

Book Review

A Pirate of Exquisite Mind: The Life of William Dampier, Explorer, Naturalist and Buccaneer. Diana & Michael Preston. Transworld Publishers. Transworld Publishers. ISBN 0385 607067 ISBN 0552 772100 (Available April 2005, approx \$27.00)

Reviewed by John Smith

Reading this book is rather like reading an adventure novel, a book on natural history, a seaman's almanac and a comment on eighteenth century social history, all at the same time. It is well written in a style which is easy to read and which gives a substantial insight into the life and times of William Dampier.

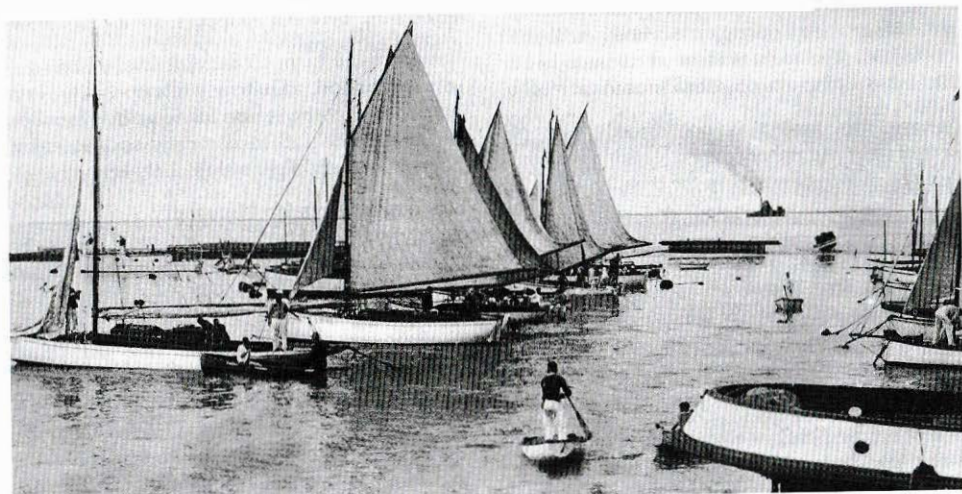
Dampier was a man whose thinking was well ahead of his time. He questioned everything he witnessed and based his conclusions on physical observations rather than hearsay or superstition. I knew of him, but like many other people knew nothing of his life and achievements. I was not aware that James Cook, Matthew Flinders, Thomas Baudin, and Lord Nelson all held him in high esteem as a seaman and hydrographer.

He was the writer of the world's first best selling travel books. He predated Charles Darwin with

his thinking about species and sub species. Daniel Defoe's *New Voyage* around the world by a course never sailed before was drawn from Dampier's experiences in real life. Jonathan Swift drew on Dampier's *New Voyage* when writing *Gulliver's Travels*. Dampier's writing undoubtedly influenced Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

Dampier was the first person to circumnavigate the world three times, visiting many places for the first time which were unknown to Europeans, and whilst doing so always taking copious notes, which he protected above all else whilst labouring his way through jungle, swamps and shipwreck. He was a buccaneer who, for the most part operated without a warrant. He found himself to be in the company of others who did not pay too much attention to the laws at the time concerning their profession. Once he was a member of the crew it was not easy to leave the ship's company, but he made several attempts to do so.

I found this book difficult to put down, quite fascinating, with well-documented footnotes and bibliography. It is in my view well worth the \$32.95 price I paid for it. SQ



The Squadron pool in about 1930. The two closer yachts are Reverie and Anyndah (with sails hoisted). The motor launch has not been identified and nor has what looks like a tug in the foreground. The 'breakwater' barges were still largely intact. (Kingsley Haskett).

In Tranquil Waters

Hartleigh Kelly

31 August 1910–16 February 2005

Hartleigh Kelly had a long, productive and innovative life, with ancestors from Robe and Riverton and long-lived siblings. We are primarily concerned to record the particular components relating to yachting. There are probably now none left alive who go back so far.

A newspaper cutting in the Squadron collection dated 29 November 1926 reported on a handicap race held at the Grange Dinghy Club for the Savage class of canoes. The starters, handicaps and skippers were —

<i>Moby Dick</i>	3 min	Miss M Kelly
<i>Britt</i>	3 min	W Kelly
<i>Ljorleather</i>	2½ min	H Kelly
<i>All's Well</i>	2 min	J Harrington
<i>Reckless</i>	2 min	J Ellis
<i>Who's Mistake</i>	Scr	K Allen

The race was won by *Who's Mistake* and *Ljorleather* came second.

The story of the deep divisions in the dinghy racing community that created the Grange Dinghy Club is recorded in the news cuttings books. Hartleigh's brothers Walter and Erskine did well both locally and in the national championships.

In the 1930s Hartleigh Kelly designed, built and skippered the first racing catamaran in this country, which has earned him acknowledgement in the National Maritime Museum in Sydney. Back home, he raced successfully in fourteen-foot dinghies and in the original heavyweight 12 square-metre sharpies that became obsolete in the 1960s. He inflicted his passion for yachting on his newly-married wife Gwen by taking her across the Gulf in a *lumaren*. The *Tums* were a Scandinavian design, not really suitable in our waters, being of narrow beam, designed to be very tender and wet to windward in any sort of sea. Their canoe sterns produced small and congested cockpits and there was headroom below only for children. Only a truly devoted wife would have endured such an experience, and we didn't often see her at the Squadron. That was a pity, because she was a cheerful and gracious lady.

By about 1960 Hartleigh was converting his interest to keel boats. His first was a Yachting World Seahorse called *Galaxy*, which he built himself and raced intensively both inshore and offshore. Hartleigh might have been colourblind, because to others she and subsequently *QED* were a vivid yellow, but he once remarked that he liked the soft tone he had chosen.

His inventive mind produced, among many things, a complex and ingenious device that automatically tied loops in nylon line for fish-hooks. There was a simple piece of bent plastic that was ideal to use on tubes of toothpaste or anything else packaged that way. He designed and manufactured a clothes smocking machine, which was highly successful on the market. He became expert in hydraulic systems, which he used on the rig of his last yacht, the little sloop *QED*. The idea came from watching sailboarders off the beach at South Glenelg, where he lived for many years. In contrast to the subsequent complex racing yachts that tilt the keels to windward, Hartleigh tilted the rig above a swinging keel, so that the mast could be swung independently. The problem was that the hydraulic mechanisms were necessarily slow to respond. *QED* didn't work as well as he had hoped in the short steep seas of Saint Vincent Gulf, but it would have done better either in smooth water or on regular ocean swells. A further difficulty was that the racing rules of the day were interpreted as banning the use of onboard computers, which are now standard on many racing yachts. Consequently a crew member had to stay below to operate the apparatus, which was uncomfortable and difficult on such a small yacht.

With great determination Hartleigh continued to race *QED* into his final years as a conventional yacht with fixed rig and keel. He rejoiced that at the Squadron he was so competitive against larger vessels that he was promoted from Second to First Division. At the age of 86 he won the TG Flint Memorial Race from Outer Harbor to Somerton. He raced with determination that could almost amount to being aggressive at times, but always scrupulously fair.

All this is of the water, watery, but it is appropriate to record some of his terrestrial sporting achievements. In 1931 Hartleigh Kelly was the virtual founder of the Grange Hockey Club, which under his enthusiastic influence had a notable record in competitions. In its first forty years the Grange club A-team competed in 34 A-grade finals and won 18 A-grade premierships in 22 years, including ten in succession. For this he was made a Life Member (as he was of the Industrial Relations Society). He enjoyed competitive tennis until well into his sixties.

Hartleigh Kelly was a popular and highly regarded Member of the Squadron and regularly contributed at Quarterly Meetings. The Squadron was an important part of his life, although towards the end he took QED to the Patawalonga boat harbour so that he didn't have to travel so far to enjoy her. Sadly, Gwen declined and died after a long illness.

Hartleigh was a notable character to those who lived near the South Esplanade at Glenelg. Every day he walked a dog. After his own died, he borrowed a neighbour's. He picked up shells and other items of interest, which he gave to passers by, especially pretty girls. There will be many people who will miss him and who will long remember a remarkable and impressive figure. We convey our sympathies to his sons Ross and Bruce and their families.

John William (Jack) Gamlin

19 September 1909 – 22 March 2005

Jack Gamlin began his long yachting career, aged ten, as bailer boy in fourteen-foot dinghies racing from the Henley Sailing Club until he was promoted to be a crew member of *Radiant*. When he was about twelve he built a canoe from galvanised iron. Like his father before him, he became a carpenter, and with that background he had good quality paddles and mast with a square-rigged sail. Police were sent to look for him when he took the tiny vessel to paddle and sail round HMS *Hood*, anchored a mile or so off Glenelg in the early twenties. At 42,000 tons she was then the largest warship ever built, and was sunk by the *Bismarck* on 23 May, 1942. Of her crew of 1,400 only three survived. Jack's next venture was a canvas boat 11 ft 6 in long, 4 ft 6 in in the beam, with a centreboard and a sail cut



down from the newly developed heavy-weight sharpie class.

The move to keelboats became inevitable. Partnerships in boats are like partnerships in wives: only remarkable people can make them work. With his close friend Frank Henderson, Jack went into a long-lived partnership in *Jafra*, using as their first tender Jack's canvas boat. She was built at Grange in 1930-32, and a couple of days after being launched from the beach she came ashore in a hard SW blow. Later she was moved to a mooring in the public water west of the Squadron pool. Jack and Frank bought her for £60 on 9 August 1941, and gave her a name derived from their own as they virtually rebuilt her.

During the Second World War Jack entered the Civil Construction Corps, and built aerodromes in Queensland and Darwin not long after the bombing. (The first Japanese raid on Darwin was on 18 February 1942 and the last was on 12 November 1943.) Because he and Frank, like everybody else at the time, were so committed to the war effort they were obliged to sell *Jafra*, only to buy her back in 1956 and resume their fishing and cruising. She was moored with Tom and Barbara Hardy's *Lialeeta* to starboard and Eddie Evan's *Radiant* to port, and the neighbours became close friends. *Jafra* was for many years the only vessel on the Squadron register fitted with a conventional fish well, which delighted the many children they welcomed aboard. In her Jack, Frank and many friends cruised and fished extensively. Their cheerful good humour and skill with mouth organs made them welcome participants in many beach gatherings over the years. We particularly remember a New Year's Eve at the

Mulberry Beach in Spalding Cove, when they taught the assembled children some new songs, as well as leading them in familiar favourites. That would have been about 1969 or 1970.

On the morning of 22 March 1971 Frank Henderson was killed instantly when he inadvertently drove his car into the back of a semitrailer. Sadly Jack sold the faithful old vessel and she left the pool.

Jack Gamlin joined the Squadron in 1949. His memories went back to Mr Kyle Gault in Warrigal before she passed to Harcourt Doherty and Jim Bullock. Hence the old Squadron rhyming slang, 'Pass the doctor' for salt, a play on Kyle Gault. George Eimer's strong cigars pervaded *Nymphs*, but Len Wigan, John Willoughby and John Maitland didn't seem to mind. At American River there was Horrie Ratcliff the one-armed fisherman, who showed remarkable skill at rolling cigarettes with his solitary hand. It's a sad thought that they greatly shortened his life. Another personality was 'Curly' Dempster, who was totally bald. On New Year's Eve the girls painted a rude face on his scalp with lipstick. Keith Litchfield was a generous host at his shack.

Jack raced on the big schooner *Pavana* in George Mayne's time, and cruised in company with John and Nancy Muirhead with their four children packed into the Black Soo *Enchantress*. He remembered helping to refloat Wilbur Iedman's *Galatea* when she went up on the spit at Port Vincent (as did *Ruthen* years later). On several occasions *Jafra's* shallow draft was useful in approaching larger vessels in trouble. One photograph in his collection was of *Ranger* and *Bella* aground at Stansbury near the site of the old jetty. They floated again on the flooding tide.

Chris Wade and his son Bill on Thistle Island were always hospitable, even though Mrs Wade's superb dinners mightn't be served until 11 pm. Sometimes they would shoot a steer, and Jack would use his butchering skills to dress the carcass. On Wedge Island Norm Growden was one of the first to fly his family to and fro. Here the challenge was to join in shooting parties to try to eliminate the feral goats. The turkeys were gone by then. No longer could passing yachtsmen and fishermen poach them, to the lury of the island's owners.

Jack Gamlin raced and cruised on so many vessels from the Squadron that he couldn't remember all of them. He was aboard *Seevogel* under Wesley Harris for the inaugural Neptune Island racesoon after the Second World War. In a drifter they were set by tide so close to Althorpe Island that Wes Harris stood on the foredeck with a boathook waiting to fend off. That was foolhardy, so they started the engine and went to Pondolowie Bay before returning home.

Jack spent five years racing and cruising with Henry Wilckens in *Taluma*, which participated in the Sydney-Hobart race of 1957. He and others have told some good stories about those times. Henry was a generous skipper with two inflexible rules — everybody must call him 'Henry', never 'Mr Wilckens' or 'sir'; and nobody was to place anything on his bunk. In one race the breeze was growing stronger as they rounded a mark to ease sheets. The eager crew wanted to hoist a spinnaker, but Henry was dubious and refused. He was trapped on the helm while they did so anyway, telling him that he was over-ruled by a 'foredeck soviet'. He took it in good part and a new expression entered our nautical vocabulary.

In the 1959 Neptune Island race they reached the mark when it was obscured by sea fog, and felt their way round from the sound of the waves on the rocks. On the return to Althorpe Colin Smith went forward to check the spinnaker, and discovered South-West Rock under their lee. They had been set by tide, and had rounded the then unlit North Neptune group instead of South Neptune, which disqualified them. It was the night on which the coastal steamer *Yandra* was lost on Neptune Island. What was odd was to look up to see clear stars, for the fog was confined to a few feet above the sea. The *Taluma* crew members Jack particularly recalled were Colin Smith (afflicted by seasickness, but he always carried on regardless), David Judell, Ian Dow, and Teddy Cowan, seacook par excellence.

Jack recalled racing aboard Keith Flint's *Vivid* and then *Volante* for the west-coaster from Queenscliff to Hobart in 1987. He was aboard *Morning Hustler* when she and others were obliged to retire from a Neptune Island race in storm conditions with broken gear. The list goes