sloops not a barque. Naval Biographical Dictionary notes the sloop Britomart was commanded in 1822 by Captain Hon George James Percival.



Date	Source	Notes
		<p>We can assume the sloop Britomart is not the Britomart of the east India Company and was therefore not commissioned.</p> <p><b>British Warships in the Age of Sail 1817-1863: Design, Construction, Careers</b></p> <p>Notes there was a brig sloop Britomart built in Portsmouth on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1820 and another launched in 1847 from Pembroke Dockyard. In fact there were 4 Britomarts launched for the navy</p> <p>Britomart brig sloop 1808-1819  Britomart brig sloop 1820-1843  Britomart brig 1847-1863  Britomart screw gunboat 1860-1892</p> <p>This document identifies naval ships launched from dockyards from 1817 onward.</p> <p>The first Britomart of 1808 may well be the merchant Britomart we are following. See story below stating that the 1808 ship was in fact a barque. If it was decommissioned in 1819 then it would have been a merchant ship from that time. Perhaps it reached its end in 1824.</p>
October 1823	London papers	Britomart at Portsmouth about to be commissioned by the Royal Navy. Probably the brig sloop above
26 <sup>th</sup> November 1823	London Times	Arrival of Britomart at Mauritius from NSW
13 <sup>th</sup> Dec 1823	London Times	<p>Britomart arrived from Isle of France with sugar and cotton.</p> <p>We can track the sail time relatively from Mauritius to London-being approx. 17 days.</p>
13 <sup>th</sup> Dec 1823	London Times	Britomart and Captn Peache arrived in Cowes for orders-under Royal Navy News
15 <sup>th</sup> December 1823	London Times Royal Navy News	<p>States that Britomart under Captn Peache arrived last night 14<sup>th</sup> with a cargo of sugar and cotton from Mauritius last from Ascension in 42 days when that Garrison was healthy and the island in a thriving condition.</p> <p>This reference is likely Ascension Island which was taken by the British in 1815. A garrison of Royal Marines was based at Ascension from 1823.</p>
15 <sup>th</sup> December 1823	Morning Post London	Notes: Cowes Dec 12: that the ship Britomart of London was to sail about 30 <sup>th</sup> August bound here for orders
15 <sup>th</sup> December 1823	London times	Britomart sailed for Amsterdam
22 <sup>nd</sup> December 1823	Hampshire Chronicle	Arrives in London from Isle of France on 13 <sup>th</sup> Dec looking for orders. Sails to Amsterdam on 22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec.
29 <sup>th</sup> December	London Papers	Sailed from Cowes for London 27 <sup>th</sup> December.

Date	Source	Notes
1823		
12 <sup>th</sup> March 1824	London Times	Notice for return trip to NSW by Daniel Peache in the ship Harvey. It is noted how grand the new ship is with guns, more passengers room etc.
4 <sup>th</sup> November 1824	Sydney Gazette	<p>Captn Peache now Captains the ship Harvey and is noted as formerly captain of the Britomart.</p> <p>By the London Packet of the 2nd of July last, we ascertain that the report which was circulated in reference to the loss of the ship Albion, Captain Best, in the hurricane that visited the Mauritius in February last, is void of truth. The Albion was driven on shore, but got off with the loss of masts, in a leaky state. The colonial brig Gover- not Brisbane, Captain Nolbrow, was blown on shore, and stove, with the loss of her mainmast.</p> <p>In addition to the other vessels that are expected out hourly, we may add that of the Phoenix, of 550 tons, commanded by Captain Dixon, formerly of the Regalia and Venerable; and also of the ship Harvey, Captain D. Peache, who was here last in the Britomart barque.</p>
12 <sup>th</sup> March 1835	Sydney Gazette	Listed as departing for Hobart Town on 13 <sup>th</sup> march
13 <sup>th</sup> October 1835	Sydney Gazette	Oct 9 <sup>th</sup> 1835 sailed for Twofold Bay
14 <sup>th</sup> January 1836	Sydney Gazette	<p>TRADE AND SHIPPING.</p> <p>The Medway, Captain Wight, arrived from Sydney, on Sunday last.</p> <p>Arrived also the Caroline, from Port Hunter, with coals ; the Mary Sharp and <b>Britomart</b>, from Twofold Bay, with oil, sheep, and cattle.</p>
15 <sup>th</sup> December 1839	Sailing from Melbourne to Hobart	disappeared and probably foundered off the Gippsland coast.
21 <sup>st</sup> January 1840	Colonial Times Hobart	<p>The <b>Britomart</b>.</p> <p>The fate of this unfortunate vessel , is now fully ascertained. We have been kindly furnished with a letter from Captain Monro to our estimable Port-officer, Cap- tain Moriarty, which removes all doubt upon the subject. We insert it at once :</p> <p>Island of Preservation, Jan. 6, 1840.</p> <p>P S,-Herewith I forward you, per bearer, (Mr. Gill, master of the schooner Sir John Franklin) the register, journals, letters, and newspapers of the barque <b>Britomart</b>, which were washed ashore upon Preservation Island, about the 22nd or 26th of December last. The vessel, I suppose, must have been wrecked upon Goose Island, or some of the low islands in- its neighbourhood. The papers, letters, and register have been partly dried ; they are, however, a</p>

Date	Source	Notes
		<p>little mutilated, but none have been opened. Enclosed in one package, is half-a sovereign, and twenty shillings and eleven pence in silver, which were opened with their own weight, and by the loose manner in which they were folded ; they are directed to Mr. L. Williams, Union Bank, Hobart Town. .</p> <p>There are several pieces of her wreck, with a few casks, &amp;c. washing upon the shores of the islands hereabouts, but nothing of any consequence or value.-I have the honor to be, Sir, your most obedient and very humble servant,</p> <p>JAMES MUNRO.</p> <p>P. S_Should anything else turn up in these quarters, I shall make it my duty to forward you further particulars, by the earliest conveyance. " J. M:</p> <p>Port Officer, Hobart Town</p> <p>It may be presumed, from Mr. Munro's letter from Preservation Island, and from the circumstance of Captain Gill having taken the rudder and seen part of 2 boats on the beach there, that the master and some others on board of the <b>Britomart</b> had taken to the long-boat and that whilst effecting a landing she had swamped in the surf, whence the papers alluded to, which were found in a small box, were washed ashore. There were seen also, several carcasses of sheep, and a water-cask, with the Britomart marked on the head. It may again be inferred by this, that the cask, which always stood on deck, and contained fresh water, was put into the boat, together with some sheep, for the support of the people in the event of their reaching an uninhabited spot ; for they were, doubtless, ignorant of the position of either the rock or reefs, on which they were stranded. The register, and some other papers more immediately interesting to the Captain, go to show, that he took to the long-boat, and we fear has perished ; but that many remained by the vessel's hull is very likely. Some would deem it too hazardous, under the supposition that they were very nearly in the track- of vessels trading to and from Port Phillip (which might relieve them), to enter an open boat in Banks' Straits. It is therefore to be hoped, that the Vansittart, already ordered out by the Government to search the islands, may bring home some of the survivors. We sincerely hope this may be the case.]</p>
6 <sup>th</sup> March 1840	The Hoabrt Town Courier and Van Diemens Land Gazette	<p>TO THE EDITOR OF THE COURIER.</p> <p>SIR,</p> <p>The first intimation of the <b>Britomart</b>'s loss about Banks' Straits, was derived from Captain Gill, of the schooner Sir John Franklin, who was the bearer of a letter to Captain Moriarty, our Port Officer, from a person called Munro, living on Preservation Island; he also brought the register of that vessel, together with some letters and</p>

Date	Source	Notes
		<p>books ; among the latter was the log-book of the <i>Ellen</i>, and a private journal belonging to the master of the ill-fated <b>Britomart</b>. The letter from Munro states that the above few things "were probably washed ashore between the 22nd and 26th December." From Captain Gill we learn, that when he observed to Munro, from seeing part of a ship's cabin affording cover to a pig-stye, " that there appeared to have been indications of a wreck," Munro replied, " Yes, he thought some vessel had been wrecked going from Sydney to Port Phillip." Ah ! says Gill, why the <i>Britomart</i> is missing; and Munro was silent. Captain Gill then returned to his vessel, and reflecting on what had passed, he resolved again the next day to have some further conversation, " when he elicited from Munro the fact of his having in his custody on shore the register of the <i>Britomart</i>, some books and letters," which he gave up to Captain Gill. Captain Gill had shown to him by some of the black women or Munro-there being only four persons on Preservation-part of two wrecked boats and some sheep's carcasses.</p> <p>The report from Captain McCole, of the <i>Vansittart</i>, is partially based on his own opinion, " that the vessel struck on a rock near Preservation, and washed over into deep water;" but Munro informed him that "a man named Drew had left the island with some cheques amounting to £460 besides gold and notes." At the time of the above report reaching the Port Office, more letters were received, via Launceston, that had evidently been forwarded by the <b>Britomart</b> from Port Phillip-perhaps Captain McCole put these into the Post Office, or the man Drew, a mysterious character, did so.</p> <p>Shortly after this there appear at Launceston some persons, apparently sealers, very flush of money; and it was noticed in one of the public prints of that place that a man had boasted of his knowing where to find the <i>Britomart</i>.</p> <p>About a fortnight since Captain Tregurtha, the owner of the brig <i>Henry</i>, expressed his surprise that the owner of the <b>Britomart</b> did not send to save something from the wreck, as the sealers of the Straits were flashing away plenty of sovereigns, and that they " all knew where the <b>Britomart</b> was."</p> <p>The <i>Truganini</i> then reported to have seen two studding- sail booms in possession of some sealers, with the sails furled to them, and which they supposed to belong to the <b>Britomart</b>. Then again, Captain Gill returns from his second trip to Port Phillip, after visiting Preservation, Badger, and Barren Islands. He has brought up the misen topmatt, the rudder of the ship's long-boat, and part of her compass ; also a snuff box, identified as belonging to one of the <i>Britomart</i>s passengers. He saw also thirty carcasses of sheep, and a ham and leg of mutton cooked ; but he can't account for Munro's mysterious behaviour; and will cooked meat float ashore?!!</p> <p>If the people in the Straits are pirates, Munro's disinclination to reveal anything is natural enough. There is a dereliction of duty on the part of the Government, if immediate steps are not taken to</p>

Date	Source	Notes
		<p>unravel the mystery which enshrouds the fate of above thirty individuals on hoard of the <b>Britomart</b>. Is it matter of no importance to know whether they were drowned or murdered ? whether they landed alive, or were plundered after being washed ashore? Let Captain Gill be examined upon his first statement and his last ; perhaps some satisfactory conclusion might then be arrived at. I remain, Sir, your's, &amp;c.</p> <p>A subscriber.</p>
21 <sup>st</sup> April 1840	Hobart Times	<p>The "<b>Britomart</b>."</p> <p>To the Editor of the Colonial Times.</p> <p>Sir,-I have received, to my surprise, the Port Phillip Herald of the 21st ult., from the office of that paper. I find that a great many other numbers have been circulated, in a similar manner. The only thing I find in the paper in question, to interest me, is an Advertisement of Captain Gill, master of the Sir John Franklin, by which, it appears, that the unwearied exertions of those, who took an active part in solving the mysterious tales of the loss of the <b>Britomart</b>, are partially rewarded, for which they are indebted to the Press ; while some hope is entertained, that the whole will yet be discovered, as it appears, that there are more parties concerned in the transaction, than were first named. Captain Gill has expressed his readiness to state, in public, at Hobart Town, what he has omitted in his advertisement ; and, as he has a wish to meet the Subscriber to the Courier, and the Correspondent in the Colonial Times, I suppose they will readily meet him, on so laudable an occasion.-Your's,</p> <p>SPECTATOR.</p> <p>Hobart Town, April 20, 1840.</p>

Britomart. Barque, 243 tons. Built at Deptford, London, 1808; reg. Hobart, 16/1839. Lbd 98-3 x 24-8 x 5-8 ft. She had been built as a ten-gun sloop-of-war for the Royal Navy. Captain John Gluyas. Left Melbourne for Hobart on 15 December 1839 and disappeared without trace. The Government cutter Vansittart was sent to search for her. Wreckage indicated she had foundered near Clarke Island, Furneau Group, and there were rumours that she may have been lured ashore by false lights and plundered. When the schooner Sir John Franklin arrived at Hobart from Port Phillip on 17 January 1840, her master James Gill said he had gone ashore to visit a sealer, James Munro, at Preservation Island, and observed a considerable quantity of wreckage on the island, not to mention a quantity of valuables in Munro's hut, much of it clearly belonging to the Britomart. He also that many of the local sealers appeared to be flush with money. In all likelihood the Britomart was wrecked during a gale, probably while attempting to shelter at Prime Seal or Preservation Island, on one of the many dangerous reefs and islets that lie between them. No doubt the sealers took every advantage of the situation. [TS1], [LF],[#LI],[LV]

Loney writes:

The government of the day seemed strongly disinclined to determine whether the passengers and crew of the ship were drowned or murdered or whether they landed alive or were plundered after beiria washed ashore. Soon after the vessel disappeared, its log book, register, compass, various pieces of wreckage and a number of personal items were reported in the hands of persons living on the Bass Strait Islands, and sealers well flushed with money boasted openly that they knew the whereabouts of the wreck. Interest also strengthened in a report that a female passenger had fallen into the hands of Gippsland aborigines; police and troopers spent several years searching for a mythical white woman at aboriginal camps throughout Gippsland. [LV]

#### The Shipwreck of the Brittomart: A Tasmanian Treasure Ship.

In the early part of the 19th century Hobart Town was the whaling and sealing capital of the world. From the Derwent River whaling ships sailed out across the Pacific and into the Great Southern Ocean hunting whales and returning to Hobart laden with valuable oil, whale bone and seal fur. The Colony's whale based economy was booming and fortunes were being made rapidly however these were the days before gold had been discovered in Australia and the one big problem that faced the whalers, traders, merchants and almost every other strata of colonial society was the shortage of specie, of cash money, coinage. Some enterprising individuals set up their own mints making trading tokens of specific values but these were usually only made of copper and of small value, inadequate for buying and selling hundreds of tons of whale oil. Silver and gold coins were scarce to such an extent that silver Spanish dollars were the official currency for a period of time. These were the "holey dollars" which had a hole punched out of the centre to create two separate coins of different values. Even so cash was still very short and whalers and publicans and other traders were not interested in promissory notes or tokens or even punched Spanish dollars. To solve this problem a number of the banks, which were at this time setting up around the colonies, imported large amounts of silver and gold coinage from Britain. Of course the only way coins could be carried to the Colonies was by ship and, legend has it, such a cargo was being carried by the 250 ton sailing barque Britomart when she disappeared on route to Hobart from Melbourne in December 1839.

According to the stories that circulated at the time of the Britomart's disappearance part of her cargo was a large iron safe containing one hundred and fifty thousand pounds in coin, a huge sum of money and a fact that appears to have become known to a certain group of desperados living on the Bass Strait Islands, the Bass Strait sealers.

In those days the big money had gone out of sealing, the stocks had been depleted by years of wholesale slaughter, however it was still possible to eke a living killing the few seals that remained in Bass Strait; their skins, furs and the oil from their bodies was still a commodity in demand enough to provide the sealers with a supply of liquor and the other necessities, which, with the

seal's flesh, were enough to sustain a man who wanted little more than to live as far away from the authorities and civilised world as he could.

These were the Bass Strait sealers, usually ex-convicts or even escaped convicts; tough, lawless men who had been brutalised by the penal system and wanted nothing to do with the growing colonies. They were men who did whatever it took to survive and took what they needed. It was into their domain of scattered reefs and islands that the Britomart was lured.

#### False Lights and "Wrecking"

The occupation of "wrecking" was an old one back in Britain. Along the coasts of Cornwall and other shires where the rocky coast was steep and wild the poor fishermen and villagers had, for hundreds of years, supplemented their meagre living by salvaging what the waves washed ashore from shipwrecks. They had certain legal rights of salvage from shipwrecks and even from the bodies of dead sailors washed ashore. Then at some point in time some enterprising salvor realised that, rather than waiting for the occasional, accidental shipwreck to occur it would be much more efficient, on dark and stormy nights, to actually organise the shipwreck by placing false navigation lights at certain points along the coast to lure ships onto a reef or headland. This way all could be ready to claim the salvage immediately it hit the beach and also to ensure that there were no live sailors to tell of the false lights. It is likely that amongst the Bass Strait sealers there lived men who had occupied themselves thus before being exiled to Australia.

Small wonder when the sealers heard of the Britomart and her supposed cargo of coins that some of the more enterprising and unscrupulous made plans to lure the unsuspecting ship onto rocks where she would be easy picking and so it seems it happened.

When the Britomart failed to arrive in Hobart Town by its due date in January 1840 people began to worry; anxiety and suspicion increased when other ships arriving from Melbourne reported that there had been no bad weather in Bass Strait.

The Government cutter Vansittart was dispatched to search amongst the Bass Strait islands for news of wreckage but returned reporting no trace of the missing Britomart. A few weeks later a schooner, the Sir John Franklin, on its way from Melbourne to Hobart, sheltered behind Preservation Island, one of the Bass Strait group. Whilst anchored there the ship's master, Captain Gill, landed to visit one of the sealers, a Scotsman named Monroe, who lived near the anchorage with two Aboriginal women. When Gill entered the Scotsman's shack he noticed Monroe throw a cushion over something in the corner. Gill asked if he had seen any sign of the Britomart but the sealer's answers seemed evasive;





Captain Gill returned to his schooner certain that Munroe was hiding something. The next day Gill landed with some of his crew and searched the area where he found that Munroe was using a piece of the Britomart's deckhouse for a pigsty. When he confronted Munroe the Scotsman refused to answer his questions but when Gill questioned the two Aboriginal women they showed him parts of the Britomart's boats and the carcasses of about thirty sheep on a beach on the other side of the island. Under pressure Munroe admitted having the sea chest of Britomart's master, Captain Gluss, which he claimed had been given to him by another sealer named Drew. The sea chest and the papers within showed no sign of water damage or immersion. Captain Gill delivered all these to the authorities in Hobart Town.

A few weeks later Captain Tregartha of the brig Henry arrived in Hobart reporting that a number of the Bass Strait sealers were in Launceston "flush with money" spending up big.

Local rumour began to circulate that the Britomart had been lured onto the rocks with false lights, the crew and passengers slaughtered and robbed but that the sealers had been unable to remove the heavy iron safe before the ship broke up and slid off the rocks into deeper water.

In his book "Vanished Fleets" A.J. Villiers that in the early 1920's a man he knew, who was descended from a Bass Strait sealer and claimed to have inherited the location of the Britomart from his grandfather, launched an attempt to find the wreck and salvage the safe but his directions were faulty and he never found the wreck or the safe.

To this day the wreck of the Britomart has never been found though according to local legends the safe is still intact within the wooden hull, still intact and holding a fortune in gold and silver coins.

Image of Monroe's home on Preservation Island.

This painting was done about the time of the loss of the Brittomart as part of a study of the Bass Strait Islands