FALIE - a brief history

BY LYN O'GRADY

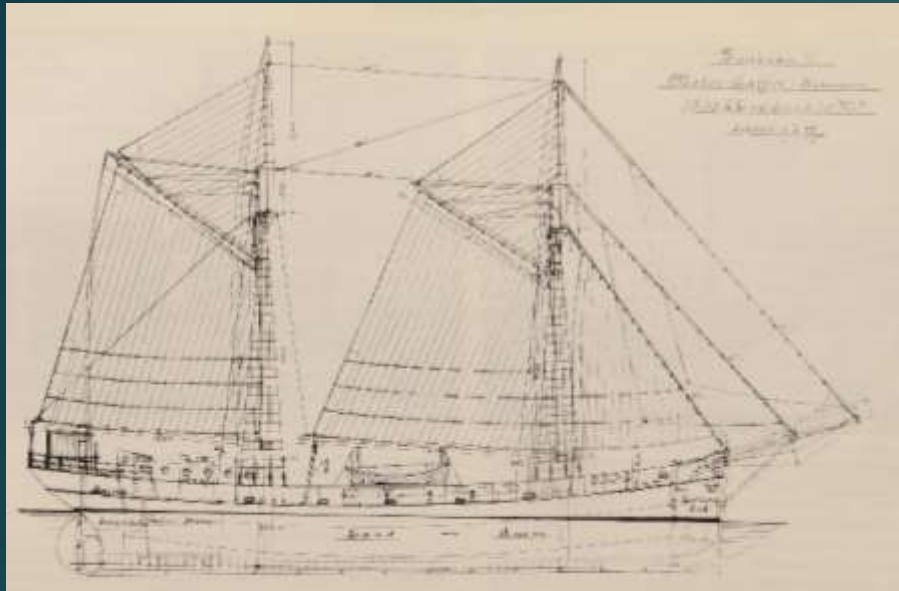**MAASSLUIS, HOLLAND**

In 1922 the newly formed Spencer Gulf Transport Company sent Captain Broun to Europe to select a suitable ship, which he found in Holland, a steel hulled schooner with auxiliary engine. It was built in 1919 but hadn't sold because of a shortage of fuel after the war.
He named her FALIE after his wife Philomena.

Portrait of a Coastal Trader 1985 – Robert Sexton, Gordon Pickhaver

Painting 1939 AV Gregory (R Fricker & Co)

After103 treacherous days at sea through snow storms and rough seas, FALIE arrived in Port Adelaide in 1923. She sailed under a Norwegian flag and with a Norwegian crew who had the option of staying in Australia if they wished.

The FALIE was more than double the size of the small sailing ships, known as the Mosquito Fleet. At its peak there were over 70 ketches, cutters and schooners involved in the coastal trade in SA.
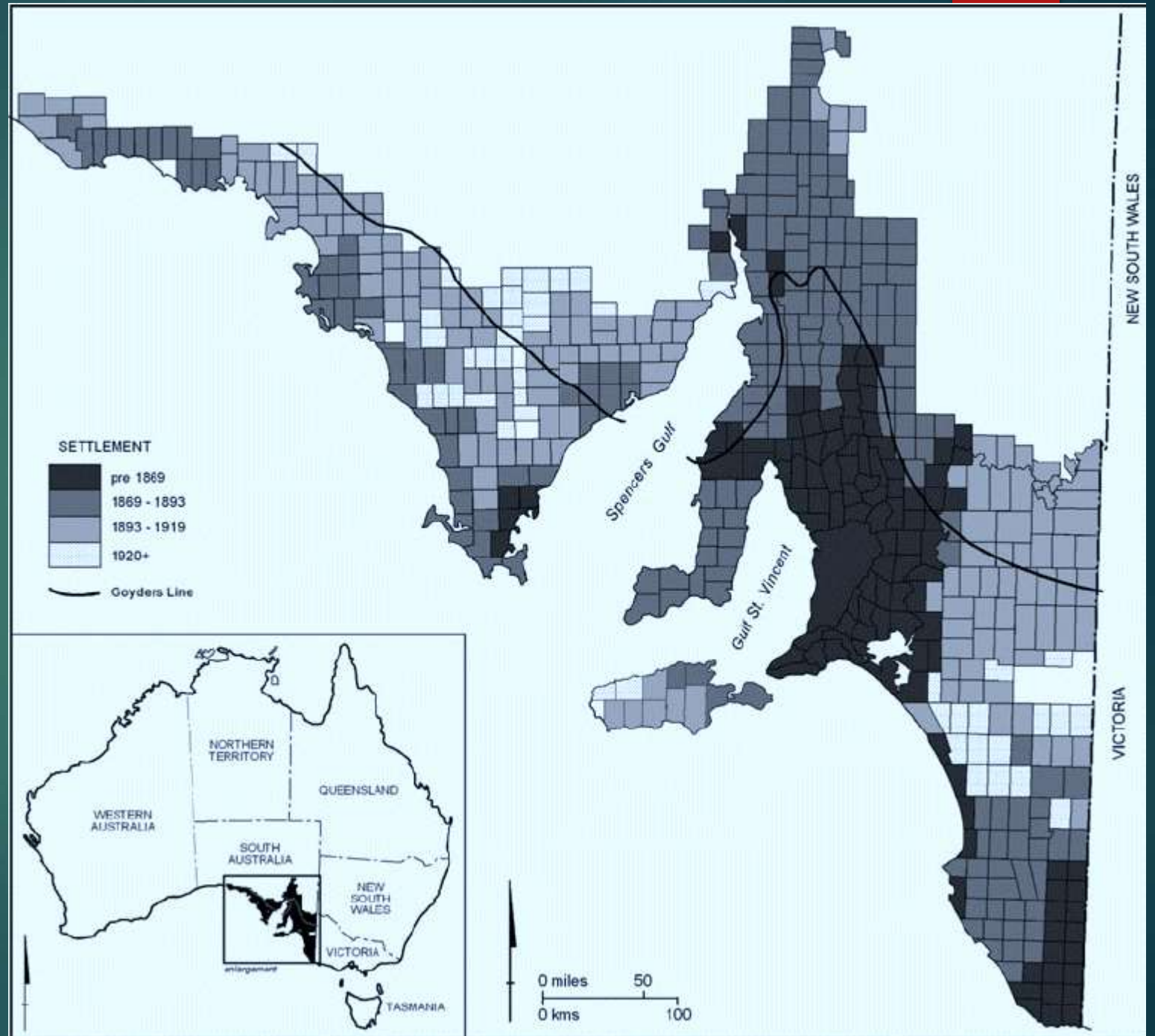

SLSA B 23077

SLSA B 10181   *courtesy of the* State Library of South Australia,
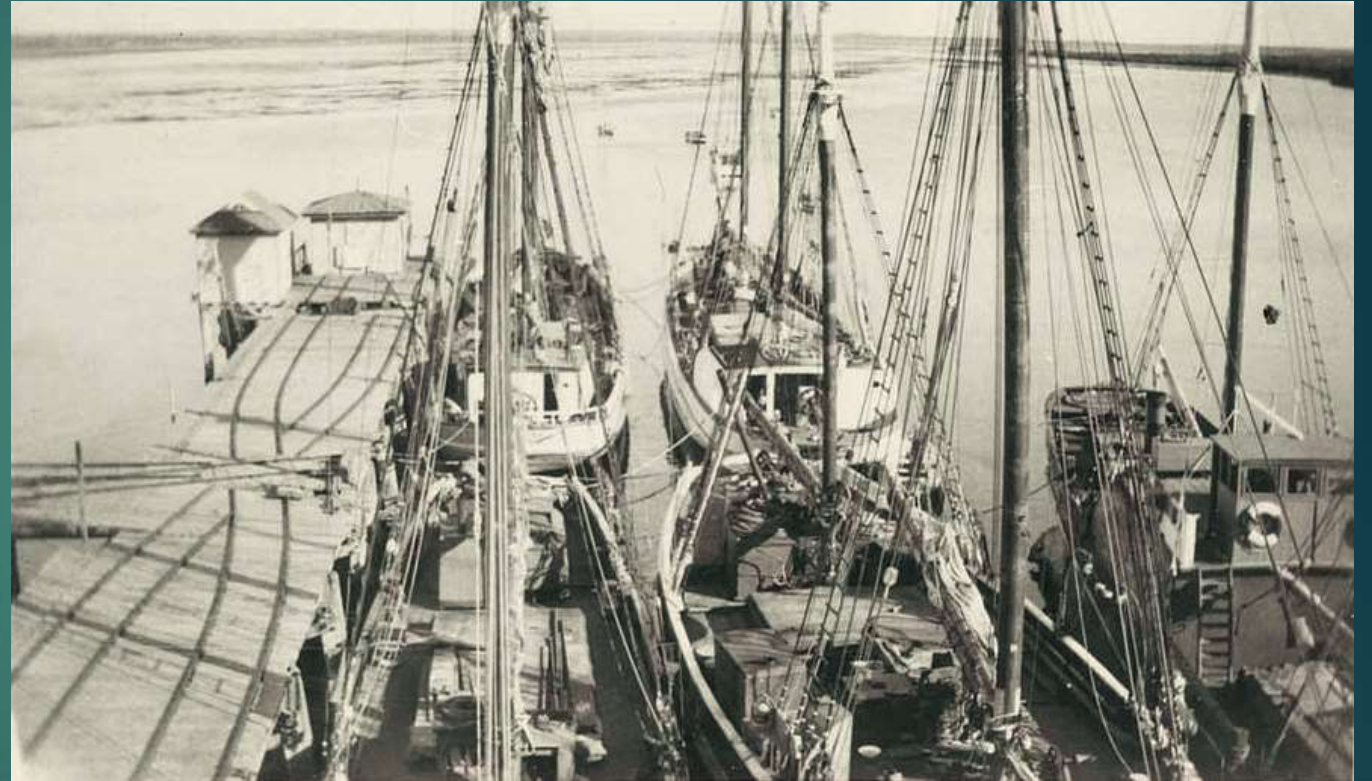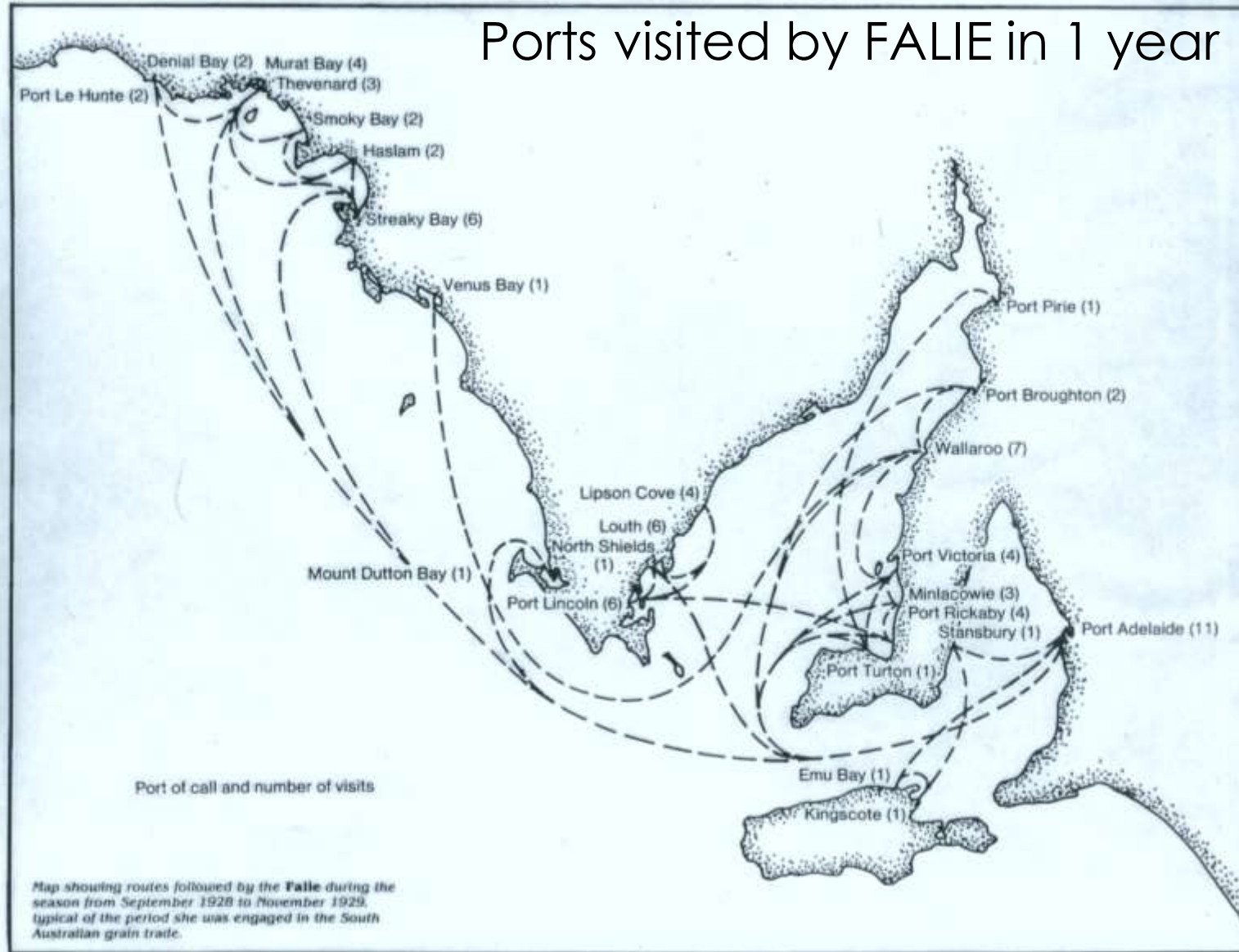
From the beginning of settlement, there was a need to move people and general cargo to and from remote settlements because roads were virtually non-existent.
This map shows the gradual expansion of settlement and Goyder's Line - north of which rainfall is too low to support cropping.

SETTLEMENT

- pre 1869
- 1869 - 1893
- 1893 - 1919
- 1920+
— Goyders Line

Spencers Gulf

Gulf St. Vincent

NEW SOUTH WALES

VICTORIA

NORTHERN TERRITORY

QUEENSLAND

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES

VICTORIA

TASMANIA

enlargement

0 miles   50

0 kms   100

Ports visited by FALIE in 1 year

Map showing routes followed by the **Falie** during the season from September 1928 to November 1929, typical of the period she was engaged in the South Australian grain trade.

Port of call and number of visits

Denial Bay (2)　Murat Bay (4)
Thevenard (3)
Port Le Hunte (2)
Smoky Bay (2)
Haslam (2)
Streaky Bay (6)
Venus Bay (1)
Port Pirie (1)
Port Broughton (2)
Wallaroo (7)
Lipson Cove (4)
Louth (6)
North Shields (1)
Mount Dutton Bay (1)
Port Victoria (4)
Port Lincoln (6)
Minlacowie (3)
Port Rickaby (4)
Stansbury (1)
Port Adelaide (11)
Port Turton (1)
Emu Bay (1)
Kingscote (1)

The shareholders of SPENCER'S GULF TRANSPORT CO were farmers on the West Coast, Eyre Peninsular and western side of Yorke Peninsula.

Based in Port Adelaide the FALIE would be away for 6 months during the harvest season, loading the windjammers at Wallaroo or Thevenard, etc.

The FALIE could carry up to three times the cargo of a ship of the mosquito fleet.

This map shows her movements in one year.

Portrait of a Coastal Trader 1985 – Robert Sexton, Gordon Pickhaver

WINDJAMMER

Windjammers were the grand merchant square-rigged ships that took cargo to interstate and overseas markets.

German built Barque Herzogin Cecilie - one of the fastest windjammers – State Library of Victoria

Windjammers would often anchor a mile offshore to avoid wharf fees. Some of the larger windjammers carried up to 60,000 bags of grain, taking 6-8 weeks to load.

Port Victoria 1933. 'Killoran', 'Pommern', 'Olivebank'. State Library of South Australia - PRG 1373/39/98
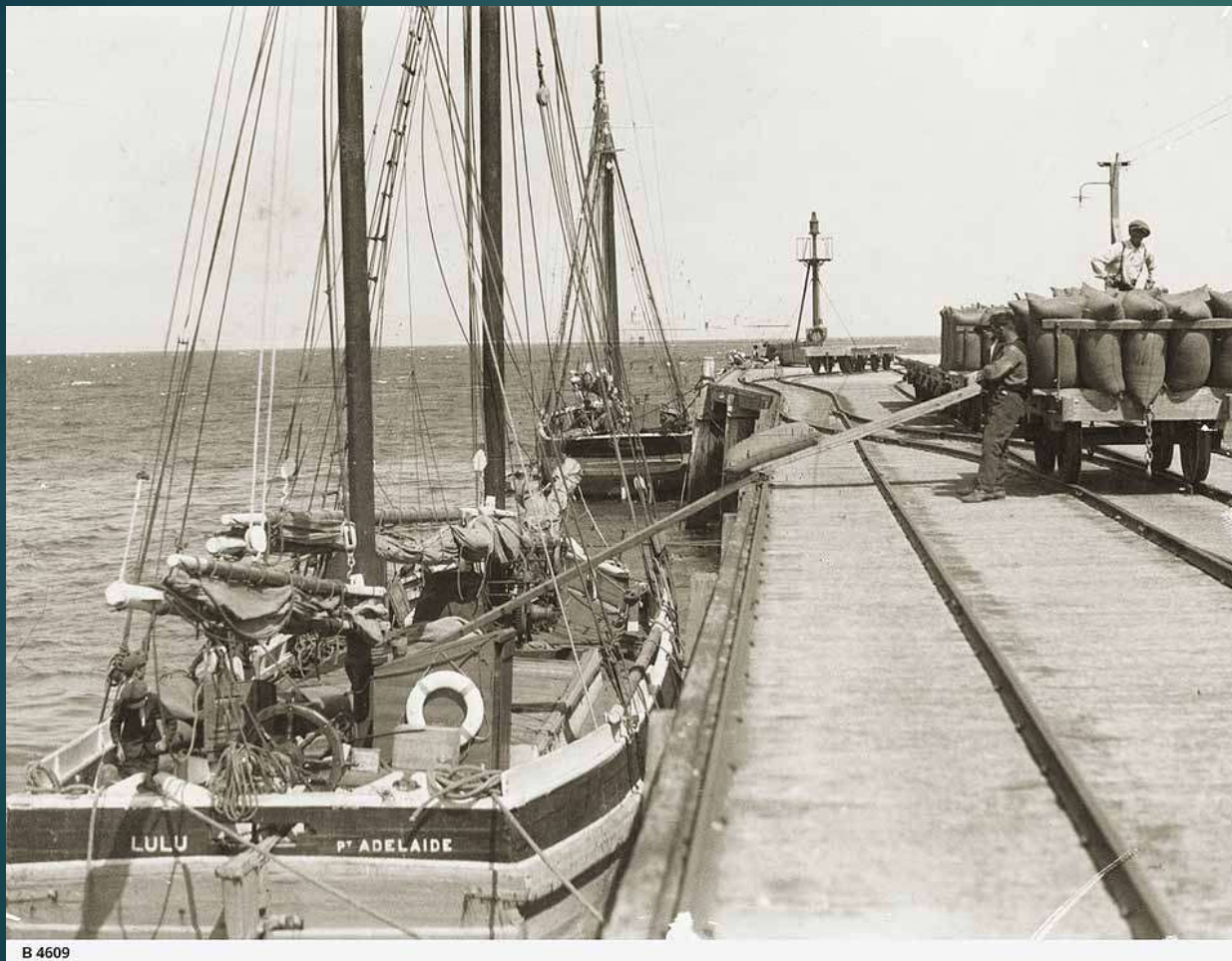
LIGHTERING from ketch into merchant ships

Ketches would ferry their cargo from shore to ship. This was called Lightering. When tied alongside the cargo was winched In the hold of the windjammer.

The Last Windjammer – Grain races round Cape Horn – Aland Maritime Museum

Windjammers would then sail EAST using the prevailing winds. The last one left in 1949.

LOADING – from a jetty using a chute to slide the bag into the hold, then man-handling into position. Note the cart running on a track, pulled by horse or tractor along the jetty.

A typical day would be loading bags one by one at dawn, sail across to Wallaroo and unload, sail back through the night and be ready to load again at dawn

Lulu at Port Victoria SLSA B 4609

Photographs courtesy of the State Library of South Australia,

LOADING – from a beach at low tide if there was no jetty. The ship would sail into a safe sandy bay and wait for the tide to go out.

SLSA PRG280-1-14-628

PRG 280/1/12/26

The cargo was then brought out either in a rowboat or on wagons drawn either side of the ship.

Photograph courtesy of the State Library of South Australia,

LOADING - from a clifftop, using a chute down to the beach and waiting ketch.

1890 Pine Point 'Annie Watt' loading wool bales and grain bags SLSA PRG1373/35/84

The deckhands worked hard handling the cargo, loading and unloading, and a 4 hour shift at the helm, steering the ship or adjusting sails etc. But it was all good training for those wishing to work on overseas merchant ships.

One of the crew would opt to be cook and conjure up one-pot meals on a wood or coal stove in the galley on the Poop deck.
There was no bathroom – washing involved a bucket of seawater on deck – there was a toilet was on the Poop deck beside the galley.
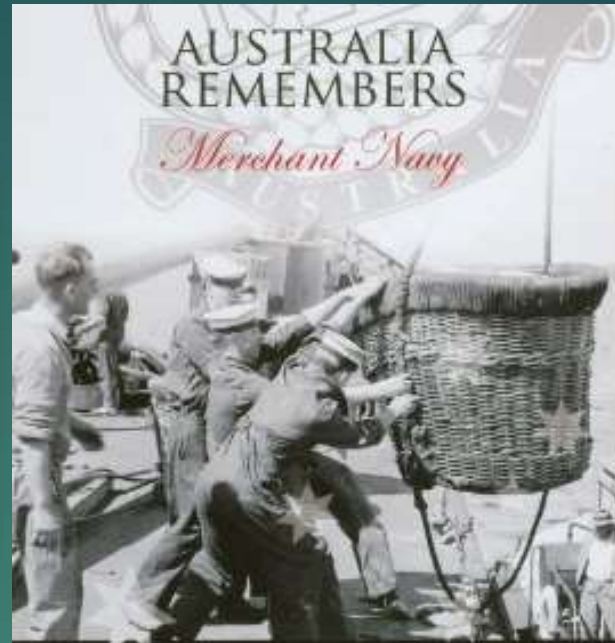

Falie – Historic Ketch Falie Archives

In the off season, cleaning and painting the hull occurred either on a slipway, or on a beach at low tide.

Falie on slip unknown dates – Historic Ketch Falie Archive

World War 2 came to Australia in 1940 with an increase in enemy activity in Australian waters, first from German raiders and submarines, and later by the Japanese. The Australian Navy requisitioned some 600 merchant ships to use as patrol boats. The crew were mostly **merchant mariners**, volunteer sailors. Putting their lives at risk. Up to 12,000 Australian mariners died whilst assisting the Navy. Because these mariners were not enlisted men, they were not recognised as returned servicemen after the war.

http://www.merchantshipsozww2.com/

In 1940 the FALIE was requisitioned by the Australian Navy and served as HMAS FALIE under Lt Cdr CV Wood with volunteer crew until the end of the Pacific War in 1945. She was initially used as an Examination ship outside Sydney Heads. The three lights mean the port is open.
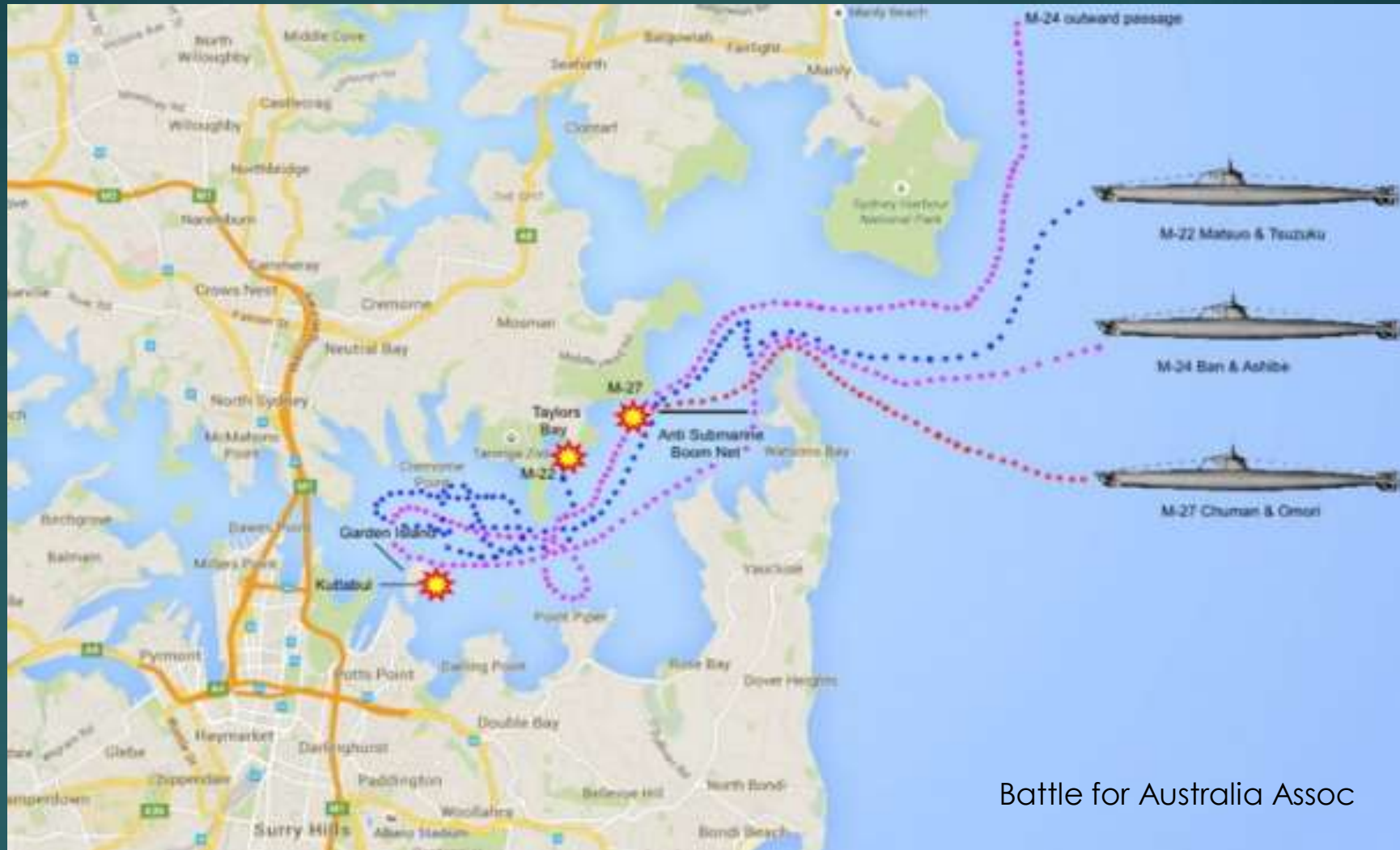

HMAS FALIE - "HMAS" Royal Australian Navy, Canberra 1942

Her role as Examination Ship was to challenge and identify every ship wishing to enter Sydney Harbour and supply a pilot for its safe entry.

RMS Queen Elizabeth & HMAS FALIE outside Sydney Harvour 1941 -   AWM 303828

Battle for Australia Assoc

At 11.05pm on 31 May 1942, HMAS FALIE was on duty outside Sydney Heads when she struck and felt three bumps on the starboard side – hard enough to knock Lt Cdr Wood out of his bunk. He then signalled the incident to the Port War Signal Station.

Three Japanese midget submarines managed to infiltrate Sydney Harbour and later a torpedo hit a billet ferry, killing 21 personnel asleep on board. It was the first of many attacks on Sydney and Newcastle.

RAN
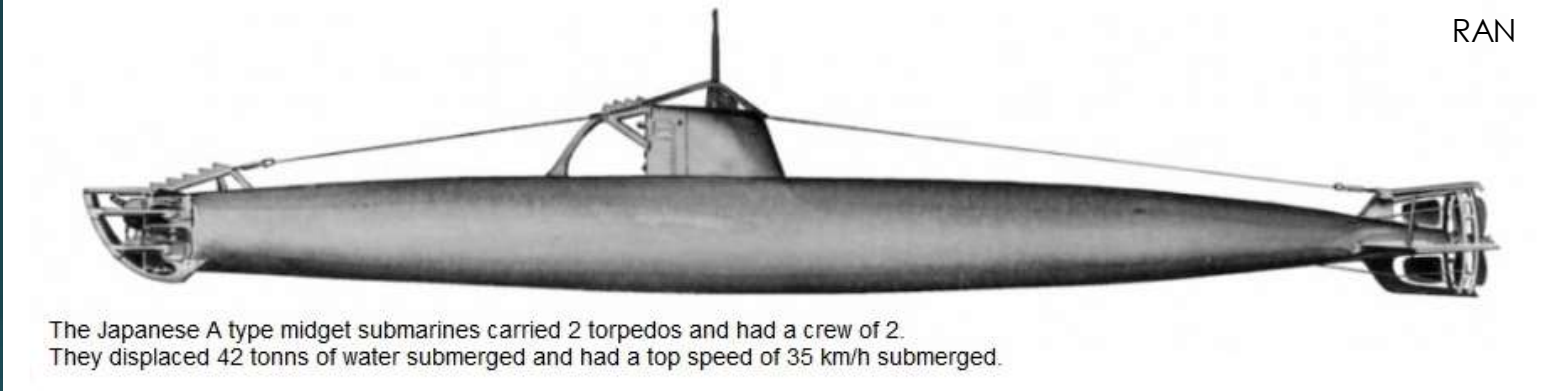
The Japanese A type midget submarines carried 2 torpedos and had a crew of 2.
They displaced 42 tonns of water submerged and had a top speed of 35 km/h submerged.
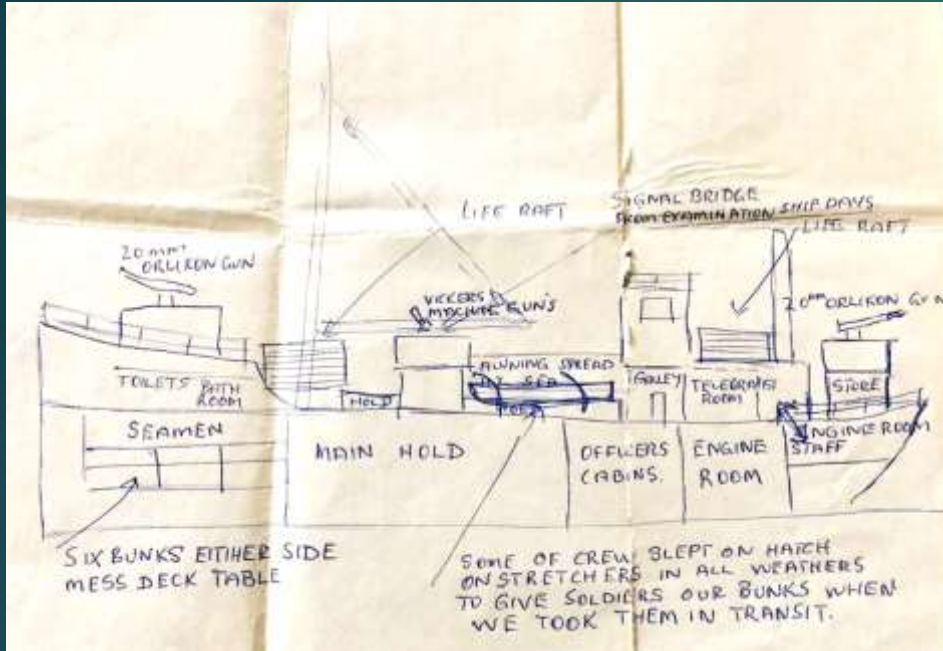

AWM 060696

1942 HMAS KUTTABUL AWM042975

AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL   042975

State Library of Victoria
H98.104/61

In 1943 HMAS FALIE was converted to a stores vessel and deployed to Papua New Guinea. For this role the Navy added two anti-aircraft guns on platforms mounted on her bow and stern, and a machine gun.

sketch courtesy Chris Frizell

Looking aft

Looking forward

Images AR Templeton

Her bowsprit gone and gaff masts reduced to one to serve as a cargo derrick for loading and unloading. Operation Lilliput was the combined American Australian campaign to extricate the Japanese out of Borneo

LT COMMANDER CV WOOD & LT AR TEMPLETON

RAN No. 03939.

HMAS FALIE brought food, equipment and troops around Borneo and nearby islands, disguised as a fishing boat

Portrait of a Coastal Trader 1985 – Robert Sexton, Gordon Pickhaver

This map shows the movements of HMAS FALIE during the two years 1943-1945 based at Milne Bay. She saw action whilst landing troops in enemy territory by night. She had one trip back in Sydney for repairs in 1944.

The Pacific War ended in 1945 and HMAS FALIE returned to Sydney with flags flying. She was eventually returned to her owners in Port Adelaide and resumed coastal work.

Falie – 1946 Chris Frizell Collection

Improvements to roads and rail networks and the introduction of bulk handling meant that after more than a century, the ketches of the mosquito fleet were no longer needed.

Seattle WIKIPEDIA

Other work was found. She took barley to Tasmania and returned with timber. Based for a while in Melbourne, she carried explosives for mining and exploration. In one year 1962, 78,000 cases were delivered to QLD. She also went to the West with explosives and return with hardwoods for our building industry.

Image courtesy Tasmanian Library

From 1968 she began a passenger and goods service between Adelaide and Kangaroo Island returning with gypsum - still working under sail. This trade ended when gypsum was discovered on the mainland.

photographs courtesy Chris Frizzel   A load of fertiliser and fuel heading to American River, KI

In 1982 FALIE was finally retired as the last ketch to operate commercially in SA waters and one of the last sail-powered trading vessels in Australian waters. She was bought by the State Government to be a centrepiece for the State's 150th anniversary in 1986.
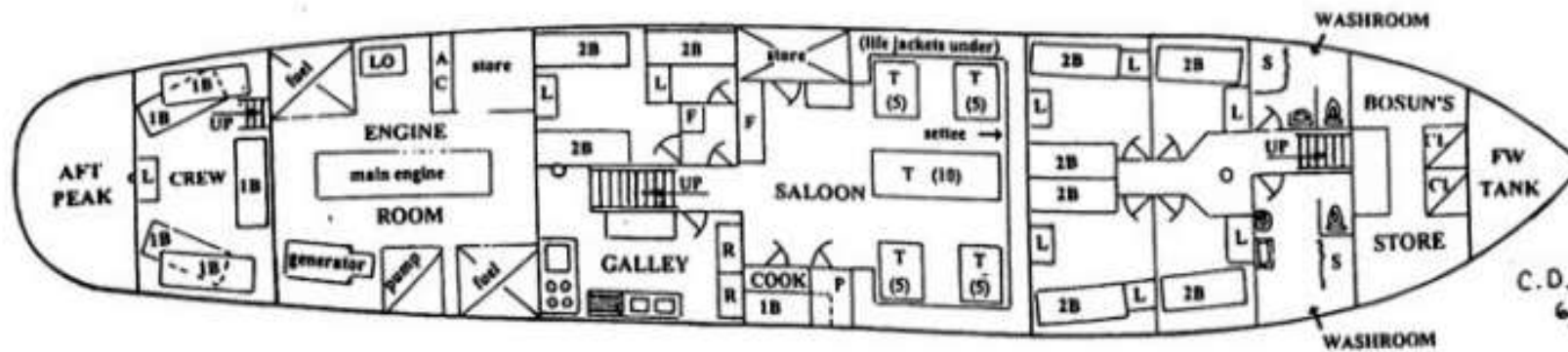

FALIE at ketch terminal in Port Adelaide - Courtesy Jenny Scott

FALIE was virtually rebuilt from the water up, with cabin accommodation for 20 passengers and 9 crew, bathrooms, a galley below deck and a smaller cargo hold (later converted to a saloon).
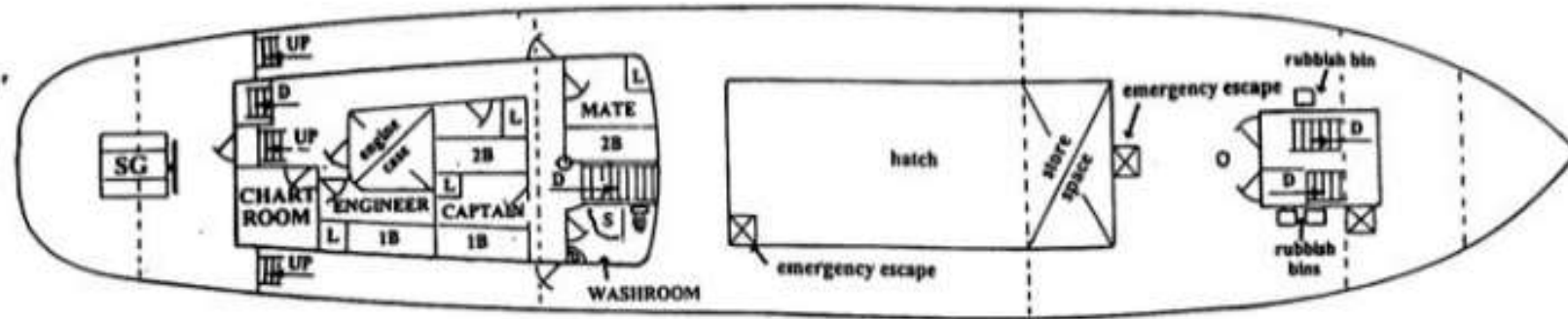
UPPER DECK

BELOW UPPER DECK

C.D. JANES
6/3/93

This involved over 200 metal trade apprentices who required work experience to complete their qualifications, as well as apprentice electricians, plumbers, joiners, welders, shipwrights, boilermakers and riggers.

Sam Gardiner, and Chris Frizell Collection

During February and March 1986 FALIE visited 33 towns along the SA coastline for a grain trade re-enactment. She was met by crowds at each place, some in costumes.

1986
SESQUICENTARY OF
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

She also assisted in other historic re-enactments such as the landing of Governor Hindmarsh at Holdfast Bay in 1836.

Photographs – Historic Ketch Falie Archives

Since then, and still owned by the State Government, FALIE became a school and training vessel for the Fisheries Academy.

Photographs – Falie Archives

And took tourists on day cruises or charters for deep sea fishing or diving, as well as shark cage diving adventures.

Then in 2005, a survey revealed that parts of her hull had deteriorated and was therefore laid up at Port Adelaide. By 2009 she was looking desperately in need of maintenance when Errol Ford and Keith Ridgeway, two retired merchant seamen were given permission to undertake general maintenance aboard.
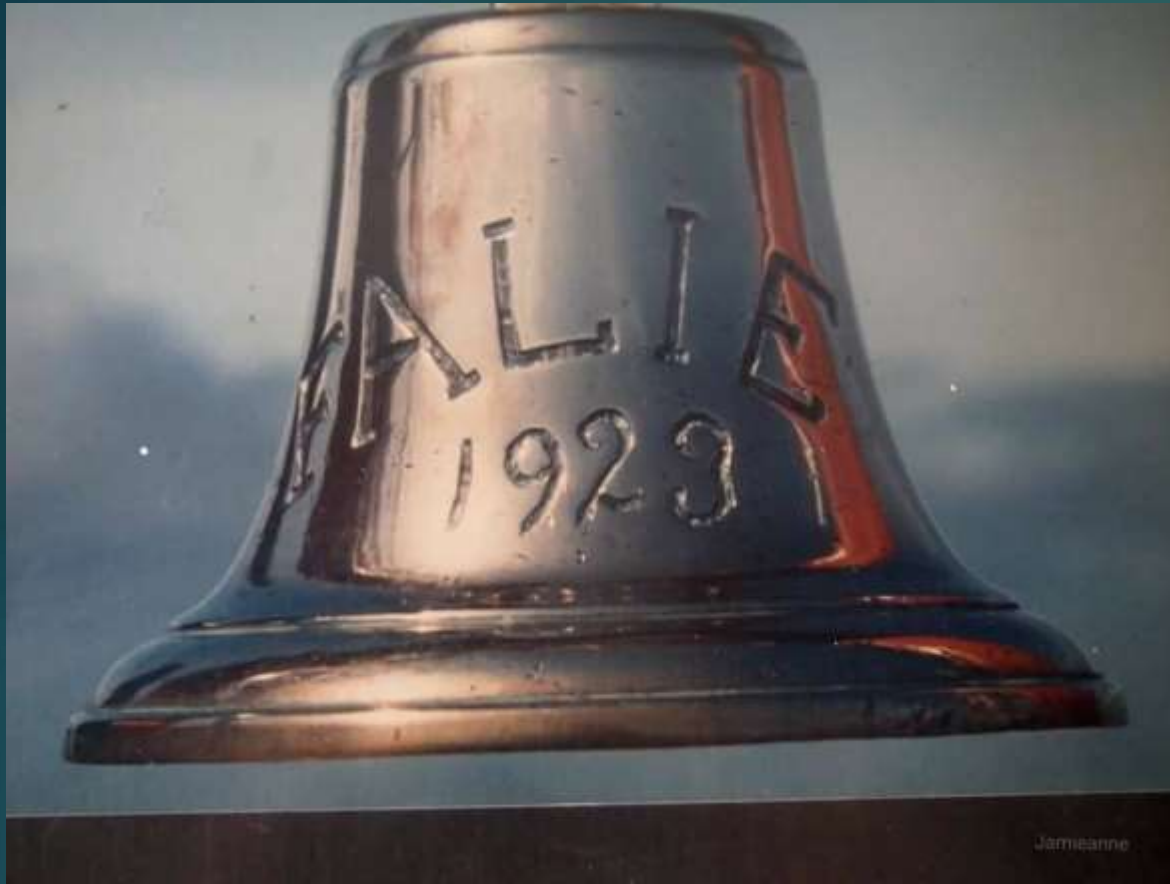

Images – Falie Archive

Without their work and the volunteers who have joined the team, the FALIE would surely not be here today to herald her 100 year contribution to the maritime history of Australia.

Built in Holland 1919 – purchased 1922
1923 the year FALIE arrived in Port Adelaide

FALIE – Portrait of a Coastal Trader
by Robert Sexton and Gordon Pickhaver 1985

THE END   -   HET EINDE   (Dutch)

lyn.ogrady@gmail.com

www.historicketchfalie.org.au