

The story of the *Duyfken* replica, Construction, Expeditions And Voyages

By Graeme Cocks, Project Director

When the replica ship *Duyfken* slipped out of Fremantle Harbour in Western Australia on 8 April 2000 and her crew set sail for Indonesia she began an expedition into Australian, Dutch and Indonesian history.

Duyfken (the *Little Dove*) sailed more than 5000km from her homeport to Banda in Indonesia, first sailing north along Western Australia's shipwreck coast. The voyage made more difficult by heavy seas, headwinds and times of dead calm as well as the primitive conditions on board.

Duyfken visited the Abrolhos Islands where the cursed Dutch East India Company (VOC) ship *Batavia* struck a coral reef and a subsequent mutiny resulted in many deaths. Her crew also visited Cape Inscription in Shark Bay where Dutchman Dirck Hartog left his famous plate 10 years after *Duyfken*'s visit to Cape York on the other side of the continent.

The replica 24 metre 140 tonne Dutch "jacht" left Australian waters from Broome in the far north Kimberley region of Western Australia and sailed into Indonesia across the Timor Sea, arriving at Kupang in West Timor two weeks later -- the new replica vessel's first ocean passage. *Duyfken* then sailed through the Indonesian archipelago.

Duyfken is remarkable not only because she is the first Dutch "jacht" to sail from Indonesia to Australia in 350 years, and more recently to sail from Australia to The Netherlands in a recreation of a Dutch spice voyage, but because the impetus to build the ship and sail the expedition came not from governments or corporations, but through an enormous community effort. It was led by Fremantle community leader Michael G Kailis who unfortunately passed away in June 1999, only weeks before the ship was due to sail for the first time. Fremantle historian Michael Young gathered together a group of like-minded individuals in 1993, and that group, under the leadership of Michael Kailis, became the charitable *Duyfken* 1606 Replica Foundation. Among that group was current *Duyfken* Foundation chairman Rinze Brandsma, board member Charlie Welker and Project Director Graeme Cocks.

The community foundation constructed the ship at a cost of \$3.7 million to help tell the little known story of Australia's first recorded European visitors and to counter two of Australia's popular historical myths: that Dirck Hartog was the first European to step ashore in Australia and that Captain Cook "discovered" Australia. The 2000 *Duyfken* Expedition sponsored by Chevron Corporation brought the little known historical truth to people in Australia and all over the world.

The first recorded chart of the Australian coastline was made by *Duyfken*'s Dutch skipper, Captain Willem Janszoon, and the first time recorded in history when Aboriginal Australians met people from the outside world occurred during *Duyfken*'s 1606 voyage of discovery. Indeed, the indigenous people of Cape York still talk about the *Duyfken* landing in their oral history. For the crew of the original *Duyfken*, theirs was a voyage beyond the known world at the time. They thought that a land of gold known as "Nova Guinea" could exist to the southeast and they set out to find it. What they found was the Gulf of Carpentaria coast of Australia's Cape York Peninsula and the oldest living culture on Earth -- but no gold. Janszoon charted 350 kilometres of the Cape coast before sailing north to Torres Strait and unsuccessfully searching for a passage through the maze of shoals and islands. He approached the fringing reefs of Papua New Guinea before turning to the

west and returning to the Banda Islands, his crew depleted from skirmishes with the people of Cape York and Irian Jaya.

Duyfken's voyage marked the European "discovery" of the sixth continent and over the next 150 years, more than two dozen Dutch voyages to Australia charted three-quarters of the Australian coastline. Englishman Lieutenant James Cook and *Endeavour* filled in the last part of the map 164 years later. *Duyfken's* visit marks the beginning of Australia's recorded history.

Hailed by Dutch historians as the most exacting "Age of Discovery" replica sailing ship yet constructed, *Duyfken's* hull is European Oak from Latvia, her sails and rig all natural flax and hemp. She was built and fitted-out in Fremantle using "plank-first" construction. Fire was employed to bend the hull planks and inside frames were added afterwards. The hull was launched on 24 January 1999 and she was able to sail for the first time on 10 July 1999. Soon afterwards, work began to prepare the basic ship for the Chevron 2000 *Duyfken* Expedition.

Thousands of people contributed to the construction of the vessel: experienced shipwrights headed by Australia's most acclaimed master shipwright, Bill Leonard, joined with volunteer shipwrights. Volunteer guides showed people over the ship as she was being built, and the Friends of the *Duyfken* and the *Duyfken* 1606 Club represented the wider community and business supporters. Most importantly, the *Duyfken* 1606 Replica Foundation obtained funding for the project from the Governments of the Netherlands, Western Australia, Queensland, and Australia, the Lotteries Commission of WA, private donors, the MG Kailis Group of Companies and a whole raft of other companies and members of the community.

Once the ship was completed, the search began for a crew with the skills to sail a 400-year old Dutch tall ship design. Since a ship of this type had not been constructed for 350 years, the *Duyfken* Foundation looked to Australia's pool of tall ship sailors or people who could adapt to life on such a primitive vessel. The search for suitable crew took a year. The Ship's Master was Peter Manthorpe, who is one of Australia's most experienced tall ship masters. He was joined by First Mate Gary Wilson who later became Master of the vessel. His crew rediscovered sailing skills not used for 300 years to sail the 24 metre, 140 tonne vessel. They began to understand the wisdom of the Dutch shipbuilders from the Age of Discovery as the little ship overcame every ocean challenge presented to her. *Duyfken* is believed to be the only ship operating in the world using a traditional Dutch whipstaff or "kolderstok" for steering.

Thousands of people and 100 craft farewelled *Duyfken* and her crew in Fremantle on 8 April 2000 as they began their arduous expedition. The *Duyfken* crew varies in size but the crew, which left Fremantle, comprised 18 experienced square-rig sailors from Western Australia, South Australia and New South Wales, and an experienced shore team. They came to the expedition for the chance of a lifetime the first time that a replica of a Dutch East India Company (VOC) vessel had been taken to the famed Spice Islands of Indonesia. Joining them were two historians, a marine biologist, two artists and a film crew from Sydney-company Firelight Productions filming a documentary of the expedition. The marine biologist from Townsville, Paul Hough, studied the works of the noted VOC naturalist Georgius Rumphius. An Indonesian interpreter and a Dutchman were also part of the crew.

A key part of the Chevron 2000 *Duyfken* Expedition was to inspire people to learn more about Dutch Australian history by inviting them to come aboard during port visits. *Duyfken* sailed up the Western Australian coast visiting sites of historic maritime importance, recognising the feats of the early navigators who sailed along the continent's western coast and sometimes came to grief when they failed to turn north at the right time after sailing across the vast Indian Ocean. They visited the seaside communities stretched along the coast and big crowds greeted the ship each time she arrived. At each port the *Duyfken* Foundation placed the ship on public exhibition and people of all

ages inspected the vessel. A feature of the exhibition was a display of 16th century shipboard life funded by a grant under the Australian Commonwealth Government's travelling cultural exhibitions program "Visions of Australia". Displays on the dockside interpret what people see on board. Volunteer guides from the local community show visitors aboard.

Communities visited by *Duyfken* include Geraldton, Denham, Carnarvon, Exmouth, Dampier, Port Hedland and Broome.

The voyage to Indonesia had particular significance because it was the first people-to-people cultural exchange between Australia and Indonesia since the East Timor crisis.

At Kupang, and again at Solor and Flores, enthusiastic Indonesians who were surprised by the historical connections between Australia greeted the crew and Indonesia demonstrated by the vessel. Indeed, like most Australians, Indonesians are not aware that the first ship to visit Australia sailed from the Spice Islands of Indonesia.

Duyfken sailed through the Spice Islands, now known as the Maluku Province. For thousands of years, this province supplied the world with nutmeg, mace and cloves. The original *Duyfken* was involved with this trade and the expedition re-discovered this part of the ship's rich history. As *Duyfken* sailed from island to island she became known as "Kapal VOC" (VOC ship) signifying the connection of the vessel with the Dutch East India Company (VOC). The crew's secondary mission was to build bonds of friendship with the people of Indonesia and this was accomplished at many ports.

Duyfken arrived at the famed nutmeg island of Banda south of Ambon on 21 June, 2000. Banda was the departure point for the original voyage of discovery to Australia. The arrival of the ship at the place where the original little Dutch scout ship left on a one of the least understood voyages of world discovery was a seminal moment for all in the *Duyfken* Foundation. *Duyfken* was involved with one of the most difficult periods of Dutch colonial history and the crew came to understand the enormous impact which ships such as *Duyfken* and the people they carried wrought on the Spice Islands.

After a two week tour of the Banda Islands, the ship turned north east towards Ceram Island to find favourable winds and to re-enact the 1606 voyage, ultimately sailing south east to the mouth of the Pennefather River, 30 km north of Weipa on Cape York Peninsula in Queensland's Gulf of Carpentaria. The ship sailed to Irian Jaya and then south to False Cape, crossing the Arafura Sea for an unscheduled stop at Gove in northeast Arnhem Land. She then crossed the Gulf of Carpentaria just as Janszoon had done in 1606.

The arrival on 9 August 2000 had particular significance for the people of the Mapoon, Aurukun and Napranum communities for the story of *Duyfken*'s original visit is still part of their folklore. They were invited to participate in the arrival in their own way. Queensland Premier Peter Beattie joined the traditional owners of the Pennefather River mouth, the head of Chevron Overseas from San Francisco, Aboriginal singers, dancers, and more than 200 people from Weipa and nearby communities to welcome the vessel.

Charged with a strong sense of past injustices both in Indonesia and Australia, *Duyfken*'s crew were intent upon making their own statement on the beach. Captain Peter Manthorpe came ashore bearing a message stick from the Noongah community of the Fremantle area. The message stick asked for permission to land. He placed a white flag on a pole on the beach and next to it was placed a spear signifying that this was to be a peaceful visit. *Duyfken*'s crew were given permission to land, and 400 years of Australian history came into focus for a moment. The traditional owners spoke about the importance of recognising the past, but not dwelling on it, of going forward

together and creating a better future. Ordinary Australians had joined together to perform an act of reconciliation for the first moment in Australian history when Aboriginal people and Europeans met. This time, message sticks and handshakes were exchanged not musket balls and spears.

Peter Manthorpe and his crew followed Captain Willem Janszoon's original chart of the Queensland coast but unlike the voyage of 1606 they came ashore with the permission of the Aboriginal people of Cape York. They sailed north through Torres Strait to Port Moresby and then on to a five month exhibition tour of Queensland ports thanks to a grant of \$500,000 from the Queensland Government.

When *Duyfken* arrived in Sydney in March 2001, she had sailed tens of thousands of kilometres, tens of thousands of people had looked over the vessel, millions worldwide had seen a documentary of the expedition and another one of the *Duyfken* 1606 Replica Foundation's goals was achieved: to bring the story of the first European expedition to Australia to the world's attention. But probably more significant will be that moment at the Pennefather River when *Duyfken*'s crew asked for permission to come ashore.

Duyfken's stay in Sydney was to be short-lived, as the VOC2002 Jaar committee in The Netherlands was in advanced negotiations with the Duyfken Foundation for the ship to sail in a remarkable voyage.

Less than 12 months since *Duyfken* re-enacted Willem Janszoon's historic 1606 voyage from the Spice Islands to Cape York peninsula – the first known European encounter with Australia and its Aboriginal people, producing the first chart of an Australian coastline – the little replica Dutch scout ship set sail from the Australian National Maritime Museum on an ambitious voyage to Texel in The Netherlands.

The venture was inspired by the great voyages of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC) or Dutch United East-Indies Company fleets in the early part of the 17th century. It will culminate with *Duyfken*'s arrival in The Netherlands to be a major participant in Dutch celebrations next year marking the 400th anniversary of the founding of the VOC.

On 20 March 1602, the Staten Generaal (States General, the equivalent of a parliament in those days) gave a licence to the VOC, amalgamating competing trading companies into six chambers representing six major ports that sponsored voyages to the Orient. This great trading company led to Dutch prominence on the world stage through its domination of the lucrative spice trade from the East Indies, today Indonesia.

Loaded with spices and other riches of the Indies, the VOC ships sailed across the Indian Ocean, rounding the Cape of Good Hope and then sailing north through the Atlantic Ocean to the home waters of the North Sea. They would then unload the precious cargoes, which would be sold across Europe. The *Duyfken* replica has retraced these homeward voyages, picking up the same trade winds and braving the same challenges of the stormy southern cape of Africa, equatorial doldrums and the stormy North Atlantic.

The original *Duyfken* sailed from The Netherlands to the Indies twice, and returned once, in 1602 when she sailed in the fleet of Admiral Harmensz. It is this voyage, with the ships *Gelderlandt*, *Zeelandt* and *Duyfken*, that the VOC 2002 Voyage most closely follows. *Duyfken*'s captain on this voyage was Willem Cornelisz Schouten who, with Jacob Le Maire, would later discover Cape Horn. Harmensz' log has been fully translated into English by Duyfken's Adriaan de Jong and will shortly be published.

In the Indies *Duyfken* joined in battle with the Portuguese fleet, helping to end the dominance of the spice trade by Iberians (Portuguese and Spanish). Schouten surveyed Jakarta Bay where the Dutch capital Batavia (now Jakarta) would later be built, and sailed *Duyfken* to the spice islands Ternate and Banda to load cloves and nutmeg for the company. He rejoined the fleet for the voyage home, setting out from Jakarta and Bantam to cross the Indian Ocean bound for Mauritius. In November 1602 *Duyfken* was separated from the fleet in a storm off Cape Agulhas, the southernmost tip of Africa. She rounded the Cape of Good Hope and headed for St Helena. After a one-month stay at St Helena, the ship set sail north and made landfall at the islands of Fernando de Noronha off the east coast of Brazil. From Fernando de Noronha, *Duyfken* sailed for The Netherlands and arrived at Vlissingen on 17 February 1603, where Schouten would have discovered that the VOC had been formed in the previous year. *Duyfken*'s sailing qualities were amply demonstrated when the little jacht arrived two months ahead of the larger ships.

Since *Duyfken*'s 1602 voyage, the ports-of-call have changed a great deal but in each one the legacy of the VOC age remains. The presence of the replica ship highlighted VOC history, as well as bringing to inter-national attention the feats of VOC mariners who developed global trading routes, many of which are still in use today.

The VOC 2002 voyage is a logical progression from the Chevron 2000 *Duyfken* Expedition which explored the spice islands of Indonesia and sailed the route of *Duyfken*'s 1605/1606 voyage of discovery to Australia. Taking close to a year, the voyage to Europe may be the world's most ambitious re-enactment voyage by any replica ship. It has added greatly to the lessons about Renaissance seamanship and shipbuilding that have already been learned during the *Duyfken* replica's construction and her voyages to date.

Duyfken sailed on 5 May 2001 from the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney after a successful visit during which many thousands of visitors saw her during March and April. It was 400 years since the ships *Gelderlandt*, *Zeelandt*, *Utrecht*, *Wachter* and *Duyfken* departed from Texel as part of the Old East Indies Company (Oude Oost-Indische Compagnie) of Amsterdam, the precursor of the VOC.

The departure followed hectic weeks of organising equipment and provisions after successful negotiations with The Netherlands to secure the sponsorship which made the voyage possible, and enlisting an enthusiastic Australian and international crew. Under new Captain Glenn Williams, *Duyfken* left a dock full of well wishers and media.

She headed into stormy autumn weather, with favouring southerlies but rain and mounting seas to test the sea-legs of the crew. Making good time up the coast, *Duyfken* rendezvoused with the *Endeavour* replica at Moreton Bay, Queensland. The two ships were built by the same shipwright, Bill Leonard, in Fremantle, Western Australia. *Duyfken* made her first port of call in Port Douglas, in far north Queensland. From there she sailed through Torres Strait via Thursday Island Darwin before sailing for Jakarta via the Tanimbar Islands.

Duyfken received a warm welcome at Sunda Kelapa, the old part of Batavia in Jakarta. This is the site of the VOC capital Batavia, founded in 1619 after a move from the nearby pepper port of Banten. It was the centre of VOC activity in the Indies for 200 years. An island in Jakarta Bay was called Duyfken Island on early charts, reflecting the role *Duyfken* played in charting the bay. It is now called Pulau Dapur (Kitchen Island) and is about six kilometres from the old Dutch harbour.

Sunda Kelapa, now famous for the tall-masted Bugis trading ships mooring there. It was once the gateway to the VOC's Batavia and is now most historic part of modern Jakarta, close to significant remains including the City Hall of Batavia, an old Dutch-style canal drawbridge and the magnificent Dutch warehouse that now houses the maritime museum.

The VOC island of Pulau Onrust (Restless Island) in Jakarta Bay has enjoyed some restoration work and was visited by *Duyfken* while in Jakarta. VOC activities including service and repair of ships on the island supported 2,000 Dutch shipwrights. Storehouses on the island contained trading goods such as copper, tin, brass, pepper and coffee.

After sailing from Jakarta the *Duyfken* replica sailed past Anak Krakatua, the famous volcanic island, then through Sunda Strait. The ship deviated from the route normally followed by spice-laden VOC ships homeward-bound from the East Indies, by sailing to Galle Harbour in Sri Lanka. Among the Asian ports of the VOC, Galle was second in importance to Batavia (now Jakarta), making this an important stop-over for the voyage's mission of celebrating the history of the Dutch trading company.

The first Dutch ships to Sri Lanka arrived in May 1602 under the command of Admiral Joris Van Spilbergen. They anchored off the port of Batticaloa on the east coast of Sri Lanka. Galle is located in the bay where a decisive battle took place in 1640 between the Dutch and Portuguese for control of Sri Lanka and the cinnamon trade. It was controlled by the Dutch from 1640 until 1796.

Galle is a historic fortified town with 14 bastions as well as Dutch houses, a Dutch church and bell tower, Government House, and a Dutch period museum. With several VOC shipwrecks in the harbour, Galle is now perhaps the most actively studied harbour for VOC ship remains. *Duyfken's* visit highlighted the progress made towards restoring Galle's historical assets.

Heading back into the Indian Ocean, *Duyfken* pushed south across the equator to find the south-east trade winds for her passage to Mauritius. But first, the crew visited the island of Rodrigues, the easternmost island of the Mascarene group of islands. *Duyfken* was the first Dutch ship recorded in history to visit Rodrigues Island and the replica's visit was almost 400 years to the day since the original ship's landfall.

From Rodrigues, the crew sailed to Mauritius to a very hospitable welcome. Like many VOC ships before, Mauritius was a welcome location to re-provision the ship. Mauritius was discovered in 1505 by a Portuguese navigator, Domingos Fernanadez, and named Ilha do Cerne. It became a useful provisioning island for ships bound for India. The Dutch arrived in 1598, and renamed the island after the Dutch stadtholder Maurits.

VOC ships began using the islands for provisioning their fleets to the Indies and established settlements in the 1630s. They settled on the east coast of the island and called it Haven van Warwijck, where they build a fort called Fort Frederik Hendrik. Today it's the town of Vieux Grand Port. The remains of the fort can be seen, along with a small museum about the Dutch settlement which had ended by 1710.

Since 1503 when the Portuguese first entered Table Bay, the Cape of Good Hope has been a place to re-supply European ships. The shipwreck of the VOC ship *Nieuwe Haarlem* in 1647 began the Dutch settlement in the Cape. The survivors built a small fort and named it 'Sand Fort of the Cape of Good Hope', seeking refuge for a year before being rescued by a fleet of VOC ships. In April 1652 Jan van Riebeeck established a permanent provision station for the VOC, supplying fresh water and produce to the large sailing ships. In 1795 the English seized the prosperous colony.

Cape Town's long Dutch heritage is evident in both the architecture and the Afrikaans language. The image of Table Mountain looming over the harbour is a striking icon of Dutch and English art depicting the period of both nations' maritime expansion, particularly when a 'Black Nor'easter' blows. This creates the unique 'tablecloth' cloud formation that spills over the mountain. A decision was made for *Duyfken* to re-fit at Simon's Town on the eastern side of the Cape of Good Hope. Simon's Town was the winter provisioning port for VOC ships and thanks to the naval

authorities the naval dockyard was used to lift the vessel. It was a short sail for the crew and a group of VIPs including the Foundation Chairman and staff, and Board Members to sail around the "Cape of Storms", the Cape of Good Hope to Cape Town.

Following an approach from the Dutch Embassy in Namibia, it was decided to add Walvis Bay into the voyage program to highlight the long maritime history of the coastline, the northern part which is called the Skeleton Coast. As in Cape Town where the Khoikhoi herders encountered the Dutch traders and began to trade, so it was in Walvis Bay where European ships traded with the local herders.

The VOC ships *Grundel* and *Boode* visited Walvis Bay in 1670 and 1677, although trade was not established. A century later, American whalers established settlements along the coast to work the rich whaling grounds offshore.

More recently, remains of a VOC vessel, the *Vlissingen*, are believed to have been found south of Walvis Bay. It is hoped that *Duyfken's* visit will generate wider interest in the *Vlissingen* and perhaps lead to a detailed search for the remains of the vessel.

Leaving Walvis Bay, *Duyfken* searched for the south-easterly winds of the great trade-wind belt that circles the southern hemisphere from the tropics to the temperate zone, to steer her towards lonely St Helena. This beautiful, verdant island rises spectacularly from the South Atlantic, far from any other land and visited only by cruising yachts and the monthly mail ship. It too was a critical watering point for the VOC ships and was often used to re-group the fleets before they tackled the Indian or Atlantic Oceans. Like Cape Town it ended up in English hands and its tiny population, descended from Malay and Indian plantation labourers and Europeans. Its port of Georgetown was a picturesque and welcoming stopover for the crew of *Duyfken* and her ship's engineer Alan Campbell who completed his own personal circumnavigation of the world at this point.

The *Duyfken* replica's sailing passage northwards through the Atlantic had more port stopovers for re-provisioning than the VOC ships enjoyed. One was the small island of Ascension, 750 miles north-west of Saint Helena. It was discovered by the Portuguese seafarer Joao da Nova Castelia in 1501, although this visit apparently went unrecorded. It was found again two years later on Ascension Day by the Spanish explorer Alphonse d'Albuquerque, who gave the island its name.

Dry and barren, it was of little use to the East Indies fleets and remained uninhabited until a small British naval garrison was stationed there to deny it to the French when Napoleon was incarcerated on St Helena in 1815. Like St Helena it remains an outpost of Britain, and was an important staging point for British forces during the Falklands/Malvinas war in 1982. A short stay in Ascension was followed by *Duyfken's* longest passage to date.

Like the VOC ships of the past, *Duyfken* was forced to weather the doldrums and claw northwards against the north-east trade winds until she reached higher latitudes and westerly winds to take her home. The Portuguese-speaking Azores islands was a useful re-provisioning stop. The first settlement of these mid-Atlantic islands is thought to have been by Flemish fishermen. In 1492, Christopher Columbus visited Santa Maria on his way back from the Caribbean. Vasco da Gama, returning from India in 1499, stopped over in Angra where he buried his deceased brother.

From 1580-1640 the colonial empires of Spain and Portugal, the great rivals to Dutch interests in the East Indies, used the Azores as a staging post for voyages west and south. The islands attracted ships of trade and war, privateers and pirates from France, England and Holland.

Texel's roadstead has welcomed returning seafarers for more than five centuries. *Duyfken* was one of these ships and four hundred years later, the replica will again be welcomed home on April 28,

2002. One can only wonder at the welcome *Duyfken* will receive after the greatest re-enactment voyage of our times. The little ship will have sailed three great oceans, visited four continents and delved back four centuries into VOC history. It has been a massive accomplishment by the *Duyfken* 1606 Replica Foundation which arranged the VOC2002 *Duyfken* Voyagie, the shore team and the crew which sailed the voyage.

During spring and summer of 2002 the *Duyfken* will play a major role in the VOC2002 Jaar celebrations, visiting many of the original Dutch VOC ports and taking part in a host of maritime events.

The arrival of *Duyfken* at Texel will be the end of a job well done for the crew, and it will also be a source of great pleasure for the thousands of people who have contributed to *Duyfken* since the first spark of an idea in 1993 caught the imagination of people from all walks of life in a community half a world away. Many of these people will be at the dockside in Texel to see their cherished ship arrive.

The End of another chapter in the *Duyfken* story.