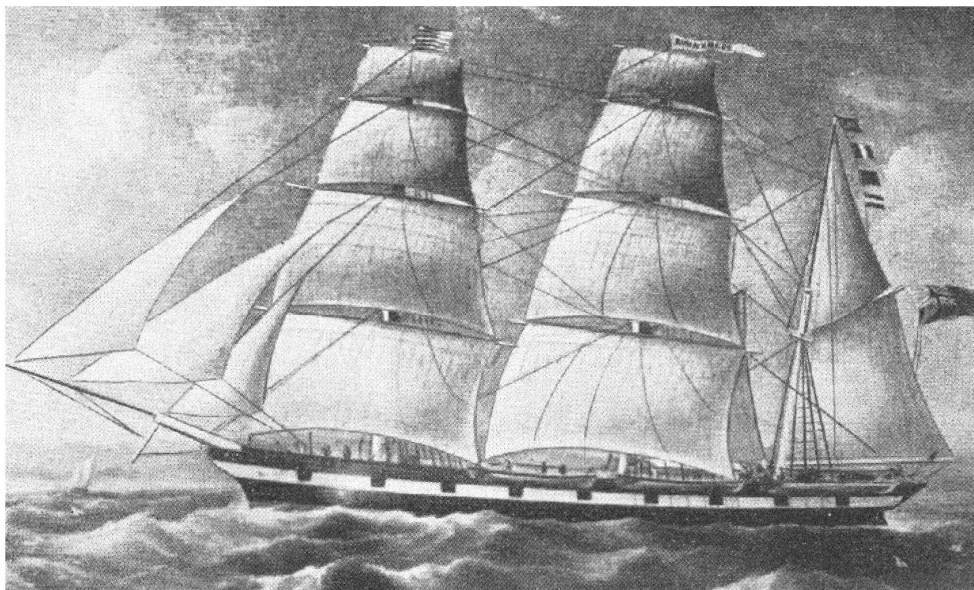


## Sperm Whaling on the Solanders Grounds and in Fiordland

A maritime historian's perspective



Barque Runnymede.

**NIWA Information Series No. 76**

**ISSN 1174-264X**

**2010**

**Author**

Rhys Richards  
Pacific maritime historian  
73 Seaview Road  
Paremata  
Porirua 5024  
New Zealand

**For any enquiries regarding this report please contact:**

Harriet Palmer  
Science editor  
Communications & Marketing  
+64-4-364 0604  
h.palmer@niwa.co.nz

National Institute of Water & Atmospheric Research Ltd  
301 Evans Bay Parade, Greta Point  
Wellington 6021  
Private Bag 14901, Kilbirnie  
Wellington 6241  
New Zealand

Phone +64-4-386 0300  
Fax +64-4-386 0574

Cover photo: The barque *Runnymede* (State Library of Tasmania)

Report prepared in conjunction with the NIWA 'Taking Stock' project.

(Contact Dr Alison MacDiarmid, NIWA. a.macdiarmid@niwa.co.nz).

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*He kohi, he kohi, he kohi.*

*Kei kau korero.*

Gather, gather, gather.

Only then discuss.

## Summary

One justification for this historical research is to provide some general indication to whale zoologists of the scale of the sperm whale fishery, and through that help towards establishing some historical baseline for former sperm whale stocks. There is no possibility of any precision of course, but the exercise may not be entirely frivolous if the estimates are presented in some way that can be understood for revision or replacement as subsequent zoological research unfolds.

When this study began, the standard and indeed almost sole source of specific information on whaling on the Solanders Grounds was a single page in Howard's history of Stewart Island, Rakiura, published in 1940 (Howard 1940, p.227). That page mentioned only a dozen whaleships, while this review identifies 187 vessels that cruised on the Solanders Grounds and off Fiordland. So the first task was to assemble the raw material, and to present it in an examinable manner so that a clear basis exists from which analysis can proceed through to readily understood conclusions. Therefore no apologies are made for the bulk of the historical corpus as it is an integral part of the survey. However in order to make the zoological conclusions more easily read by non-historians, they have been provided first rather than last.

- The number of whaleships known to have cruised on the Solanders Grounds and off Fiordland is 187 (Table 1). In a few cases where a whaleship visited twice in the same calendar year but on two separate voyages, it has been counted twice. The annual totals are presented in Table 1, where for reasons unknown but possibly due to sampling limitations, there are very few vessels recorded in the decade from 1863 to 1872. Since this hiatus in sperm whaling is not apparent elsewhere in the NZ region, such as whaling visitors to the Chatham and Kermadec Islands, an adjustment will be made and shown later.
- It has been possible to calculate, in some cases, the quantity of oil taken per ship each month cruising on these grounds. During 85 months cruising, the average taken was 76 barrels, or slightly less than the average sperm whale (see below).
- The total number of months of known cruising on these grounds was 437 (Table 2). This also indicates the seasonal distribution of whaling, March to June, and through that, the seasonal presence and absence of sperm whales.
- From this it was calculated that the total number of barrels of sperm oil taken was in the broad vicinity of 437 cruise months times 76 barrels equals 33 212 barrels.

- The size of whale taken and saved on these grounds was available for 41 sperm whales. The average size for each whale taken was 84 barrels. This large size confirms that almost all whales taken were big bull whales, many of which could be called 'bachelor males.'
- The minimum number of whales killed and processed, calculated as 33 212 divided by 84, was equal to at least 409.7 sperm whales killed.
- However these whalers and whalerships were operating in very stormy, cold, seas close to the physical limits of sail whaling. It is estimated of every three whales killed, one or more was lost. Then overall 410 plus one third, or 547 as a minimum. That is say about 600 killed over a time span from 1845 to 1875, or thirty years, would be, overall, about 20 whales killed each year.
- This is not a precise number, nor even a good estimate, but perhaps a good indication of the scale, namely that sperm whales were never very numerous. Yet whales were sufficiently reliable and large enough to sustain a sperm whaling industry over three decades.
- There is however a further anomaly for which an adjustment could be made. As noted in section A. above, there is an unexplained absence of references to sperm whaling on the Solanders Grounds for the decade 1863 to 1872. If in fact whaling continued there throughout, then on a pro-rata basis there may have been a third more whalerships involved. This would raise the total number of whales killed from 600 to 800.
- Again, because of the nature of the scattered and obviously incomplete records, there can be no precision, only an indication of the likely scale of the fishery.

**Table 1** Number of whaleships recorded cruising on the Solanders Grounds and in Fiordland, 1844–86.

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of whaleships</b>
1844	3
1845	6
1846	6
1847	1
1848	3
1849	-
1850	13
1851	2
1852	1
1853	2
1854	3
1855	-
1856	11
1857	19
1858	19
1859	15
1860	5
1861	12
1862	18
1863	-
1863	-
1865	1
1866	-
1867	-
1868	-
1869	4
1870	-
1871	-
1872	-
1873	-
1874	6
1875	7
1876	8
1877	2
1878	2
1879	1
1880	3
1881	2
1882	3
1883	6
1884	2
1885	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>187</b>

**Table 2 Whaleships cruising on the Solanders Grounds and of Fiordland: recorded mentions per month cruising.**

January	43
February	44
March	53
April	63
May	61
June	47
July	29
August	23
September	15
October	16
November	11
December	32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>437</b>

NB. The main season whaling season was March to June (early winter). Mid and late winter were too stormy for sail whaling.



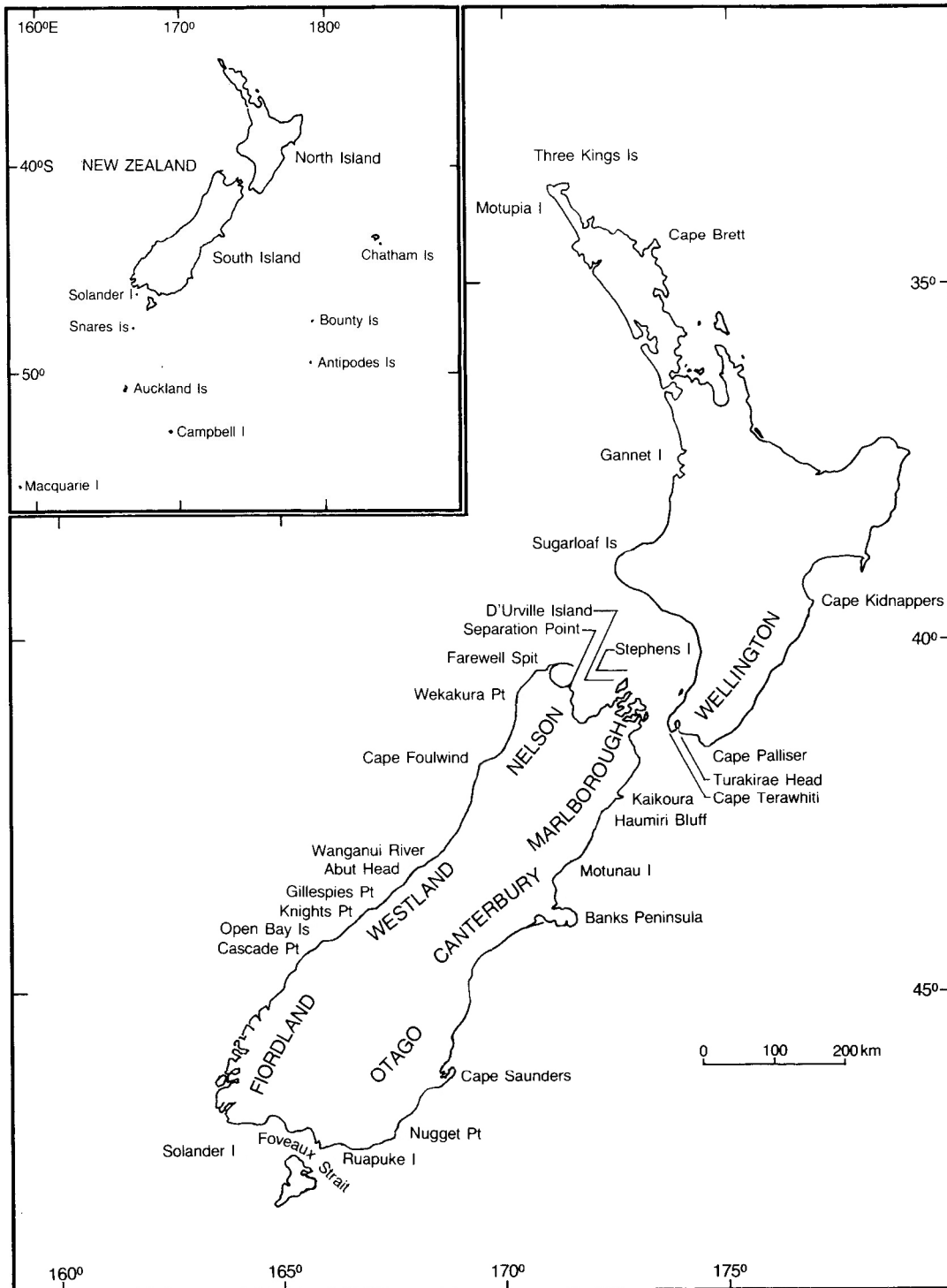
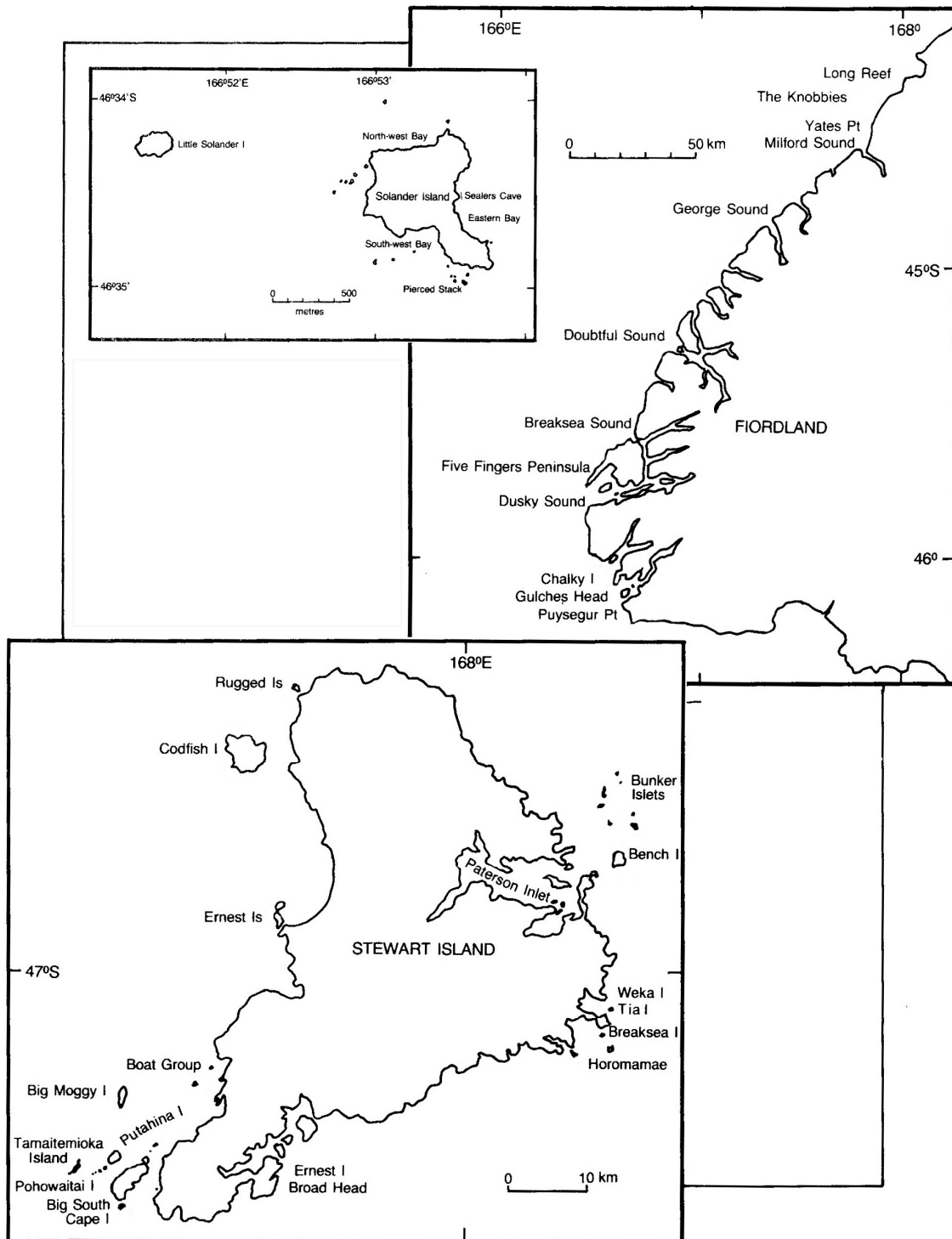


Figure 1 Place names familiar to whalers around the New Zealand coast.



**Figure 2 Place names and whaling locations around southern New Zealand.**

Source of Figures 1 and 2: 'The Distribution and Abundance of the New Zealand Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus forsteri*)' by Dr Graham Wilson, New Zealand Fisheries Research Division 1981.

## 1. Introduction: Frank Bullen and Captain Charles Bayley

Solander Island, or Hautere, and its offshore rocks, lie across the western end of Foveaux Strait about 80 km west of Stewart Island and Codfish Island, close to latitude 47°S, longitude 166° E. Solander Island rises sharply from the sea to a conspicuous peak over 330 metres high. In clear weather, which is uncommon, Solander Island can be seen from sea level for a radius of 40 miles or 65 km in all directions. Strictly speaking the term 'Solanders Grounds' might refer only to the area from which the peak can be seen, but the old sail whalers tended to use the term more loosely to include all the sea west of Stewart Island.

By contrast, very few sperm whales were caught off Fiordland, or sighted there south of 45°S, but the fiords were used extensively by sperm whalers for shelter from the frequent westerly storms, especially if they had killed and secured a whale alongside, and needed calm water in which to cut up and boil down their massive quarry. Sperm whaling on the Solanders Grounds was made famous by one man, the much acclaimed writer of stories of the sea, Frank Bullen, with the publication in 1899 of his best seller 'The Cruise of the Cachalot,' a semi-historical account of a whaling voyage around the world. (The pun in the title was intended—the word 'cachalot' is also the French name for the sperm whale.)

Bullen was a great writer, with a fine turn of phrase, and his books are outstandingly realistic, particularly where he dealt with men at sea. In several cases however the authenticity of the events he described have been questioned, largely because, as was the custom of the day, Bullen had no qualms in embellishing his stories to make a good yarn. Later readers have sought to try to extract the factual aspects from those that are fictitious. In New Zealand several generations have pored over 'The Cruise of the Cachalot' seeking to establish exactly where and when the events Bullen described so vividly actually took place.

In fact the 'Cruise of the Cachalot' is a thinly disguised account of Bullen's own travels and particularly his time aboard the sperm whaleship *Splendid* of Dunedin, embellished of course to heighten the tale. There can be no doubt that Bullen was aboard the *Splendid* at some point. He said so more than once. In his less well-known book 'Idylls of the Sea,' Bullen has a particularly vivid description that could hardly have been acquired by hearsay:

### *A day on the Solander Ground*

*'A bright sunny morning; the gentle northwesterly breeze just keeping the sails full as the lumbering whaling barque Splendid dips jerkily to the old southerly swell. Astern, the blue hills around Preservation Inlet lie shining in the soft spring sunlight, and on the port beam the mighty pillar of the Solander Rock is sharply outlined in the steel-blue sky. Far beyond that stern sentinel, the converging shores of Foveaux Strait are just discernable in dim outline through the low haze.'*

[He then describes the taking of two sperm whales, towing them and seeking shelter in Port William.]

*'In four days [our] work getting the oil is finished, and three or four Māoris ashore have made a tun and a half of good clear oil from the abandoned carcase.... Working by the shore, no finer or*

*more skilful whalers exist than the half breed Māoris who people Stewart Island, and they would joyfully welcome such a grand opportunity to making their pile...[ ' Dirty work for clean money. ] Their oil, added to the ship's quantity, make twelve and a half tuns of oil and spermaceti mingled from the one fish... This is no imaginary sketch, but a faithful record of actual facts which, with slight variation, has been repeated many times within the writer's experience.' (Bullen 1899 p.150-156.)*

Further research has shown that what Bullen wrote accords closely with the events on the voyage of the *Splendid* in 1875-76, which he could well have learned secondhand, but portrays only people who were on the voyage from March to May 1876.

Similarly, the main records of sperm whaling on the Solanders Grounds come from another single person, Captain Charles Bayley, who was Hobart's most successful whaler. He captained 18 whaling voyages from 1840 to 1860, for which an unequalled series of logbooks survive in the Crowther Collection in Hobart. These logbooks provide a basic history of the peak period of sperm whaling on the Solanders Grounds from 1840 to 1860, into which all other contemporary information has been interwoven. An overview of Captain Bayley's whaling career forms the third and longest section of this review.

Tables 3 and 4 summarise Bayley's 18 voyages, their catches and their value. Table 3 estimates Captain Bayley's personal earnings from whaling from 1841 to 1860. Table 4 estimates that in this period whalerships under Captain Charles Bayley killed 316 sperm whales and 79 right whales.

The fourth and final section of this review concerns the lesser known decades from the 1860s to 1880s when a few American vessels called en route elsewhere, and a few from Dunedin including the cruise made by Bullen, but the main sperm whaling was from Tasmania, which perhaps explains why so little has been known about it in southern New Zealand. Curiously then most of the information for this period was found in scattered references in various early New Zealand newspapers, especially those now on-line and partially indexed under the National Library's Papers Past project.

## **2. Right Whales and Sperm Whales**

The Solander Islands had had some local importance in the sealing period from 1803 to 1810, although most of the sealing then was at the Antipodes and other subantarctic islands, and again from 1822 to 1830 when sealing was combined with trading for flax and potatoes (McNab 1907; Richards 1995; Smith 2002). From 1827 to about 1842, the Solanders were a minor part in the flurry of right whaling in Foveaux Strait which preyed upon migrating right whale mothers as they came into coastal waters to drop their calves and suckle them in calm sheltered waters. Some whalerships cruised offshore, other ships began 'bay whaling' close in shore, while several 'shore stations' were soon established on a small scale (McNab 1913; Richards 1995; Prickett 2002). Evidently it was only after first the seals and then the right

whales had been exploited so close to extinction that they could no longer sustain commercial voyages, that attention turned to sperm whaling on the Solanders Grounds.

It is not clear when the first sperm whale was taken on the Solanders Grounds. The earliest known is that on 19 April 1838, while off the Solanders, the New Bedford whaleship *Alexander Barclay* 'spoke the barque Govnor Burke, Captan Dosson, of Sidney, 40 days out with 50 barrels of sperm oil.' (Log PMB 671, 677.) This was possibly the earliest as the Governor Bourke and all the American vessels known on the Solanders before 1850 returned home with large cargoes of right whale oil and almost no sperm oil. (Omega March-April 1844, and December 1844 – February 1845 (PMB 381-382); Wade January 1845 (PMB 819); Omega 1847(PMB 884) and Pantheon December 1848 (PMB 253).

Similarly many American whaleships merely passed through the Solanders Grounds en route elsewhere, such as the *Coral* of New Bedford which rested at Half Moon Bay from 22 January to 3 February 1850, but paid no attention to local whaling before hurrying off to take a cargo of right whales on the 'North West Coast', north of California (PMB 869).

### Southern right whales

Southern right whales *Eubalaena australis* have V-shaped double spouts, no dorsal fins, and a huge rounded head that takes up almost a quarter of the total body length. This large head is split by a great curving mouth in which there are no teeth, but lots of long, coarse, hair-like plates of baleen, which the whalers called 'whale bone.' Through their baleen the right whales strain the seas to extract tiny krill, which the whalers called brit. The main habitat of right whales is in cold waters further south, but each winter they migrate north for the birth of their calves in more sheltered waters in-shore, and to breed again.

They were called right whales simply because the whalers considered them the right whales to catch. Right whales migrated on set routes that brought them up to whaleships waiting close in-shore into sheltered bays, and they floated when dead. Though their oil was worth only a third as much as sperm oil, right whale oil was more easily procured, and there was also a bonus of marketable 'whalebone'. This baleen once filled many of the roles filled today by equally flexible plastics. The cow whales were larger than the males, and had a pathetic loyalty to their calves which was exploited by the shore and bay whalers who harpooned the calves first in order to secure their mothers later. Since many pregnant cows were accompanied by their sub-mature calves of earlier seasons, in effect often all three generations were killed at the same time (Richards 2002).

It has been estimated that at New Zealand alone over 14 000 adult right whales were killed in the decade or so before 1842, and that 4000 more were killed between 1842 and 1851. (Richards 2002.) The bonanza of right whaling at New Zealand was such that the species was almost exterminated before 1840, but even thereafter right whales were still killed wherever they could be found, including at the Solanders.

### Sperm whales

After 1840, the prime targets of the sail whalers were the sperm whales *Physeter catadon* which are conspicuous for their low bushy spouts projecting well forward at an angle of about 45 degrees, for their long, blunt and almost rectangular heads, and for the large conspicuous teeth in their narrow lower jaws. Their main habitat is equatorial, but wanderers may be found at all seasons in all waters between latitudes 50<sup>0</sup>N and 50<sup>0</sup>S. At the Equator, sperm

whales are gregarious and often in large schools of mixed ages and both sexes, and many are small. Male sperm whales grow much larger than females. In summer males that lack a harem may wander far south with some large and solitary, or near solitary, males venturing well into cold subantarctic waters. Especially where strong ocean currents push up against deep rocky shores, sperm whales dive deep to attack and dismember giant squid. Some old bulls found at the Solanders had grown so large, with unusually thick blubber, that a single bull alone might pay a substantial part of the cost of outfitting a whole voyage from Hobart.

Charles Bayley and his contemporaries took sperm whales around the Solanders mainly from October to March, that is from late winter to late summer. Off Fiordland, no sperm whales were taken north of latitude 45°S. Right whales were few and were taken opportunistically mainly in January, mainly around Stewart Island and further west. In February and March some were taken well west of southern Fiordland, at latitude 45°S and to longitude 164°E, but again none were taken further north than Milford Sound. Captain Bayley was seldom on the New Zealand grounds from March to October, which seems to have been the off-season for whaling, though this is not entirely clear on the limited evidence available from these logbooks.

### **3. Captain Charles Bayley, Master Mariner**

Charles Bayley was Hobart's most successful whaling captain and whaleship owner. He was recalled by a contemporary as a quiet, unostentatious man who commanded with discipline and efficiency. Bayley was never satisfied with anything short of complete success : he was 'tenacious and a most persevering and energetic man' (Richard Copping, in Walker 2005:50). Bayley began whaling as a boy in several shore whaling stations in southern Tasmania. In 1827, aged 14, he signed on a local whaleship *Wallaby*, a 284-ton barque. Thereafter he rose steadily through the ranks. He was chief mate then captain when Captain Henry Wishart was killed by a whale in August 1839. He was still only 25 years old. The *Wallaby* continued servicing shore whaling stations, and went on a whaling cruise for six months to Encounter Bay, Kangaroo Island and Bass Strait, for which another logbook survives (Commercial Journal and Advertiser 7 September 1839; Nicholson 1985 p.159, 178).



**Figure 3 Captain Charles Bayley.**  
(Photo: Maritime Museum of Australia)

### **3.1 Master of the *Wallaby* in 1841 and 1842.**

The *Wallaby* was then fitted out for a voyage sperm whaling in the mid Pacific. She left Hobart on 31 December 1840 and sailed to northern New Zealand, Lord Howe Island, Cato Reef, and Rennell Island. After further cruising, the *Wallaby* lay trading for three weeks at “Murrow Harbour,” also in the Solomon Islands. (This was probably Marau at the eastern tip of Guadalcanal, though the logbook also referred to it as if on nearby Makira.)

James Robinson was then a 17 year old boatsteerer (or harpooner) on the *Wallaby*. Later he recalled this as a difficult voyage with an unruly crew who even challenged Bayley’s accurate navigation and ample sailing skills. Still worse, the officers were very weak. After leaving the Solomon Islands in September 1841, the *Wallaby* cruised north over the Equator to Ocean and Nauru Islands. But their whaling was not going at all well. ‘We got a good many sperm whales, but they were small, mostly cows and calves, and did not yield much oil.’ From the Equator, Captain Bayley took the *Wallaby* towards the New Hebrides, now Vanuatu.

When the *Wallaby* had been out 17 months, they had taken 24 sperm whales, but these were small and made only about 24 tuns (i.e. 192 barrels). So Captain Bayley decided to

abandon the sperm whaling grounds in order to go right whaling on the east coast of New Zealand. They arrived at Cloudy Bay on 14 May 1842, where they found

*'two or three whale boats [already] employed in shore whaling. These men did not like our coming there. The style of the whaling was very trying to us just arrived from a warm climate. The mountains were covered with snow, and our boats did not [wait on] land, but cruised about under sail all day. We felt the cold very much... After we left Cloudy Bay, we went to other places--- Cavaty [Kapiti], Mana and Pegasus Bay etc. Twice we visited Port Nicholson as it was called then, now Wellington.'* (Robinson mss.)

Charles Bayley's journal, though almost as terse as a logbook, reveals a few further details of his difficulties with his rebellious crew. At Kapiti on 12 May 1842, three men had 'absconded' (Richard Wagstaf, James Butler and Thomas Brown). In July at Cloudy Bay, three more men were enticed away by 'Robert Fyfe, chief headsman at the shore fishery.' Another who deserted was captured by Fyfe's men, but escaped back to the bush and then rejoined the *Wallaby*. So Captain Bayley took his ship to the infant colony at Port Nicholson from 22 to 31 May. There the resident magistrates imprisoned the third mate, Phillip Hines, for three months for assaulting the captain, and sought unsuccessfully to help Bayley stop still more of the discontented men from deserting.

In June the *Wallaby* visited Port Cooper [now Lyttelton] where they met the whaleship *Lady Mary Pelham*, four months from Launceston with six tuns of sperm and whale oil (NZ Gazette and Wellington Spectator 3 September 1842). In Port Levy on 7 July, the *Wallaby* took a whale, and ten days later they shared another captured with a French whaleship also provisioning there. On their return to Port Nicholson on 28 July, the logbook recorded that they landed 8 tuns (64 barrels) of sperm oil, no doubt to pay the port and legal fees, and to purchase supplies. The local newspaper said however what was landed was 900 barrels of sperm oil and 7 casks of rum. NZ Gazette and Wellington Spectator 4 July 1842. This seems in error for her total cargo, which was noted at the Customs house as 900 barrels sperm oil, 800 barrels right whale oil and one ton of bone (Ibid. 10 August 1842).

In August two right whales were taken in Cloudy Bay, and another off Mana Island. In September, still at Mana, Captain Bayley insisted that even in harsh weather, his men must try hard to catch humpback whales, a species that were normally ignored as too fast for rowers in whaleboats. Evidently they caught some for on 22 September they stored down first '200 gullunts' and then another that rendered down to '100 gollums.' This was small return for the hard, cold and dangerous work (Richards 2002 p.43). So after taking wood and water at Mana, the *Wallaby* retreated to Hobart, arriving home on 2 November after a tedious voyage of 22 months.

Though not mentioned in the logbook, from Mana Island the *Wallaby* carried a passenger, 'John Knox,' who was the father of 'Johnny Knocks,' who became a long-term resident on the farm that Mossman of Sydney had begun on Mana Island from 1832 (Hobart Town Courier 2 November 1842; Nicholson 1985 : 240; Richards 2002 : 20).

During their five months at New Zealand, the *Wallaby* had taken twelve right whales yielding 50 tuns of right whale oil and some whalebone (i.e. baleen). Along with the earlier 40 tuns of sperm whale oil, this was worth over £4,200, a good return since her outfit and provisions had cost only £1,500 or less.



With hindsight it can be deduced that Captain Bayley had not enjoyed tropical sperm whaling, nor such a long voyage as 22 months: He never went as far north again, and year after year he chose to return home to Hobart well within twelve months in order to have the best summer month or two at home.

### 3.2 Captain Charles Bayley on the *Fortitude* 1843–1848.

In 1843 Charles Bayley passed the command of the *Wallaby* to his younger brother James, and took over the new 252 ton barque *Fortitude*. She had been built for a leading Hobart merchant Askin Morrison, and Charles had a part share in her. He set out in January 1843 searching for new grounds for whaling. After two months south of Tasmania, he ventured still further south, well into subantarctic waters, to 'Akron Island' [the Auckland Islands] at latitude 50°S. There the *Fortitude* lay in North Harbour for the next three months, accompanied by the *Cheviot* of Hobart, under Captain W. T. Mansfield. Together the two crews harpooned fifteen right whales from 21 April to 31 May. But the autumn weather was so atrocious, often with thick snow storms, that they lost at least nine of these whales. In June they abandoned the Auckland Islands as unworkable in winter.

Cruising off southern New Zealand near Banks Peninsula, at 44°S, proved less bitter. At Otago they obtained a ton of potatoes. Still cruising in company with the *Cheviot* of Hobart, short visits were made ashore at Port Cooper, and at Port Levy, where they encountered the whaleship *Patriot of Bremen* in August and September (see Oesau 1939:70). Port Levy was then a small village of nearly 300 Māori and about 20 'white men' who were 'mainly runaway sailors and whalers.' Early in 1844 Edward Shortland, the official Protector of Aborigines, visited Port Levy, which was originally called Koukourarata. He wrote that "the Pa called Puari was the largest ... with numerous and extensive cultivations...with a considerable population." The Māori were law abiding and friendly to visitors, but had developed a reputation for dealing firmly with deserters and law-breakers if their hospitality was abused.

The *Fortitude* reached home on 15 October 1843, after a voyage of only nine months, with 17 tuns of sperm oil, 161 tuns of right whale oil and seven tons of whalebone. This was a huge cargo, worth over £10,000 on an outlay of about £1,500. This was probably the most lucrative voyage that Captain Charles Bayley ever made.

On his second voyage in the *Fortitude*, from November 1843 to April 1844, Charles Bayley tried the west coast of Tasmania before cruising back to the south tip of New Zealand. There he cruised off southwest of Stewart Island and west of Fiordland from January to March. A great stroke of luck occurred when a big sperm whale taken on 17 March yielded a valuable bonus of 'about 40 lbs of hambergreas.' This was the first ambergris known to be taken by a Hobart whaler. The current value in Sydney was set nominally at 'five shilling an ounce in order to determine the wages of seamen' (Sydney Morning Herald 29 April and 12 August 1843). This valuation was to the advantage of the owners rather than the seamen, so while the declared value was about £160, it may have been worth twice as much in London depending upon its scarcity on the day of sale. For example, a large quantity was sold in London in 1868 for 22 shillings per pound. With this ambergris, plus 28 tuns of sperm oil, 31 tuns of right whale oil and one ton of bone, the *Fortitude* had made another lucrative voyage.

On his third voyage in the *Fortitude*, from 8 May 1844 to 22 February 1845, Captain Bayley again sought both right and sperm whales off southern New Zealand. From the Snares, his route was to the Molyneaux River [Clutha mouth] which was then the home of about 23 Māori and two whitemen with Māori wives (Shortland 1844 : 156-157). It was reported on 1 July that the *Fortitude* had lost an anchor there and had been hired by two local Māori, Raki Raki and Tatui, for purposes unknown but probably to bring home Māori families taking mutton birds on the islands west of Stewart Island (Church 2002 :73).

Bayley found that supplies were scarce at Port Levy, so other brief shore visits included Port Otago, Port Cooper, Pigeon Bay and Akaroa. In August 1844 Akaroa and its big harbour was the home of 97 Māori and 120 French, German and British settlers. Including several whaling stations with six boats and 54 men, the total population of Banks Peninsula was almost 700. (Ogilvie 1990: 30.) Captain Bayley generally ignored such settlements, as he had brought adequate basic supplies from Hobart, and did not want to risk any desertions among his crew, but from time to time he allowed one or two boats to make short visits ashore to obtain cleaner water, firewood and, where possible, potatoes, vegetables and fresh pork.

On 18 July, off Akaroa, Bayley noted nine other ships, all whaling. Even so they prospered: In late July, less than three months from home, the *Fortitude* had already taken nine whales (New Zealand Gazette 7 August 1844).

On 31 July at Port Levy they obtained 80 baskets of potatoes and seven pigs. At Port Levy again on 4 September he 'discharged two New Zealand men and shipped others. Gitting off wood and water. Received on board half a ton of potatoes and five pigs.' They next cruised north to Table Cape where 'some natives came off in several canoes. Brought off some pigs and potatoes.' The *Fortitude* then returned home via Bass Strait, but the bulk of her large cargo of 19 tuns of sperm oil and 131 tuns of right whale oil, plus 5 tons of bone, had been taken in winter south and east of New Zealand.

On his next voyage, from 8 May 1845, Captain Bayley took the *Fortitude* directly to southern New Zealand. Between long cruises, short visits were made to take wood and water at Open Bay, Port Adventure on Stewart Island, 'Molyneaux roads,' and Banks Peninsula. On 28 June they spoke 'the *Cheviot*, 7 months out with 300 barrels of oil, and the *Joanna*, 4 months out with 70 barrels of sperm oil and 300 barrels of 'black,' or right whale oil. On 3 July Charles Bayley in the *Fortitude* noted in his terse logbook 'Spoke *Wallaby*, 3 months out, 70 barrels sperm and 550 barrels black.' (But he did not mention that her captain was his brother James!) The *Fortitude* remained cruising on the southeast coasts of New Zealand in June and July. They called again at Molyneaux on 13 August where they obtained ten tuns of water, seven pigs and three boat-loads of potatoes. When two crewmen 'absconded,' the people ashore supplied 'one man in their stead.'

The *Fortitude* resumed whaling off the Solanders Islands and Milford Haven in Fiordland where on 25 August they 'spoke the schooner *Amazon* of New Zealand, 6 weeks out, with 4 tuns of sperm oil.' Now apparently requiring only a few more whales to fill her cargo, the *Fortitude* then went to Bass Strait in September and October. However when this strategy proved unrewarding, they returned to the Solanders Grounds in December, January and February, where they killed seven sperm whales but lost one. On 5 January 1846 they spoke the *Magnolia* of New Bedford, out 7 months with 500 barrels. She was accompanied by an un-named schooner, probably the *Amazon* of Jacob's River under Captain Howell. The

*Magnolia* had seen two right whales on 5 December and took a sperm whale on 6 January, another on 13 January and two more on 5 February. However her captain then left for the northwest coast of America expecting the prospects for right whaling would be even better there than at New Zealand (Richards 1995 : 59, 60, 76).

The whole of Fiordland was then uninhabited except occasionally as a gateway for the taking of seasonal foods. The westernmost village in Foveaux Strait was at Riverton where there were nearly 200 Māori and 20 foreigners in the vicinity. It was a fishing village with only 25 acres cultivated, and produced mainly potatoes, with a little barley and wheat (Shortland 1844 : 517). The largest settlements were in Foveaux Strait with about 350 Māori spread between Ruapuke Island and the Bluff plus only 15 or so resident foreigners. Stewart Island had then about 85 Māori and 38 foreigners, mainly at The Neck, Horseshoe Bay and Murray River. A further nine foreigners with Māori wives lived on Codfish Island (Shortland 1844 : 517).

Captain Bayley did not frequent any of these little Māori villages as they seldom had supplies to spare, and visits to even the tiniest spots risked desertions from his crew, on whose whaling the whole voyage depended as he carried no reserves or replacements.

Instead in February 1846 he went to uninhabited South Port on Stewart Island where he was surprised to find several destitute crewmen who had foolishly deserted from the French whaleship *Ferdinand* of Havre. When they begged him to relieve their predicament, Bayley was compassionate and took them aboard. However when he encountered the *Ferdinand* at sea a week later, as was right, he dutifully delivered these deserters to M. Postel, the French captain. The *Fortitude* reached Hobart on 19 February 1846 after a voyage of nine months. Her cargo was a lucrative 59 tuns of sperm oil, 58 tuns of right whale oil and 1 ton 13 cwt of whalebone, worth about £7,593.

The fifth voyage of the *Fortitude*, from April to October 1846, seems somewhat routine. Captain Bayley again went directly to southern New Zealand, round South West Cape to Molyneaux, to Otago Harbour. The village of 'Otakau' at the head of the harbour, then had about 160 Māori, some living in rather squalid conditions, but only 16 whalers and two shop-keepers, three white women and five white children. Only 12 acres of land was under cultivation, 50 sheep and 9 cows. (Shortland 1844 : 517.) Otago still had a shore whaling station as late as 1848, when the Presbyterian colony of Dunedin began in the lower harbour, but by then most of the local shore stations formerly on the New Zealand coasts had already ceased. Those few local whalers who persisted had found that the only reliable way to continue to take whales profitably was to use a small vessel to cruise off the west coast and Fiordland. Even then, very few whales were taken by local whalers after 1848 (Richards 1995 : 61-69).

Meanwhile, having found Otakau unable to supply his needs, Captain Bayley went the neighbouring whaling stations at 'Wiki-a-wiki' [Waikouai-iti]. This was then a village of about 100 Māori, plus 40 foreigners with 14 Māori and 14 foreign wives and their 44 children. Most of the foreigners were whalers in winter, but in the summers they had fenced and farmed nearly 400 acres to cultivate wheat, barley and potatoes, and to run 1400 sheep and 200 cattle (Shortland 1844 : 317). Apparently this smaller but better farmed settlement was better able to supply Captain Bayley with the desired provisions.

Despite heavy weather, storms and snow, whaling continued whenever whales could be seen. In June the *Fortitude* was reported off Banks Peninsula as having taken one sperm whale and eight right whales (Sydney Gazette and General Trade List 3 October 1847; 278). In July they visited Port Levy in company with the barque *Cheviot* and the brig *Nimrod*, both of Hobart. In August they sheltered briefly in Akaroa Harbour where Captain Bayley refused to allow three deserters to rejoin his ship. In September the *Fortitude* and the *Cheviot* took wood and water briefly at Pigeon Bay, where Captain Bayley secured a bullock, eight pigs and a ton of potatoes.

Probably because the bad weather was unrelenting, the *Fortitude* reached home on 16 October 1846 after a short voyage of only six months. However she carried home a creditable cargo of 7 ½ tuns of sperm oil, 135 tuns of right whale oil and 4 tone 15 cwt of whalebone. This was worth in total about £5,700, which on a outfit of about £1,500, left almost £4,000 as a profit over only six months! Captain Bayley was well on the way to becoming a rich man.

### 3.3 Captain Bayley's Disastrous Voyage in 1846 and 1847

The sixth voyage of the *Fortitude*, from 6 November 1846, was a major disaster. It began normally, as they reached the Solanders Grounds within two weeks, and saw many sperm whales there. However, one month later when the *Fortitude* had yet to catch its first whale, the logbook records, in another hand, a disaster on 5 December :

*'At sunset, captain killed a [large] sperm whale. In the dark [all three boats] abligh to hang on to the whale all night. Gales and heavy seas. 6 December. At daylight saw the ship was about three miles off [from the whale and the boats.] Standing towards the boats. The captain left the other two boats with the whale to go on board [the ship.] Got within about 300 yards of the ship, on the weather quarter, when [his] boat capsizes. The captain was the only man picked up after axcident happened. The other five men was drowned--- James Angus, John Stacey, George Rogers, Henry Marriett and Ahiou. At 8 am got the whale alongside. At 9 parted the warp and lost the whale. At noon, strong gales. Solanders Islands bore north 15 miles distant. The capt was sencless for about two hours after he was picked up with both legs and right hand greatly bruised--- lost the boat and all the gear.'*

*7 Dec. Capt. very bad. Bore up for Pt William in hope of gitting medical aid and more hands. Came into Patterson River in company with the American ship Factor [ of New Bedford] 26 months out, [2185] barrels of whale oil. Got the doctor of the ship to attend the capt.'*

Cancelling or delaying the voyage was not considered an option. Charles Bayley would not have stood for it. Within a few days he began recovering, and within a week he was back chasing whales! The *Factor* went on to Sydney and reported the disaster, and Captain Bayley's miraculous survival :

*' We spoke the Fortitude again off the Solanders on 26 December; Captain Bayley was much better. Spoke her again 11 January 1847; captain able to go in his boat. The Fortitude still had not taken any oil up to that date.'* (The Shipping Gazette and Sydney General Trade List 6 February 184.)

Much later Charles Bayley confided to friends that the old ship-keeper left on board while the boats were away, (who probably wrote the above account) had lost his presence of mind, and did not get the ship around to rescue them, or get a line out to them. Bayley acknowledged it was ironic that he was the only man in the capsized boat who could not swim. He said he had survived only because he had got his finger into the boat's plug hole, where it swelled and he could not get it out. Gradually one after another his companions had fallen off the water-full boat till they were all gone. Eventually the two mates brought their boats back to the ship, learned of the disaster and (somehow despite their own hypothermia) had began searching for any survivors. Finally they followed the flight of albatrosses who were already attacking Bayley, who was delirious and crying out 'Leave me alone!' (Robinson mss : 46). Upon regaining consciousness, the first thing he did was to wave his hands to keep off the albatrosses (Copping in Walker 2005: 50). After more than three hours in the very cold water, Bayley's finger in the bung was so swollen that 'the garboard streak had to be split to release him' (O'May 1936 : 42).

Among those who drowned was Ahuah, a Solomon Islander who had shipped on board the *Wallaby* at Marrow in September 1841. He could swim like a fish, but he left the boat to pick up a large float, and could not get back to the boat (Robinson ms.: 46). Robinson, who had known him well, called him Ahuah. His name on the crew list is 'Ahiou' or 'Ahrow.' Another man on the list, 'Aleards' may also have been a Solomon Islander (AOT. CUS 36/1/222).

Other whaling vessels encountered off the Solanders were the *Alexander Coffin* and the *St George*, both of New Bedford, but these were primarily right whaling, cruising out of season hoping to pick up opportunistically a sperm whale if they could.

The *Fortitude* continued cruising off the Snares, Solanders, Dusky Bay and Chalky Bay before the ship returned to The Neck at the mouth of Paterson Inlet on Stewart Island. A crewman, James Campbell, died in March, whereupon the *Fortitude* was very short handed, having only 19 left of the original crew of 27. They turned for home, and stopped en route only at Table Bay where they got one ton of potatoes and three pigs. On 27 March five crewmen were struck by lightning, and several were 'very bad for several hours.' When the *Fortitude* reached Hobart on 1 July 1847 her cargo was only 12 tuns of sperm oil, the product of only two whales in seven months, and worth barely over £1,000. This was Captain Bayley's only losing voyage, and he ended the logbook 'So ends a bad voyage, and put the ship in the hospital.'

Yet only four months later, on 16 November 1847 Captain Bayley took the *Fortitude* out again on its seventh whaling voyage. First he tried a summer cruise in Bass Strait and off South Australia, but by mid March 1848 the *Fortitude* was back sperm whaling off Milford Haven, Dusky Bay, Chalky and Doubtful Harbours. In March they met the *Pacific* of Hobart with 360 barrels (equal to 9 tuns) of sperm oil and the *Eamont* of Hobart, with 12 tuns of sperm oil. During May the *Fortitude* killed and tried out four sperm whales and lost another. In June Captain Bayley tried again cruising in Bass Strait, off Kangaroo Island and the south-west coast of Tasmania. When he reached Hobart on 31 December 1848, they landed 61 tons of sperm whale oil and just one tun of right whale oil. Together these were worth about £5,214, with a fine profit of almost £3,500.

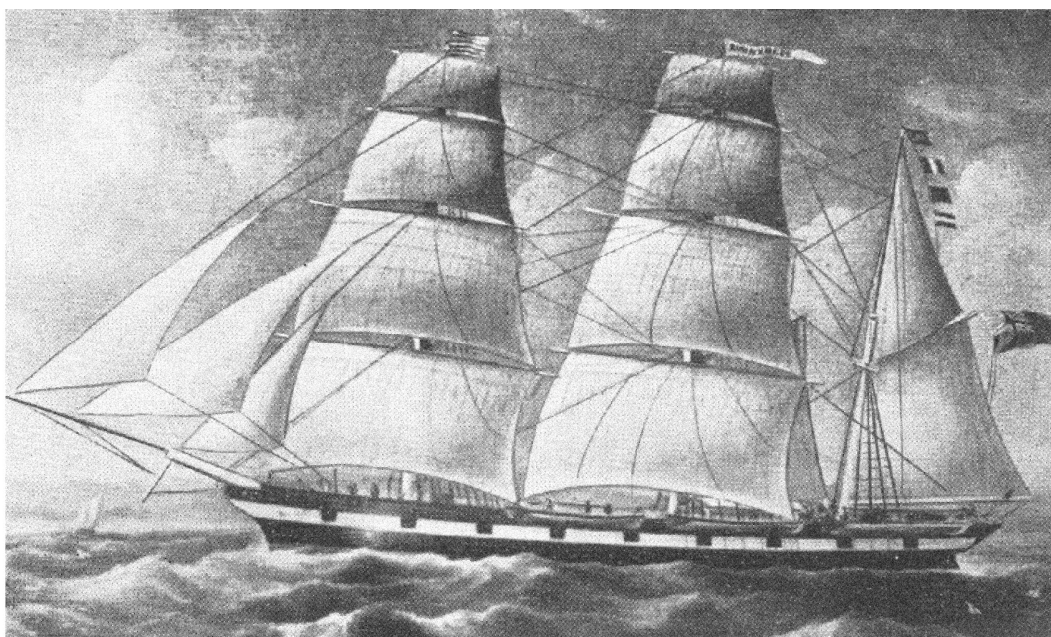
With hindsight it can be seen that on these seven voyages in the *Fortitude*, Captain Bayley had sought and found off southern New Zealand a whaling ground that could be relied upon



to provide a steady income from sperm whaling with an occasional right whale too. Whaling there each winter was always cold, and often dangerous. Captain Copping said ‘summer and winter found Charles Bayley off the West Cape of New Zealand, a more cold and stormy and dreary place there is not in the world to whale constantly.’ (Walker 2005 : 50.) But whaling there was reliable. That reliability was a feature that particularly suited the steady persistence of Charles Bayley. Moreover these grounds were close to home, not too dissimilar from the winter about Tasmania, and the proximity allowed short cruises of about nine months with a month or more in summer recovering at home. While other whalers might explore wherever they liked, Bayley clearly preferred to focus his cruises on familiar grounds off southern New Zealand.

### 3.4 Charles Bayley: Master of the *Runnymede* 1849–1857

In 1849 a master shipbuilder in Hobart, John Watson, built a 289-ton whaleship for Askin Morrison. Charles Bayley bought a quarter share, launched her and named her the *Runnymede*. He then took the *Runnymede* out on ten voyages, all but one to New Zealand. As logbooks remain for eight of these voyages, they can be reviewed briefly in the following sections.



Barque *Runnymede*.

**Figure 4** The whaleship *Runnymede*.

(Photo: State Library of Tasmania)

On her maiden voyage in June 1849, the *Runnymede* went directly to the Solander Islands, and to cruise off Fiordland. They spoke with a French ship, *Angelina* of Havre, ‘clean,’ on 27 December, the *Harlequin* of Sydney on 7 February 1850, also ‘clean,’ and the *Sussex* of Hobart on 17 February. They saw lots of blackfish, and some right whales on 9 December,

but they took only sperm whales. After eight months, the *Runnymede* returned home on 5 March 1850 with 68½ tuns of sperm oil, worth about £5,822.

Out from Hobart again from April 1850, Captain Bayley went first to the 'west side of New Zealand.' Cruising there from May to January 1851, they met four other whaleships from Hobart, namely the *Sussex* with 700 barrels of sperm oil, the *Pacific* with 140 barrels, *Marie Laurie* with 300, and the *Highlander* with 3 tuns of black fish oil. Also present were the *William Hamilton* of New Bedford, 'clean,' and two local whaling schooners 'Amerston, Captain Hoil', [*Amazon*, Captain Howell], and *Otago*, Captain Stevens.' (Richards 1995 : 134-136.) All were sperm whaling. The *Otago* was a 90-ton schooner newly built in Foveaux Strait. Like other local whaling schooners, the *Otago* was employed for six months of each year conveying wool and cattle to Sydney, and went whaling each winter (Whitecar 1864: 159).

On the Solanders Grounds from May 1850 to January 1851, the *Runnymede* killed five large sperm whales, two small ones, and lost two big ones.

In January 1851 Bayley took the *Runnymede* to the 'east coast of New Zealand.' There they took potatoes at Table Cape. From 11 February to 10 April, off Banks Peninsula, they found an out-of-season migration of right whales, of which six were killed. (Curiously only one other whaleship there, the *Highlander* of Hobart, shared in this bonanza, having taken 200 barrels of 'black' oil further south in February.) The *Runnymede* was reported off Timaru in April with 50 tuns of sperm oil and 50 tuns of right whale oil (Church 2002: 106). In May, the normal start of the right whaling season, the *Runnymede* was evidently full, for she then left the grounds and reached Hobart on 13 June 1851. After an unusually long voyage of 13 months, her cargo of 58 tuns of sperm oil, 48 tuns of right whale oil and 27 cwt of bone, was worth about £6,555. This was about £5,000 above the cost of her outfit, and probably more than the *Runnymede* had cost to build. Thus in effect the *Runnymede* had paid for herself in only two voyages. Charles Bayley increased his share in her ownership to half.

In 1851 Hobart was alive with speculators seeking passages to California for gold. Moreover ten whaleships from Hobart set out in 1851 and 1852 on speculative voyages to the newly exploited bowhead whaling grounds off Kamchatka and in the Behring and Arctic Seas. (Chamberlain 1988: 9). These speculators included his brother James Bayley, first in the *Fortitude*, and later in the *Flying Chilvers*, for which two logs survive in the Crowther collection. In 1852-53, the *Flying Chilvers* went first to the Middle Grounds in the mid Tasman, then to cruise off the Solanders until March. The *Flying Chilvers* next called at the Molyneaux for vegetables and other potatoes, after which James Bayley took her on a cruise in the Great Australian Bight. James Bayley returned home in November 1852 with 43 tuns of sperm oil taken in just over twelve months (Daily Southern Cross 7 January 1852). Similarly there are two logbooks for the *Pacific* of Hobart, Captain William Sherburd, which made a most successful voyage to the Solanders, Stewart Island, the Middle Grounds and Cape Leeuin, from which he returned in November 1853 with a large cargo of 70 tuns of sperm oil taken in under nine months. These 'other' logbooks serve as reminders that at that time Charles Bayley, like his brother James, and like William Sherburd, was just another one of Hobart's many successful whaling captains who roved widely across the southern oceans.

Charles Bayley was already a rich man by 1851, yet he chose next to make an off-season cruise to Bass Strait, Kangaroo Island, South Australia, and off Cape Lewin in western

Australia. Through this western cruise, for four months at a season when the New Zealand grounds were normally unprofitable, the *Runnymede* delivered to Hobart on 20 December 1851 another fine cargo of almost 52 tuns of sperm oil worth about £4,400. Bayley was not so much lucky, as well organised to take advantage of every good opportunity as it arose.

A crew agreement survives for the voyage of the *Runnymede* from April 1852. This lists a large crew of 31, all of whom have British surnames except Richard Hiho (AOT. CUS 36/1/458). But in addition, unusually for a whaleship, the list names nine more as 'passengers.' It may be coincidence but since one passenger was named Patrick Gilroy, it could be that Captain Bayley was returning home to southern New Zealand a group of whalers under the famous southern whaler Paddy Gilroy.

The journal shows that Captain Bayley returned directly to southern New Zealand, cruising just south of the Solanders, then trying the southwest and southeastern coasts, and finally the Chatham Islands. None of these grounds proving profitable, Captain Bayley returned early to Australia, cruising to Kangaroo Island, the Great Australian Bight and off western Australia before reaching Hobart on 31 December 1852. After a voyage of eleven months, the *Runnymede* brought home a mixed cargo of 40 tuns of sperm oil and 30 tuns of right whale oil worth about £4,500.

On his next voyage, from 13 February to 24 December 1853, Captain Bayley once again went directly to the Solanders Grounds and Fiordland. There he again met Captain Howell, who was now in the *Frolic* from Otago. Howell was having a particularly good cruise. In July news reached Dunedin

*"that the schooners Otago and Frolic have been at Stewart's Island, having come from Sydney, for which port they have sailed again, laden with oil and potatoes.... Whales were very plentiful on the West Coast, the Frolic having taken 36 tuns of black oil and 1 ½ tons of whalebone. It is said that she cleared £2,000 within the last three months, after paying all expenses..... A short time since, the Frolic had been offered for sale in Sydney for £300. She was bought by Mr Howell and cleared the value of her purchase money after she had been [only] a few days out [cruising]..... From gossip, we learn that Mr Howell, the fortunate owner of the Frolic, has purchased the Eliza and a brig [not named] for whaling on the New Zealand coast." (Otago Witness 9 July 1853.)*

Captain Bayley followed his now standard practice of cruising well off shore, but once a whale was taken, they beat their ship in to a sheltered anchorage where the whale could be cut in and tried out with less difficulty. In April the *Runnymede* called into Halfmoon Bay on Stewart Island for 'four tons of potatoes and one pig.' The *Pacific* of Hobart was there too on 22 March 1853. In May, in the height of the right whale season, Captain Bayley left New Zealand and set out for Queensland, Bass Strait and South Australia. Perhaps however he was just trying for a final whale to fill his ship. For when the *Runnymede* reached Hobart on 24 December, after a voyage of eleven months, there was certainly something to celebrate for Christmas as her cargo was nearly 95 tuns of sperm oil, worth a handsome £6,599.

In 1854 the *Runnymede* made her fourth voyage to southern New Zealand. In March they took two sperm whales 'in sight of land,' and near Milford Sound spoke the *Pacific* of Hobart, 'clean.' Also there was the 'Govenor of Sidney, Capt Gilroy, five months out, with 200 barrels of sperm oil. Gilroy took a 170-barrel sperm whale on 13 April and had 230 more barrels by



11 July. On 5 April two boats sent on shore at Open Bay returned with 'about twenty baskets of potatoes,' and more were brought off the following day. Again the *Runnymede* cruised off shore until a whale was taken, when she headed for a sheltered bay or fiord. From 21 April to 2 July the *Runnymede* took nine sperm whales, one of which was 'small,' and lost two more. Ninety more baskets of potatoes were secured in June, apparently from Stewart Island, and another 2 ½ tons from Jackson's Bay in mid July. The *Runnymede* then returned home, via South Australia. After a cruise of nine months, on 16 November they landed at Hobart with 100 tuns of sperm oil. Through a major price rise, this cargo was worth a handsome £7,500. Clearly, Captain Bayley was continuing to make very good money from whaling steadily.

As no logbook survives for this voyage, very little is known of the *Runnymede*'s next cruise, her fifth, except that she left Hobart on 17 February 1855, and left New Zealand on 5 February 1856. Her cargo was 70 tuns of sperm oil, worth a creditable £5,600 (Hobarton Mercury 15 February 1856; Hobart Daily Courier 15 February 1856).

Captain Bayley's voyage in 1856 followed his standard route. In April he was sperm whaling off the Solanders and Fiordland, where they met two American whaleships, three from Hobart and the whaling schooner *Otago* from Otago. When whales were caught, they were taken into sheltered waters for processing in the fiords, mainly Thompson Harbour and Milford Haven. In May they spoke the *Pacific* of Hobart with 370 barrels of sperm oil. The *Runnymede* was still on the 'west coast of New Zealand' in August when she was spoken to by the local schooner *Eliza* which had taken 300 barrels in four months on the West Coast (Nelson Examiner 13 September 1856). The *Eliza* reported that the American ship *Alexander*, 12 months out, had 550 barrels, and three Hobart whaleships, namely *Flying Chilvers* with 250 barrels, *Australasian Packet* with 130 barrels and the *Runnymede* with only 150 barrels. The latter figure at least seems under-reported as when the *Runnymede* reached home on 22 December 1856, after a voyage of only nine months, her cargo was 62 tuns of sperm oil (about 500 barrels) and 12 tuns of whale oil, worth about £5,800.

### 3.5 The (Almost Unknown) Voyage of the *Runnymede* in 1857

Before the *Runnymede* left home in 1857, as was usual a formal Agreement was signed to establish contractual obligations between the owners and the crew. The only such agreement or crew list surviving for these voyages of the *Runnymede* was made out on 5 January 1857 with Charles and James Bayley named as the joint owners. The Agreement specified the agreed lays, or shares, each crewman would earn for any sperm oil or right whale oil and bone taken during a cruise of eighteen months. Of the 34 crew, 21 signed including the captain, mate and second officer, but 13 could not write even their own names. These included the fourth mate, one of the boatsteerers (harpooners), the carpenter and 'Toby' who may have been the only non-European crew member. The lays varied from 1/16th for the first officer down to 1/65th for one seaman and 1/80th for the ship's boy for all right whale oil and bone taken, but only 1/120th for sperm oil. Normal prices of only £14, 40 and 40 were set in advance, whereas the actual market prices on their return home were £12, 40 and 80, providing still further profits for the owners. Thus an ordinary seaman received at the end of this successful voyage only £24.3 rather than the £43.77 had he

shared in the sharp 100% increase in the price for sperm oil during the voyage. That bonus went, as was usual, entirely to the owners.

Logbooks usually contain very little more than bare observations of the weather, shipping met and whales seen, chased and taken. Charles Bayley's records are perhaps more correctly called journals since they do contain a little more detail. But they convey nothing of day by day business of cruising for elusive whales, and how they were captured and processed.

Consequently it is a pleasure to turn to a record that reads easily. In July 1855, William B. Whitecar left New Bedford on the bark *Pacific*, Captain John Shearman, on a whaling voyage through the Atlantic and Indian oceans to reach southern New Zealand in February 1857.

*'On this ground, in company with us were about a dozen English ships from Sydney and Hobart Town' [including the Runnymede]. 'The weather was always difficult... During the four months we continued on this coast, we were hove to [sheltering from the bad weather] for 58 days, and at least half as many more, we were prevented from whaling by the density of the fog....'*

*'On the commencement of the first gale, we saw a colonial schooner belonging to Jacob's River, New Zealand, square her yards and run for Mary's Bay [probably Murray River on Stewart Island]. Her captain, on the approach of the gale, usually running into one of the many safe and pleasant harbours on the coast, remaining there till its violence had ceased, and then popping out and cruising during the continuance of good weather. The schooner, the Eliza, was manned by New Zealanders—her captain [later called 'Tom'] and mate ['Bill'] are half castes. They are [all] a manly people, without much intelligence, [education?] but make excellent sailors and whalemen. The Otago, another schooner, belongs to the same place, also has a Maurii crew with an English captain and mate, all very pleasant people.'* (Whitecar 1864 : 151.)

*'The American ships, running in to Stewart's Island [in February] for vegetables, lost several men by desertion... who were hard put to sustain themselves in the bush...[I heard later that] they finally joined the natives who fed and clothed them...'*

*'On the last day of March, the third mate struck a noble whale...the flukes struck the boat twice, knocking a hole right through it... The crew swam to her remains but in the heavy swell, lost one man.... This accident [shattered our comradeship.]'*

*'Several of the barques then on the whaling grounds were built in Hobart Town, from the Hobarttown model. They had long heads, but their sterns and aft were of a fashion of fifty years ago... we saw the barque Runnymede's boats lying at the side of a dead whale, and the Sapphire's boats captured four sperm whales... The American 'toggel' irons [harpoon heads] are an impressive improvement, as are our iron row locks...'*

*'The colonial gentlemen are fair whalers, but do not possess the [daring] energetic, go-ahead spirit of Americans. They work very carefully, and seldom expose their boats or themselves to much danger; for instance they never sail on to whales, always taking the mast down when arriving in their vicinity. I remember hearing the captain of the Hobart ship Pacific [William Sherburd] remark that he had been whaling, man and boy, for thirty-five years during which time he had never sailed on to a whale, and never had his boat stove in. On the contrary, Yankee whalers will risk more to capture whales...'*

*"On 17 May [ 1857] with the schooner Eliza we went in to escape the gale in Milford Haven Bay [probably Anita Bay at the mouth of the fiord.] Her captain informed me that the [sperm] whale [he had alongside] would reimburse his ship's owners for all the outlay on the vessel, provisions being very cheap here....' [A good sperm whale in those southern waters would yield 8 tuns (64 barrels), worth at a London price of pounds 80 per tun, about £640. Richards 1995 : 135.]*

Once securely anchored, there was liberty for all to visit each other's ships, with the American vessels being very popular for free molasses, free biscuit and some tobacco.

*'I was very pleased with these Mauriis; they were intelligent, courageous and sprightly. Their songs, delivered with all the gusto of a half-civilised nature, possessed great interest. In their war songs they become imbued with the spirit of their music, and perform most curious antics attended by horrid contortions of features. Their love songs too were accompanied by numerous gestures, one of them taking the lead, and the others joining in the chorus. These love songs were said, by those acquainted with their language, to consist of all that was licentious and disgusting; but to us who did not understand a word of them, it made little difference. They also performed in pantomime, which from its ridiculousness excited our risibilities to prolonged laughter, to their great satisfaction.'*

*'The half castes considered themselves a peg above the native, and take good care to let the strangers know the distinction. They are a large, well built, race and make excellent oarsmen; they are much addicted to the use of spirits; they lament much their inability to read and write, stating in palliation of their ignorance, that when they were children there were no schools, but that the rising generation, by the exertions of the missionaries, enjoyed the privilege of attending schools.'* (Whitecar 1864 : 146-163.)

The Americans were overwhelmed by the natural beauty of Milford Sound, the greenness of the vegetation, the sweet singing of the birds, and the abundant fish of many kinds. Their officers were mistaken in considering 'this port so far out of the way as to present no incentive for desertion, and five crewmen stole a boat from the *Pacific* and vanished....'

*'On 23 May the barques Isabella and Lady Emma anchored in the bay, and soon after the schooner Otago, making five of us anchored in this shelter... The Lady Emma reported that*

*three of her men had deserted a few days since at Open Bay, in the vicinity of which is a settlement containing eight Mauriis. This is the only settlement on the [west] coast from Jacob's River to Cook Strait, with Milford Haven no exception as no whites or civilized natives have been seen there. During a former voyage part of the crew of the Runnymede whilst cutting wood, were driven to the beach by these savages.'* (Whitecar 1864 : 168.) (See also Wellington Independent 4 September 1847; SG and Trade List 16 October 1847.)

*'Next day there was a feast aboard the Eliza...ducks, wild pigeons, wood hens, innumerable fish, excellent corn beef [cooked by their French chef !] .... and a noble plum duff... washed down with a local tea.' A picnic followed, all the way to the head of the fiord, and the sheer 'three hundred foot' waterfall there. Hunters took still more ducks, pigeons, and wood hens, while others gathered muttonfish [paua, or abalone], crayfish and various shellfish...'*

*'From all ships we numbered about 130 souls... At night our barque became the rendezvous of all... I counted 70 men in our forecastle. Each vessel contributed its singers—French, Portuguese, Mauriis, Sandwich and Navigator Islanders, English, Irish, Scots and Americans... the utmost goodwill pervaded the company.'*

Later some men searched the shore for fragments of greenstone 'used by the Chinese and Maurii for ear rings, necklaces and nose pendants [ sic –ear pendants] and formerly 'as gifts or sale to the various tribes along the [east] coast.' The Māoris told Whitecar that a greenstone quarry [of bowenite]

*'had successfully operated in this bay twenty years ago, whilst the rendezvous of a sealing party... a whaling company also had [left] a tryworks ashore where many a fine jacket of blubber had been converted to oil... Now [Milford Sound] was deserted; resigned to its original inhabitants except when some old barnacled whaleship touches at it, or the schooner of the Maurii run in for protection from the weather.'* (Whitecar 1864 : 166-176. See also Shortland 1844 : 155.)

Whitecar on the *Pacific* of New Bedford, and the other whaleships, remained at Milford Sound for 17 days before they all beat out, with the *Pacific* and the *Isabella* both bound for Hobart. Whitecar's colourful narrative seldom mentioned the *Runnymede*, but he does convey far more of the life and vitality of the whalers' visits to Fiordland than are in Bayley's terse logbooks.

Using the PMB microfilms and indexes, three American logbooks can be located for voyages off the Solanders Grounds and Fiordland in 1857, but unfortunately only two mention the *Runnymede* by name. The *Hunter* of New Bedford was off the Solanders on 31 December 1857. (PMB film 775.) The *Hunter* met five other American whaleships, two from Hobart and two from France, of which one was the '*Carlincourt*' [*Caulaincourt* of Havre]. The *James Allen* of New Bedford spoke the *Runnymede* off the Solanders on 12 December and 30 December 1857 and "cruising off Milford Haven" on 3 May and 3 June 1858 (PMB film 384).

All that is known further about this voyage of the *Runnymede*, however, is that she arrived home at Hobart on 7 March 1858, after a voyage of 13 months, with 42 tuns of sperm whale oil, 12 tuns of right whale oil and 18 cwt of bone. Altogether these were worth about £4,538. This was not Bayley's best voyage, but it was nevertheless a lucrative return (Hobart Town Courier 11 February 1858 and 12 March 1858).

### 3.6 Captain Bayley's Last Two Voyages 1858–1860.

The *Runnymede* left Hobart on 10 April 1858. Within ten days she was cruising off Doubtful Harbour and Milford Haven in company with three schooners and a barque. On 4 May they saw three schooners lying off Open Bay, and soon after seven ships were in sight. Whaling vessels from Hobart mentioned, with their total catches so far, were the *Terror*, out 4 months with 80 barrels sperm oil; *Prince Regent*, out 7 ½ months, with 450 barrels; *Pacific*, out 7 months, with 9 tuns of sperm and 6 tuns of black oil; *Southern Cross* out 3 months, clean; and the *Flying Chilvers*, out 4 ½ months, with 7 tuns. Also present were the *Eliza* of New Zealand, *Captain Brown*, out 4 months with 150 barrels sperm oil, and the *Hunter* of New Bedford, out 4 months with 80 barrels of sperm oil. The *James Allen* of New Bedford, now over three years from home, met the *Runnymede* on 3 June, 18 June, 23 June, 30 June and 2 July 1858 (PMB film 384). Their logbooks show that from May until late July the *Runnymede* had continued to cruise to and fro from the Solanders to Doubtful Harbour and Thompson Sound to Open Bay and back.

Eight other whalships noted in May and June, all from Hobart, all with sperm oil: *Pacific*, out five months with 100 barrels; *Flying Chilvers*, 4 ½ months out with 130 barrels; *Australasian Packet*, 5 months and 70 barrels; *Louisa*, 5 ½ months, 170 barrels; *Southern Cross*, 17 months, 340 barrels; *Sussex*, trying out; *Pryde*, catch unknown; and *Emma* 4 ½ months out with 200 barrels.

There were still lots of whales, occasionally a right whale but mostly big sperm whales which, where known, averaged 62 barrels each, or almost eight tuns. On the home market, these big sperm whales were worth about £640 for each whale. Three this size were ample to pay for the outfit for a whole voyage from Hobart for twelve months. Consequently it was the size of the whales, rather than the quantity, that set the economic imperatives: it mattered not if few whales were killed, so long as each was very large. Large bull sperm whales were a feature of the Solander Grounds.

On 12 August the *Runnymede* entered Thompson Sound where the crew were sent to cut wood at 'Crayfish Cove' until two crewmen deserted. On 23 August a boat was sent out in search of men overdue from a fishing trip the previous day. One man, un-named, was found as he was still swimming near the up-turned boat, but the other three men had drowned.

The *Runnymede* then returned to the Solanders Islands where two schooners were noted as ' *Eliza*, *Brown*, 6 months out, with 300 barrels and one whale,' and ' *Post Boy*, six months out, with 300 barrels of oil.' In September they met the *Post Boy* and another local schooner, the 90 ton *Queen of Perth* which had just been bought for £700 (Lyttelton Times 21 November 1858). In November, with these two schooners, the *Runnymede* entered Patterson's Inlet on

Stewart Island, where Captain Bayley obtained '1,000 pounds of potatoes.' Soon after, whilst off the Snares, a crewman who fell from the main top was saved miraculously. Further shore visits included Port Adventure to try out a whale on 1 December, and to Patterson's Inlet again for Christmas. On New Years Day two out-of- season right whales were seen and chased, but without success.

During January 1859 they spoke off the Solanders and the fiords, two New Bedford whaleships, the *Metacom*, Captain Hinds, and the *Jireh Swift*, Captain Earle, and two Hobart whaleships, the *Sussex*, 2 ½ months out with 10 tuns of sperm oil, and the *Prince Regent*, 3 ½ months out with 10 tuns of black oil. All were cruising to and fro for sperm whales, as was the *Pryde of Hobart* in February.

The *Runnymede* arrived home in Hobart on 8 March 1859, after a voyage of eleven months, with 65 tons of sperm whale oil, worth a handsome £5,224.

At this point, Charles Bayley was listed as the sole owner of the *Runnymede*, so most of the profits were his (AOT. MB 2/33/77, 4 April 1859).

On 20 April 1859, Charles Bayley set out on his tenth and final voyage as commander of the *Runnymede*. As usual he took his ship directly to southwestern New Zealand and Fiordland. Six other whaling barques from Hobart were noted in May, all cruising from the Solanders to Milford and Thompson Sounds and back. One was the 195 ton barque *Australasian Packet* for which a logbook survives in the Crowther collection which covers three voyages each of twelve months during 1859-60, 1860-61 and 1861 to 1862, which yielded 24 tuns, 32 tuns and 30 tuns respectively. Like Bayley, Captain Chamberlain made mixed cruises including south of Tasmania and the Middle Grounds as well as time on the Solanders.

In August, the *Runnymede* called at 'Mussle Beach' [Kanawera, or Port Craig] where they met three local whaling schooners, the *Post Boy*, Captain Gilroy, with eleven tuns of sperm oil, the *Eliza*, Captain Brown, with 14 tuns, and the *Queen of Perth*, Captain 'Stevence,' [Stevens] with five tuns. All three schooners had been out whaling for six months, from February to August. During the next month, the *Runnymede* made four more brief calls ashore at Stewart Island to buy or barter potatoes at Murray Bay, Port William, Glory Cove in Patterson Inlet and, it seems, two boatloads from Halfmoon Bay.

Next followed a long tedious cruise on the Solander Grounds for four months, with the *Runnymede* accompanied from time to time by two local schooners, the *Postboy* and *Queen of Perth*, and the *Sussex* of Hobart. They also spoke three New Bedford whaleships, the *Cornelius Howland*, *Polar Star* and *Marion*. Visits were made to South Port to try out whales, and to Port Adventure where 10 cwt of potatoes and two pigs were bought on 30 January 1860. Out of season right whales were seen again in January and in February off Banks Peninsula. Other whaleships there included the *Emily Downing* of Hobart Town, and the French whaleship *Auguentin*, Captain Gell, 17 months out, with 900 barrels (much of which it may have been taken, however, earlier during an Arctic cruise).

But during February and March the *Runnymede* had taken no whales, so Captain Bayley sailed east to the Chatham Islands, a ground then popular with other Hobart captains not only for whaling but also as a reliable source of cheap potatoes and other provisions. In April the *Runnymede* got five tons of potatoes and several pigs in Skirmish Bay (Kaingaroa Harbour) plus, as was usual, wood and water. In May Captain Bayley returned the

*Runnymede* back to Stewart Island, the Solanders and Milford Sound for the start of the winter season there. In July they were reported at Port Adventure on Stewart Island with only 48 tuns of sperm whale oil, but later that month they had better 'greasy luck,' taking half as much again. The *Runnymede* reached Hobart on 22 July 1860, after a voyage of 14 months, with 75 tuns of sperm whale oil, worth about £6,000.

### 3.7 Charles Bayley's Retirement, his Death and his Epitaph

Charles Bayley then 'swallowed the anchor,' or retired from the sea. In 1860, he was 47. He retained half ownership of the *Runnymede*, but passed over her command to his brother James who took her back to southern New Zealand for several voyages. Meanwhile Charles devoted himself to his business interests ashore. He was a rich man, with his various investments worth probably well over £100,000. This was at a time when a working man could support a family modestly on £30 p.a., when seamen on wages got £25 p.a., and seamen who got wages and keep received in cash only about £10 p.a. (Dakin 1938: 136).

In the twenty years from 1840 to 1860, Charles Bayley had captained 19 voyages, but had been at home on average barely 50 days each year, and often under 40. In 1840 when he was 27, and not yet a captain, he had married Eliza Randolph, a Scots widow aged 23. In his concise logbooks, not a word is said about his wife or his wider family, though it is notable that Charles always sought to be in Hobart for Christmas and to enjoy January, the best summer month, on shore at home.

On 26 November 1863, Charles Bayley purchased an elegant sandstone Regency villa on the shore of New Town Bay for £2,700. He re-named this stately home after his best ship, the *Runnymede*. Upon Charles' death on 20 January 1875, aged 62, all the ships in the harbour flew their flags at half mast in respect for this master mariner. His obituary stated that

*'Captain Bayley was no ordinary man. Of great presence and indomitable energy, he was successful in whatever he undertook.... No-one ever grudged Charles Bayley his good fortune.... Both as a master and as a ship owner, he was remarkable for his considerate care for the seamen under him, and while laxity of discipline was the last thing he would tolerate, he was respected and loved by those under him and was obeyed... His wife predeceased him and their children.'* (Hobart Mercury 23 January 1875.)

The *Runnymede* mansion passed to his brother James, another successful whaling captain, whose family lived there for well over a century. It is now a National Trust building (Mercer 2002). Its authentic furnishings, many original including even the wall paper, indicate that its owners' possessed not just money but also exquisite contemporary taste, and high contemporary culture including in music, fine arts, and marine arts including scrimshaw. Even now it is in every way a showpiece of what luxury could achieve in Hobart in the 1860s if great taste was combined with unlimited expense. A tour of this masterpiece provides a whole new insight into the character of Charles Bayley. For his house, his epitaph, is startlingly different from the harshness and dangers that he endured during his twenty year career as Hobart's most successful, and wealthiest, whaling captain.

**Table 3 Whaling voyages from Hobart by Captain Charles Bayley, 1841–48.**

Vessel	Dates of voyage	Sperm oil tuns	Rate £/tun	Value £	Black oil tuns	Rate £/tun	Value £	Bone tuns	Rate £/tun	Value £	Total £ revenue from voyage	Months at sea	£ per month
<i>Wallaby</i>	1841–42	40	80	3200	50	20	1000	Some	-	-	4200	22	191
<i>Fortitude</i>	1843	17	80	1360	161	44	7084	7	235	1645	10 089	9	1121
<i>Fortitude</i>	1843–44	28	80	2240	31	35	1085	1	275	275 + ambergris	360 + 160	5	720
<i>Fortitude</i>	1844–45	19	75	1425	131	32	4192	5	280	1400	7017	9	360
<i>Fortitude</i>	1845–46	59	89	5251	58	32	1856	1+ 13 cwt	295	486	7593	9	843
<i>Fortitude</i>	1846	7.4	85	629	135	30	4050	4 + 215 cwt	215	1021	5700	6	950
<i>Fortitude</i>	1846–47	12	85	1020	-	-	-	-	-	-	1020	7	146
<i>Fortitude</i>	1847–48	61	85	5185	1	29	29	-	-	-	5214	13	401



**Table 4 Whaling voyages from Hobart by Captain Charles Bayley, 1849–59.**

<b>Vessel</b>	<b>Dates of voyage</b>	<b>Sperm oil tuns</b>	<b>Rate £/tun</b>	<b>Value £</b>	<b>Black oil tuns</b>	<b>Rate £/tun</b>	<b>Value £</b>	<b>Bone tuns</b>	<b>Rate £/tun</b>	<b>Value £</b>	<b>Total £ revenue from voyage</b>	<b>Months at sea</b>	<b>£ per month</b>
<i>Runnymede</i>	1849–50	68.5	85	5822	-	-	-	-	-	-	5822	8	728
<i>Runnymede</i>	1850–51	58	85	4930	48	30	1440	1 + 7cwt	135	182	6552	13	468
<i>Runnymede</i>	1851	51.8	85	4403	-	-	-	-	-	-	4403	4	1100
<i>Runnymede</i>	1852	40	75	3000	30	50	1500	-	-	-	4500	11	409
<i>Runnymede</i>	1853	94.5	65	6143	9.5	48	456	-	-	-	6599	10	660
<i>Runnymede</i>	1854	100	75	7500	-	-	-	-	-	-	7500	9	833
<i>Runnymede</i>	1855–56	70	80	5600	-	-	-	-	-	-	5600	9	466
<i>Runnymede</i>	1856	62	85	5270	12	45	45 540	-	-	-	5810	9	646
<i>Runnymede</i>	1857–58	42	88	3696	12	45	45 540	-	-	-	4538	13	349
<i>Runnymede</i>	1858–59	65.3	80	5224	-	-	-	-	-	-	5224	11	475

**Table 5 The estimated personal earnings from whaling of Captain Charles Bayley.**

<b>Vessel</b>	<b>Gross earnings £ London prices</b>	<b>Minus 10% freight to London to estimate Hobart prices</b>	<b>Minus outfit and provisions</b>	<b>Estimated Captain's lay – say 8%</b>	<b>Plus half share to Captain as owner – say 15%</b>
<i>Wallaby</i>	4200	3780	2280	190	342
<i>Fortitude</i>	10939	9081	7581	631	1037
<i>Fortitude</i>	3600	3240	1740	145	261
<i>Fortitude</i>	3241	2916	1416	118	210
<i>Fortitude</i>	7593	6834	5534	461	780
<i>Fortitude</i>	5700	5130	3630	303	371
<i>Fortitude</i>	1020	918	592		(592)
<i>Fortitude</i>	5214	4693	3193	266	478
<i>Runnymede</i>	5822	5240	3740	312	569
<i>Runnymede</i>	6552	5897	4397	366	659
<i>Runnymede</i>	4403	3963	3963	2463	369
<i>Runnymede</i>	4500	4050	4050	255	382
<i>Runnymede</i>	6599	5940	5940	4440	660
<i>Runnymede</i>	7500	6750	6750	5250	787
<i>Runnymede</i>	5600	5040	5040	3540	413
<i>Runnymede</i>	5810	5229	5229	3729	559
<i>Runnymede</i>	4538	4085	4085	2585	387
<i>Runnymede</i>	5224	4702	4702	2202	330
			<b>Totals</b>	<b>5012</b>	<b>7670</b>

**Table 6 Summary: estimated numbers of sperm and right whales taken by whaleships under Captain Charles Bayley.**

<b>Sperm whales</b>	
Total oil yield recorded @ 8 barrels per tun	865.5 tuns 7164 barrels
Estimated yield per sperm whale	25 barrels
Estimated total number of sperm whales killed and tried out Plus an estimated further 10% of whales killed but lost	286.6 28.6
<b>Total estimated number of sperm whales killed</b>	<b>315.2</b>
<b>Right whales</b>	
Total oil yield recorded @ 8 barrels per tun	537.4 tuns 4300 barrels
Estimated yield per right whale	60 barrels
Estimated total number of right whales killed and tried out Plus an estimated further 10% of whales killed but lost	71.6 7.2
<b>Total estimated number of right whales killed</b>	<b>78.9</b>

## 4. Decline of Whaling on the Solanders Grounds

### 4.1 Paddy Gilroy

The final section of this review concerns the lesser known decades from the 1860s to 1880s when a few American vessels called en route elsewhere, and a few from Tasmania, but the main whaling was by whaleships operating from Dunedin, including the cruise made by Frank Bullen in the *Splendid* in 1876. Most of the information for this period was found in early New Zealand newspapers, especially those now on-line and partially indexed under the Papers Past project, plus logbooks from American whaleships (PMB).

In this period the whaler who spent most time at the Solanders was Paddy Gilroy, whose whaling prowess Bullen declared second to none. This included the American captains, whose discipline and meanness to their crewmen was in stark contrast to Gilroy's informality and reliance upon team effort :

*"Half his crew were Māori and relations by marriage. Overflowing with kindness and good temper, his ship was a veritable ark of refuge for any unfortunate who needed help...His men adored him. They believed him capable of anything in the way of whaling...There were 16 white men on board the Chance, including the skipper, drawn as usual from various European and American sources, the rest of the crew of over forty all told being made up of Māoris and half*

*breeds. One common interest united them, making them the jolliest crowd I ever saw---their devotion to their commander. There was to be found no jealousy of the Māoris being officers and harpooners, no black looks or discontented murmurings; all hands seemed particularly well satisfied..... so that though the old tub was malodorous to turn a pretty strong stomach, it was a pleasure to visit her cheerful crowd for the sake of their enlivening society.'* (Bullen 1899 p.331.)

Bullen made Captain Paddy Gilroy's name synonymous with sperm whaling in Foveaux Strait and the Solanders. Gilroy had been right whaling on the southern coasts since 1837 or earlier, and had settled at Bluff soon after. Gilroy went whaling in the *Success* until 1845, and then in the *Amazon*, and in other vessels. These were active not only everywhere in Foveaux Strait and around Stewart Island, including the Solanders, but also in Fiordland and some made seasonal cruises to the subantarctic islands. In 1857 Gilroy became a partner in the 96-ton schooner *Postboy* which, as noted earlier, was active for many years in Foveaux Strait, at the Solanders and along the coast of Fiordland.

The 171-ton whaling brig *Amhurst* under Captain Gilroy had left Sydney in November 1865, and was at Bluff in February 1866, and was next reported three months later off Jackson Bay, still 'clean,' that is, without any oil. 'Three of her boats were away bay whaling, one at Big Bay and two others at Milford Sound' (West Coast Times 10 April 1866). On 30 May she called briefly at Bluff, still with no oil.

*'While cruising off the Solanders she was struck by a heavy sea, causing her to make water very fast. Tried to make Preservation Inlet, but owing to the weather was obliged to bear up for Stewart's Island, and succeeded in getting her into a safe spot in Port William before she filled. She now lies under water, the deck awash at low tide. The sails and whaling gear have all been saved. The master ... arrived at Bluff from whence he intends taking appliances with a view to lift the wreck.* (West Coast Times 20 July 1866.)

At auction,

*'the hull and gear of the whaling brig Amhurst (lying stranded at Stewart's Island) sold for £95, whaling tackle £19 and miscellaneous stores, including 'barometer, compasses, running gear, 4 whale boats, harpoons, lances and everything complete,' £65. Total £170.'* (Southland Times 31 August, 7 September 1866.)

Nevertheless the *Amhurst* was refloated. 'It is the owner's intention to give her a thorough overhaul, and then sail for the Auckland Islands to try their luck for seal oil' (Southland Times 10 October 1866). She then made several sealing and whaling voyages to the Snares, Auckland and Campbell Islands. The *Amhurst* returned to Bluff, via Patterson's Inlet, 'from a whaling voyage,' in mid November 1867 bringing up nine men and one woman, survivors of the wreck of the *General Grant* at the Auckland Islands (West Coast Times 20 November 1867). Soon after Captain Gilroy was employed by the Government to set up stores depots for shipwrecked seamen at the Auckland and Campbell Islands (West Coast Times 12 February 1868).

In 1871 Gilroy took command of the 48-ton schooner *Awarua*, and took out the 115-ton brigantine *Sarah Pile* in June 1873 and October 1874. In the latter he had returned to Dunedin in October 1873 with 16 ½ tuns of oil, 544 kg of whalebone and some sealskins, taken partly in the southern islands. For this, Gilroy and his partners claimed the £500 bonus newly announced by the Otago Provincial Council to promote local whaling, but his claim

was declined as premature. The *Sarah Pile* sailed again on a whaling cruise on 30 October 1874 (Evening Post 31 October 1874).

During 1874 Gilroy and partners then bought the old whaling brig *Chance*, which Bullen described as 'some poor old relic of a bygone day.' Gilroy however came home in March 1875, after a cruise of only five months, with sperm oil worth £4,000. This earned her half the provincial bonus, despite allegations from his competitors who owned the rival Otago whaling barque *Splendid*, that the *Chance* had gone to Macquarie Island for sea-elephant oil (Cumpston 1968 p.83-86). Gilroy took the *Chance* out again despite its reputation as a very leaky wreck of a ship. He returned on 9 September 1876 'from southern New Zealand.'

Later Gilroy took out the 225 ton whaling barque *Celestia* which was reported on 28 September 1877 towing into Port William a ten tun sperm whale, no doubt taken from the Solanders Grounds. It was said then that the *Celestia* was 'as revenue producing as Gilroy's previous commands. When Paddy Gilroy was sixty in 1881, the *Celestia* was sold. He remained at Bluff, always a genial adviser for sailors, and a great raconteur of sea tales, until his death in 1903' (Church 2002).

## 4.2 Other whaleships present in the 1860s and 1870s

Gilroy was the pre-eminent whaler at the Solanders in this period, but not the only one. The *Hunter* of New Bedford made two visits : On 17 March 1858, well west of Fiordland, she spoke the *Prince Regent* of Hobart. In May they cruised as far north as Cascade Point, where they met the *James Allen* and the *Runnymede*. Sperm whales were seen from time to time, and chased, but without success. For example:

*'Saw whales. Lowered boats. Bow boat struck. Larboard boat went on to fasten to the whale, darted, missed the whale. Cut the line. The whale went off. So ends the day.'*

The *Hunter* then cruised away to Tasmania (PMB 775).

On her next voyage from Tasmania, she took 530 barrels of sperm oil and 630 barrels of black whale oil by late February (Sydney Morning Herald 25 March 1861).

The *Hunter* next took a whale near Thompson Sound on 15 June 1861 and two more on 24 and 25 June off Milford Haven. They saw two sail, but identified only the *Roman* of New Bedford, seen on 7 July. Thereafter the *Hunter* cruised west to the Middle Grounds and Tasmania (PMB 334).

A journal kept on board the *Roman* of New Bedford in 1861 is beautifully written in a tiny copper-plate script, but is frustrating as it lacks the usual almost daily observations of latitude and longitude, so that the location of the ship day by day is unclear. Her crew saw the Auckland Islands on 23 February 1861, saw many right whales 'on New Zealand, and killed and saved seven large right whales.' On 7 March the *Roman* 'was going through Favourite Strait,' (a long lasting American name for Foveaux Strait) and came to anchor in Glory Harbour on Stewart Island for a week. Thereafter the *Roman* went to the 'north and west' to cruise 'along the land' which apparently was Fiordland. A sperm whale was taken and saved

on 12 April, and five more on 12 and 13 June just off Thompson Sound. Whaleships spoken included the bark *Sun* of New Bedford on 26 March, out five months and 'clean.' The *James Allen* of New Bedford was seen frequently from 27 March to 9 May, and the *Cornelius Howland* of New Bedford, met on 27 April, was then 29 months from home with 900 barrels of sperm oil and 100 barrels of whale oil. The *Southern Cross* of Hobart was spoken on 7 April and 6 May. Also on 6 May was a memorable meeting with the *William Gifford* of New Bedford, as the wives of the two captains visited each other's ships. The *Minerva* of New Bedford was seen off Thompson Sound on 28 June, after which the *Roman* cruised north to Fiji and the central Pacific (PMB 261).

The *Minerva* of New Bedford really did have bad luck. She passed the Solanders in early January 1861, noting only that the *Cornelius Howland* was there 20 months out, with 700 barrels. By then, the *Minerva* had only 100 barrels of sperm oil (Sydney Morning Herald 25 March 1861). The *Minerva* went on to the Chatham Islands until March, when she called at Port Pegasus only to have several of her crew desert and eleven others mutiny for several days. 'Ugly seas, Horrid weather, Hard Times and Low Spirits' are explained by another entry on 25 April: 'Saw our first whales in two months.'

As they cruised well west of Fiordland, they saw more ships than whales. In the last days of April: 'Spoke *Southern Cross* of Hobart 700 barrels in 3 months, and bark *James Allen* 350 barrels in 18 months, and schooner *Postboy* of Sydney with one whale.' On 3 June 'A month since we saw a spout.'

They spent June off Milford Haven where they met more successful ships:

*'Runnimead, boiling, had taken three other whales in the last three weeks.' William Gifford of New Bedford has taken 150 barrels this season. James Allen of New Bedford has now 1550 barrels. Runnimead and Isabella [both of Hobart] boiling. Southern Cross [ditto] in Milford Haven. Ship Hunter boiling and has taken ten other whales this season, making 700 barrels. Roman 1600 barrels, 400 this season. Hunter now 1700 barrels sperm and 500 barrels whale oil.'*

The *Minerva* was then over twelve months out from home, with scarcely any oil, but such was the unreliable nature of whaling that, at last, the *Minerva* took three large sperm whales on 5, 7 and 9 July.

After that, the *Minerva* went to the Bay of Islands and beyond, yet returned to cruise in much the same grounds, a bit further off Fiordland, from March to July 1862. In March they met the *Hunter* of New Bedford, now with 2,200 barrels; the *Spartan* of Nantucket, 41 months out with only 300 barrels of sperm oil and 400 barrels of whale oil, and the *Stephania* of New Bedford.

May was spent closer in further south, often in sight of Milford Haven, or Caswell Sound, with a week anchored in 'Blanket Bay,' somewhere south of George Sound. In June they saw the *Cornelius Howland* of New Bedford cutting in a whale, and took and saved one themselves but the weather was much 'too rugged' for their equipment to hold dead whales securely alongside for cutting in or for towing to shelter in the fiords. They spoke the *Sapphire* of Hobart, the *Hunter* of New Bedford, now with 350 barrels taken this season, and the *William Gifford*, now 46 months out from New Bedford, with 1,000 barrels of right whale oil and 900 barrels of sperm oil.

In July it was still far too rough to continue, and they left the ground. (PMB 881.) By the time the *Minerva* reached home in April 1864, she had taken a better than average total of 1,982 barrels of sperm oil (Starbuck 1878 p. 577).

In July 1862 the *Stephania* of New Bedford arrived in Auckland having had 'average luck, having now on board 32 tuns and 90 tuns of black oil' taken over the past 24 months. She was 'last from the West Coast of New Zealand and reports the *Runnymede* with 14 tuns of sperm oil on 20 May; *Marie Laurie*, 49 tuns; *Prince Regent*, 9 tuns; [all three from Hobart,] *Roman* of New Bedford, 30 tuns since December, *Junior* of New Bedford 18 tuns taken in one day; *James Allen* of New Bedford 600 barrels of sperm oil, and 400 barrels black oil; *Eliza* of New Bedford 300 barrels; *Hunter* of New Bedford 10 tuns of sperm oil taken since January; *William Gifford* of New Bedford 10 tuns of sperm oil; *Draper* of New Bedford 4 tuns; and *Empire* of New Bedford clean. The *Southern Cross* was spoken on the 4th [June] with 4 tuns of sperm oil. With the exception of the *James Allen*, all the American vessels are reported with this season's 'take', many of them having on board besides considerable quantities of oil taken last season' (Daily Southern Cross 5 August 1862).

When the *Offley* returned to Hobart on 6 November 1862, her captain reported that south of New Zealand he had met the *Runnymede* on 20 August with 45 tuns and the *Sapphire* with one whale (Daily Southern Cross 11 November 1862). All three were probably cruising off the Solanders.

Not all vessels did well. The 347 ton, full-rigged ship *Pacific* of Hobart, under the experienced Captain Sherburd, had been out and about twelve months but had taken only eight tons of oil on the Solanders Grounds in January 1864 when a huge westerly hurricane sent him into Port William to shelter. After three days of continuous furious gales, Captain Sherburd shifted the *Pacific* into Paterson's Inlet but on 1 February she dragged her anchor, struck a reef stern first and became a total wreck. Scarcely anything was saved from the wreck, and three of their four boats were crushed, yet fortuitously all 26 of the crew survived (Southland Times 10 February 1864).

The *Minnesota* of New York spent January and February 1869 cruising off the Solanders where they took a small sperm whale on 1 January, lost one on 7 January, and took one and lost another on 2 February. Off Resolution Island they spoke two New Bedford whaleships, the *Roman* and the *Eliza Adams*, and then cruised north to 'Cascade Point,' near Jackson's Bay. On 3 March the journal keeper noted "I never get no oil in March and April," and three days later 'Off Port Adventure. Sent the second mate on shore where he found half a dozen Mauris living there.' They then went to the Chatham Islands, returning to the Solanders in October: 'Too early in the season here. Chased a lone whale. Could not catch it. Killed a humpback whale.' On 1 November they took a whale, but on 15 November 1869 they began cruising back to the Chatham Islands.

This journal, kept by Captain Clothier 'Crazy' Pierce, is such a dismal pessimistic tale that one doubts the sanity of its writer. He wrote almost daily that God was against him :

*'My destiny is fixed, my ruin certain, my damnation sealed.' 'I have ruined myself and all concerned this time' 'The hand of Providence is against one now that I am so wicked.' 'The ocean is BARREN for me. It is so ordained.'* *'No whales are around Solander Islands. Nothing. Nothing. NOTHING.'* *'Will the Lord ever prosper us?'*

While at the Solanders, and at the Chathams, her bad luck was not apparent, but later the *Minnesota* returned home after a voyage of 48 months with a cargo worth at current prices only a dismal \$1,323. That was precious little to cover expenses, let alone to leave anything at all to share among the captain and the thirty-odd crewmen for their four years work (PMB 240-241; Richards 1982 p. 46).

One American vessel that spent much of her long voyage off Solanders was the *Eliza Adams* of New Bedford. She arrived on 6 December 1873, killing one whale that day and another the next day, some of which was lost because it was impossible to keep a whale chained alongside in such bad weather. On Christmas Day they ran straight into a hurricane. Whales were plentiful, and many were killed, only to be lost in such bad weather. They secured one of four sperm whales on 3 January 1874, and chased many more unsuccessfully on a set route west of the Solanders, south to the Snares, and back. On 26 January they killed a large sperm whale, but lost it four times, and lost another, before trying out one on 11 February and another on 18 February which yielded a big total of 120 barrels. At anchor at Port William in early March : 'Nearly all hands went ashore to church... Had company (two ladies) to Dinner,' and four deserters were not recaptured until 18 March. Next day they killed a sperm whale, and returned to try it out at anchor. The horrendously bad weather continued for weeks. But a whale taken on 30 March was lost when the chains mooring it along side parted yet again. The same occurred the next day, but they killed another and took it into Port William, remaining there till 13 April. Still cruising the same route from the Solanders to the Snares and back, they narrowly escaped the sunken reefs known as the Traps (PMB 256).

Unusually, one of the crew, A.G. Briggs, kept a private log aboard the *Eliza Adams* at this time (PMB 911). In it he criticised the captain for bullying the crew and for incompetent navigation, criticised his wife as a slovenly glutton, and deplored their children, also onboard, as the worst mannered he had ever met. But Briggs does add useful detail: the two whales taken off the Solanders on 14 and 15 December 1873 were large, yielding together 195 barrels, while the big whale killed on 3 January yielded a huge 136 barrels. The whale killed on 18 February tried out at 119 barrels, one on 18 March made over 100 barrels, and another, though 'swelled up and blasted' by delays in trying out, still yielded 91 barrels.

Losing so many big fish from along side in the constant gales through inadequate equipment was no doubt very frustrating, but even so those few tried out were making it a lucrative voyage. From the Solanders, the *Eliza Adams* went to the Bay of Islands where her cargo so far was transhipped home, with the details listed as '159 casks, [containing] 971 barrels of sperm oil, 46 [barrels, containing right] whale oil, and 600 pounds of bone' [baleen]. In this case, each cask held just over six barrels. Normally for the American whalers a 'barrel' was not a physical container, but rather a nominal measure of 33½ gallons.

The *Eliza Adams* then cruised west to Kangaroo Island and Tasmania, before returning again to the Solanders Grounds, where they noted a smoke on the island on 16 November 1874. They spent the next six months cruising off the Solanders but with little success. Whales were seen frequently, killed and brought to the ship, but could not be held there in bad weather until they could be cut up or towed into a sheltered port. Many were lost, but on 19 December they brought one into Port Pegasus. On Christmas Day, which was rarely noted in American logbooks, they set out for the Snares and to resume cruising 'about Solanders Rock.' Sperm whales were taken on 12 and 25 January, 8 and 17 February, 2



March and 7 April 1875. Three of these were tried out at sea, and four in Port William. A crewman drowned on 2 March and the third mate died at Bluff in early April. The ships spoken on the Solanders ground were the *Lagoda* on 1 January 1875; the *Matilda Sears* in January and February; the *Tamerlane* in February, March and April, and the *Chance* in early April. The *Eliza Adams* anchored at Akaroa on 20 April 1875 and then went to Tasmania.

Meanwhile, however, events far away from the Solanders had sounded the death knell of sperm whaling globally. For some decades the fishery had been dominated by American whaleships, but by 1872 the American whalers had suffered three crushing setbacks. First, many crewmen deserted whaling for the goldfields of California, Australia and New Zealand. Second, the American Civil War from 1861 to 1865 was even more disastrous for American whaling, particularly when many old whaleships were sunk to block southern ports. Then in 1871 thirty four whaleships were trapped in the Arctic ice, with 1200 whalers saved but without employment. Some whale stocks had declined massively through over-fishing. But worse still it soon became clear that cheap petroleum would replace many of the roles formerly played by sperm oil (Starbuck 1878 pp. 103-114). After 1872, American entrepreneurs were reluctant to re-invest in such an unpredictable, speculative, industry as sperm whaling.

Nevertheless in southern New Zealand several whalers believed that with their close proximity to the whaling grounds, and by using smaller vessels, they could still make local whaling pay.

In 1873 George Printz of Riverton purchased the small 115 ton brigantine *Sarah Pile* in Sydney. Having 'spared no expense in every way for his purpose, to command her he appointed Captain Gilroy, who, we have no doubt, will make the most of her.' (Southland Times 6 May 1873.) When they returned on 30 September, they reported 'bad weather... whales plentiful, had killed 4 black whales yielding 18 tuns of oil, but two others killed were lost'. She then switched to taking sea elephant oil at Macquarie Island (Otago Daily Times, 30 September and 20 October 1873).

Six months later, they returned from the 'Macquarie Islands.' 'Captain Gilroy states that had there been moderate weather, he would have taken 100 tuns of oil in the same time. He speaks very highly of his crew' (Southland Times 21 January 1874).

One of several commentaries in Hobart newspapers deploring the decline of local whaling mentioned that in September 1874 two Hobart whaleships cruising on the Solanders, were the *Othello* with 90 tuns taken in 13 months, and the *Sapphire* out 11 months with no oil at all (Daily Southern Cross 22 September 1874) .

In December 1874, the Bluff schooner *Awarua*, Captain Adams, landed sealers on the Snares and the Solanders, and reported that, during an uncharacteristically calm day, they saw 'the whaling barque *Chance* about ten miles off the Solanders hard at work trying out a whale' and 'whaler in sight all night seen by the light in her try works. At daylight next morning she was still engaged trying out...' (Bruce Herald 11 December 1874) .

In 4 December 1874 the whaling ship *Eliza Adams* of New Bedford passed through Foveaux Strait:

*'bound to the Solanders where she intends cruising for a time...she had on board 130 tuns of oil, chiefly sperm, 36 months out [from home.] On Tuesday last she captured a sperm whale off Dunedin, [which yielded 7 tuns of oil] and about a fortnight ago made fast to a very large whale off the Solanders, but unfortunately lost it, there not being enough of whale line.'* (Southland Times 4 December 1874.)

The *Eliza Adams* was also reported in January sheltering 'in Port William , trying out a whale caught off the Solanders. She has on board 140 tuns of sperm oil and ten tuns of black oil, the product of two seasons up to date' (Southland Times 1 February 1875). On 2 February 1875 the *Eliza Adams* was 'west of Stewart Island' when she 'came into collision with the American barque *Matilda Sears*, which had to pay \$ 313.75 for the damage.

On 2 March the second officer harpooned a large whale, but it made a furious attack on the boat and bit it completely in two. Fortunately none of the crew of the boat were injured or lost ...' but soon afterwards, through misunderstandings, one man also lost overboard got cramp and drowned soon.' On 15 March they captured a very large whale and succeeded in getting it alongside, though blowing a gale the whole time. Unfortunately the fluke chain broke and we lost it....captured our eighth and last whale off the Solanders Rock on 7 April, making us 85 tuns sperm oil for the cruise' since leaving Akaroa on 20 April (West Coast Times 30 March and 30 April 1875).

To the delight of a large watching crowd, on 11 May at Akaroa the *Eliza Adams* took a 32-foot humpback whale which was expected to yield up to 1 ½ tuns of oil (West Coast Times 19 May 1875).

In January 1875 Captain Joss reported that on 10 January in Foveaux Strait his brig had been visited by Captain Lewis and six hands from the whaling barque *Laganda* [Lagoda] 'out 19 months from Boston with 500 barrels of sperm oil aboard. They had spoken the *Tamerlane*, 600 barrels, the *Eliza Adams*, 1300 barrels, and the *Matilda Sayers*, 80 barrels, [all] off the Solanders. The *Lagado* was bound next for the Chatham Islands' (Southland Times 13 January 1875).

The *Chance*, Captain Gilroy, left Bluff in February 1875 to cruise off the Solanders but encountered foul weather until 14 March when they 'sighted sperm whales to the S.W. of the Solanders, and gave chase. Secured one, and stood for the straits,' but lost two chains attached to the whale, before finally towing it into Port William three days later. She could not get out again till 30 April. She cruised for a week before next seeing sperm whales, but without securing any until 19 April when a whale 'struck his boat with such force that it smashed the boat in pieces and precipitated the crew into the water. Fortunately none were hurt and they were at once rescued by the mate's boat, while the captain's boat succeeded in again making fast and capturing the whale...on 25th on Solanders killed another whale and began cutting in. On 29th entered Port William and finished trying out ... on the 10th May at Solanders succeeded in making fast to one, which took all the line away, and were unable though darkness to fasten again. On 11 May another whale was fastened to, and killed and cut in ... at Port William....and on home to Bluff on 21 May with ' 360 barrels of sperm oil equal [sic] to 36 tuns, taken since February.'

The total amount of oil taken by the *Chance* during her nine month cruise amounts to 83 tuns, nearly half of which is sperm oil, the rest sea elephant oil' (Southland Times 24 May 1875).

In January 1876 an optimistic report stated "the Invercargill whaler *Chance* and three American vessels have caught four sperm whales off the Solanders [this season.] The vessels all report having seen many whales and should fine weather prevail, the whaling business will probably be unusually successful for some months to come' (West Coast Times 8 February 1876).

The *Eliza Adams* reached the Solanders in November 1875 and cruised there till April 1876. On 2 January they took their second whale there, which they tried out on Preservation Inlet along side 'the *Splendid* of Otago, New Zealand.' On 28 January they took another whale into Port William, where they had to deal firmly with deserters and men ashore seeking to entice their crewmen away. The captain's wife and child made a rare visit ashore. The cruised off the Solanders in February , sheltered in Milford Haven in early March where they met the '*Old Chance*,' who later gave them a surplus whale to cut in for a half share. In late March they sheltered in Port William where the captain brought 1 ½ tons of potatoes from Bluff. On 6 April 'the *Old Splendid* of Otago came in with a large sperm whale after only a few days, and on the 9th 'the *Old Chance* came in with a sperm whale for us to look at' (PMB 256 and 911).

In February 1876 'the *Chance*, *Eliza Adams*, *Tamerlane* and *Splendid* have all been [sheltering] at Port William during the past week, where they had to run for shelter during a late gale.... The whalers were all cruising off the Solanders. Captain Gilroy seems to be the only one who saw the gale coming...The *Splendid* of Dunedin was the last to arrive ... a woeful sight,' and severely damaged...The whaling season up to the present time has not been so successful as it was during the last year....' (West Coast Times 3 March 1876).

In May 1876 a report from Stewart Island noted that 'the barque *Splendid* had arrived at Port William with two whales which are expected to turn in 42 tuns of sperm oil; the American whaler *Eliza Adams* as she sailed about a week ago for New Bedford, fell in with whales and secured one of 10 tuns. The barque *Chance* finished transshipping her take of oil on to the *Celestia* and proceeded to the whaling ground. The *Tamerlane* remained in Port William detained by a law suit against her captain.... The case was heard by Captain Greig who gave a verdict [against her captain] for damages of one shilling. Many of the settlers appear most anxious to have police supervision on the Island, as there are no less than seven runaways sailors lurking about at the present time' (West Coast Times 9 May 1876).

Two relevant American logbooks survive for this period 1874 to 1877. That of the *Tamerlane* of New Bedford (PMB 690) includes a cruise on the Solander grounds from 19 December 1874 to 29 March 1875. They took six sperm whales there, and encountered four other whaleships—the *Matilda Sears* of Dartmouth, *Lagoda* of New Bedford, the *Eliza Adams* of New Bedford and the barque *Chance* of Bluff. They then provisioned at the Bay of Islands and went right whaling at Campbell Island. The *Tamerlane* was back on the Solanders Grounds, cruising for eight months from October 1875 to May 1876, sheltering from time to time in Port William and once in Preservation Inlet. The *Tamerlane* took two sperm whales in December, but from time to time saw more ships than whales: the *Eliza Adams* from

November to March 1876, the *Splendid* from January to May, the *Chance* from March to May and the *Matilda Sears* from December to February 1876.

A brief log and an accounts book from the *Matilda Sears* indicate that she had earlier in January and February 1875, and in February and March at Port William had bought '400 pounds of potatoes at 2 ½ cents per pound = \$10,' for which they sold '10 pounds of tobacco at 50 cents per pound and five old meat barrels at 1 dollar each = \$10.' In January 1877 the *Matilda Sears* was again at Port William where they bought 800 pounds of potatoes for \$10, (which incidentally compared unfavourably with a comparable purchase for \$8.75 at the Bay of Islands in April 1877.) At Port William at the end of their whaling, on 11 January 1877 Captain Childs sold '100 pounds of tobacco at 45 cents per pound = \$45.00' (PMB 879). Since her captain had been fined at Port William by a 'magistrate' for acting like a pirate while recovering a deserter hidden on a local cutter, it is most unlikely that Captain Childs paid any duty on this tobacco.

As whaling declined, Hobart continued to send many ships to cruise on the Solanders Ground. Included was the *Runnymede*, now under Captain Davis, which the *Eliza Adams* met there on 17 December 1875. The barque *Asia* was on the Solanders ground in January 1879, but found the weather too unfavourable and shifted to the Middle Grounds (in the mid Tasman sea). There she was 'unusually lucky' in March taking three whales that yielded 33 tuns, so she returned home in May (Wanganui Herald 3 June 1879).

### 4.3 The *Splendid* of Dunedin

The well known cruises of the famous barque *Splendid* of Dunedin proved a highly profitable speculation. By 1870 even sperm whaling at New Zealand had almost finished, but gold had brought much wealth to Otago. Several merchants thought that they could take advantage of the closer proximity of Dunedin to the Pacific whaling grounds to play the Americans at their own game. For this they purchased a former American whaleship, twice as large as the existing coastal whalers, and capable of cruises of up to three years anywhere in the Pacific. The whaleship purchased in 1874 by Mssrs. Cormack, Elder and Co., was the 357-ton barque *Splendid*, built of oak and pitch pine in 1835, which had made twelve major whaling voyages, mainly from Edgatown on Martha's Vineyard. For the Otago Whaling Company, the *Splendid* made twelve more voyages from 1874 to 1890, for which good records survive.

On her first voyage from Dunedin, the *Splendid* went north to cruise off the the Kermadec Islands and, presumably, also to Macquarie Island and passed the Solanders en route home, as her cargo had as much sea elephant oil as sperm oil (Cumpston 1968 p.86).

Her second voyage, from May 1875, was also to the Kermadecs and to Tonga to chase humpback whales (see Bullen, 1899, Chapters XIX to XXIV). On being unsuccessful there, Captain Mellon took the *Splendid* to Stewart Island intending to cruise on the Solanders Grounds. A short diary kept on board by a young apprentice, Robert Percival MacKay, records that in January 1876 they took two large sperm whales but lost one head (see Bullen 1899 p.327) .

At Port William they met the *Matilda Sears*, and *Tamerlane* 'each having done well hereabouts,' and saw also the *Eliza Adams* and the *Chance*, which had just taken a whale. The *Matilda Sears* struck one too but lost it. After another short cruise on the Solanders, the *Splendid* returned to Port William on 19 February to find 'the *Eliza Adams*, *Chance*, *Tamerlane* and the [trader] *Swordfish* all lying there.' (MacKay mss.) However three days later after the storm had subsided, the crew, who apparently included the young Frank Bullen under another name, declined duty. The *Splendid* returned to Dunedin in February 1876 after an absence of eight months with almost 13 tuns of sperm oil (Otago Daily Times 29 February 1876).

The third cruise of the *Splendid*, now under a more experienced captain, William Earle, set out in March 1876 specifically for the Solanders ground. (See Bullen 1899 Chapters XXV to XXVIII.) During April, they saw there other whalships cruising there – the *Chance*, *Eliza Adams*, and *Tamerlane*. The *Splendid* took four sperm whales with each towed into shelter at Port William and tryed out there. She returned to Dunedin 'with a jubilant crew' as they had taken 22 tuns of sperm oil in twelve weeks which was less than half the time of the previous unsuccessful cruise (Otago Witness 10 June 1876) .

Her next voyage, the fourth from Dunedin, from 12 July 1876, was to relieve and replace gangs of sealers taking sea elephant oil on Macquarie Island, and in September to cruise on the Solanders where they took one sperm whale, and lost at least two. In November met the *Tamerlane* of New Bedford which was towing a sperm whale into Preservation Inlet (MacKay ms).

However all her following voyages were to the north, to the Kermadecs and Tonga, and also frequently to the Chatham Islands (e.g. Otago Witness 15 March 1879.) There in November 1882 the *Splendid* achieved lasting fame in capturing a sperm whale containing an immense 938 lbs of ambergris estimated to be worth over £45,000 (Evening Post 18 December 1882; Southland Times 19 December 1882). This was by far the largest quantity of ambergris ever taken from a single whale. It was later sold in the United States , over several years, for over \$125,000.

As far as is known, the *Splendid* did not visit the Solanders or Fiordland after the cruise in 1876. It is rather ironic that Frank Bullen made the Solanders famous for this her last voyage there, while only a few years later the era of sail whaling at the Solanders and in Fiordland had ended forever.

#### 4.4 The Hobart Whalers 1880–1887

Most of the whalships present after 1880 were from Hobart.

Late in 1880 'the Tasmanian whalers *Sapphire* and *Aladdin* are in Half Moon Bay, the latter through the stress of the weather. The *Sapphire* brought in a fine whale which it is estimated will yield 15 tuns of oil. This is the second [whale] that vessel has brought in during the last three or four weeks' (Southland Times 6 December 1880).

Tragedy struck the *Aladdin* on this voyage: she had left Hobart on 31 July 1880 under Captain Edward Copping, who took on board both his young son and daughter. 'Late in October off the Solanders, a chain securing a whale to the *Aladdin* broke, and a link flew up and struck Captain Copping in the head, fracturing his skull. He and his children were landed at Bluff, but Captain Copping died in Invercargill Hospital on 9 November 1880. In his obituary he was described as 'a quiet unassuming man, liked among the whaling community, and a good whaler.' (Walker 2005 p.138.)

The *Aladdin* continued whaling as later a rudder was found near Orepuke with written on it "Whaling barque *Aladdin* Capt. Copping' (Bruce Herald 1 February 1881) .

*'It is notorious what [bad] luck has fallen to the foreign whalers that during late years have visited the New Zealand waters. The barques Asia and Sapphire, hailing from Hobart, are lying at present in Half-moon bay, Stewart's Island. The former having 45 tuns of sperm oil aboard, and the latter 65 tuns. The crew of the Sapphire had lately had an encounter with an old sperm whale off Preservation Inlet, that is fit to go into a book. Instead of shearing off after receiving the harpoon, the old fellow faced about and came at the boat open jawed, fighting with both mouth and tail. During five hours he did not move a mile from where he was struck. Two harpoons were got into him, and one lance, and also five or six bomb lances, but only one exploded. The line which held him gave way somehow, and the crew returned to dinner, the barque being only about 200 yards off. At dinner the boat was again manned, and got close alongside the fish without being observed. The mate had a gun ready, and being in a position to fire a deadly shot, pulled the trigger, when the cap snapped, and the whale seeming to hear the noise, swam away to windward and escaped. The fruitless snapping of that cap cost probably five or six hundred pounds. Such is life—and whaling !'* (Poverty Bay Herald 4 February 1881.)

*'The whaling barque Asia has been lying at Half Moon Bay for ten days. The Hobart whalers seem to prefer Half Moon Bay to Port William.'* (Southland Times 22 November 1881.) A year later *'The whaling barque Asia is again wind bound at Stewart Island. It is reported that on Sunday last she lost a Splendid whale when towing it into Port William. The captain of the Asia has engaged Wm. Joss and a number of the natives from Stewart Island as a crew. This will be the cause of a circulating of a good sum of money in the port, as it is intended to pay the crew off at Bluff at the expiration of the voyage.'* (Southland Times 25 September 1882.)

The *Aladdin* was reported on the Solanders ground on 23 February 1882 because a fighting bull attacked the boat and seized the mate in his jaws, but fortunately for him 'splinters prevented the whale from closing its mouth...The *Aladdin* continued cruising off the Solanders with the *Asia*, which fortunately saved the second mate when another whale destroyed his boat. The *Asia*'s crew killed the whale but it yielded only five tuns [ 40 barrels]' (O'May 1936 p.86) .

*'The barque Asia arrived at Hobart on 13 February [1883] from Spring Bay and the New Zealand coast, from whence she sailed early in January, with 72 tuns of sperm oil. Captain Folder reports that the whaling barques Sapphire had taken 15 tuns and the Emily Downing 8 tuns when he left the coast.'* (Grey River Argus 6 March 1883.)

*The Asia had arrived at Stewart's Island in November [1882] an empty ship, and in less than three months cruising on the Solanders has arrived in Hobart with a full cargo of 72 tuns of sperm oil, valued at £6,000 and netted to her owners equal to £2,000. Invercargill merchants burn their fingers over Longwood shares and throw away thousands, whilst strangers make a fortune at their back doors.'* (Southland Times, quoted in the Grey River Argus 25 April 1883.)

The *Emily Downing*, a graceful 270-ton barque from Hobart, made a voyage from November 1883 to January 1885 cruising off the Solanders and using Stewart Island for shelter and for trying out her oil. A logbook survives in the Crowther collection in Hobart, that records on the Solanders Grounds during 1884 the *Othello*, *Aladdin*, *Waterwitch* and *Splendid*. The *Emily Downing* returned home with a rather meagre 19 tuns for this voyage.

On a subsequent voyage, from 23 April 1884, the *Aladdin* 'cruised for some time about the [south] west side of New Zealand... the most prolific ground in these seas is about the Solanders.' After unsuccessful cruises on the Middle Grounds and off South West Cape [south of Tasmania], the *Aladdin* arrived at the Solanders in late September, 'and after some desultory cruising in this vicinity, took four large whales, yielding 45 tuns. Whilst there she spoke the barque *Sapphire* with 38 tuns on board. On 23 February [1885] spoke the barque *Waterwitch* with 16 tuns of sperm oil. Left Solanders on 25 February to cruise about the Middle Grounds, Jervis Bay and S.W. Cape till 12 March without success.' (Southland Times 30 April 1885.) The *Aladdin* reached home on 15 April 1885 with 45 tuns from a voyage of 12 months. (O'May 1954 p.88.) That was her last cruise as the *Aladdin* and the *Emily Downing* were then withdrawn from whaling, leaving only four vessels whaling from Hobart after 1886.

*'The whaling barque Sapphire which left Hobart in November 1886, has been lying at anchor in Half Moon Bay for nearly a month wind bound. She has secured about 45 tuns of oil since the beginning of January, but has been very unfortunate, having lost several whales when towing them in for trying out.'* (Southland Times 31 March 1887.)

And that seems to have been the end of sail whaling on the Solanders Grounds and off Fiordland.





## Acknowledgments

This project would not have begun without the prompting, advice and generosity of Dale Chatwin, to whom I remain most grateful. In addition the State Library of Tasmania kindly provided a Tasmania Research Fellowship for three very busy weeks in February 2008, along with the full support of Tony Marshall, (Senior Librarian), Heritage Collection, and his ever-helpful team, to enable me to examine closely the original logbooks in the Sir William Crowther Collection. To them, to Mark Howard, and to all others who contributed, I owe many, many thanks.



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