

whose instructions he frequently defied, and who generously provided space in his cabin for the naturalist to work. Knowledge of that source could have embittered him.

Enfeebled by repeated hemoptyses (spitting blood) Baudin struggled on until they reached Isle de France, where Henri De Freycinet curtly reported, 'On 16 September 1803, around the middle of the day, M Baudin ceased to exist.' He was 49 years old. His unrelated namesake Midshipman Charles Baudin wrote,

His funeral was nothing less than dismal: he was universally detested. He had shown great strength of spirit in his last days. He had collected in a jar of spirits of wine the lungs he had brought up in the course of his untold suffering, and he showed them to everyone who came to visit him. 'Are the lungs indispensable to life?' he would say. 'You see, I no longer have any, yet I still exist.'

Nicolas Baudin deserves to be remembered as more than the commander of the French ship encountered by Flinders on 8 April 1802. He was a self-taught *savant*, who led an expedition which left outstanding records and images,

particularly of the original Tasmanians. He was not responsible for placing French names on features designated by Matthew Flinders, their first discoverer. There is no geographical feature bearing his name. Flinders generously named Baudin Rocks, but they are now Carpenters Rocks, which was what Baudin called them. In any event, few can confidently say where they are, unless familiar with the *Admella* tragedy. There is no point today in trying to correct that minor detail, but I believe that we have good reason to remember and honour the name of Nicolas Thomas Baudin. He deserved neither denigration nor oblivion.

Horner, Frank. *The French Reconnaissance: Baudin in Australia 1801-1803*. Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1987. ISBN 0 522 843395 5.

Brown, Anthony J. *Ill-starred Captains: Flinders and Baudin*. Adelaide, Crawford House Publishing, 2000. ISBN 1 86333 192 1.

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'From the Catastrophe to the Encounter' *Squadron Quarterly* September 1995: 33-8. 50

Quarterdeck



Di Moncrieff presenting the quarantine flag and ensigns of Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Papua-New Guinea to Marlene and Phil Tassicker after their wedding.

John Smith has had news of former Members Colin and Claude Horton, who sailed *Shercoliz* from the Squadron to Queensland in about 1996. Claude's mother died, and she had a great desire to return to her native France. They returned to England, where they bought a house and a 47-foot power boat. They sent an email describing the tribulations of taking the vessel across the Channel to enter the French canal system. Even there they had trouble from strikes by the lock operators and other vicissitudes. Those who wish to make contact with them may do so at 11 Cours Jules Ferry, Montfrin, 30490 France. Phone 33 466 036 516.

★ ★ ★

Dick Gower has sold *Ninke*, reducing to two the number of vessels entitled to wear an undefaced Blue Ensign. They are *Minna* (Harold and Mary Handley) and *Pauline* (Dean and Norma Paterson). Time was when virtually every Squadron vessel proudly wore this mark of

nautical distinction, with which we looked down patronisingly on lesser organisations with insignia on the fly. (Technically the Australian national flag is a defaced British Blue Ensign.) It took many years for Australian legislation to supersede the British Merchant Shipping Act, thereby creating an Australian register. Before then we had to apply to the British Admiralty and have our vessels measured for Thames Measurement, with the Official Number indelibly carved on the main bulkhead. To wear the Blue Ensign, the owner and his warrant must be on board, and one of Her Majesty's vessels could require it to be produced. Thus do the relics of our imperial past fade away one by one, leaving few who know (and likely fewer who care) what such matters once meant.

On the topic of ensigns, new boat owners are reminded that the proper ensign to wear at the stern of a Squadron vessel is the Australian Red Ensign, not the Blue, although the latter is quite lawful.

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