

THE PANTER ORRS .

WILLIAM HENRY PANTER

To quote from the "Laindon and District Community Archive"

"William Henry Panter was born at the Rectory, Laindon in 1841. His father Frederick Downes Panter was a cleric in holy orders, and later became Rector of Thetford, Norfolk.

William joined the Navy in 1855 at the age of 14. He immediately went out to China with Admiral Keppel and served throughout the whole of the China war. He was a courageous man, or should we say boy, being involved in three engagements and in two boarding parties; resulting in him being mentioned in dispatches and resulting in him receiving the China medal and two clasps. By the age of twenty, following several skirmishes he was appointed acting navigating sub-lieutenant by Admiral Sir James Hope. He was then given the command of a gun boat, and on the vessel being paid off, he was complemented by senior Naval Officers at Hong Kong for having brought home the vessel safely through one of the worst Typhoons ever known at the time. Only one out of the crew of thirty managed to get back with him. (another source says that he returned with only 5 of the crew – the others being "disabled" by the terrible conditions. This sounds far less drastic – I had imagined terrible thoughts to explain how only 1 out of 30 crew made it back, as the Laindon archive report unbelievably suggested).

In England he was appointed navigating sub-lieutenant of the Marlborough flagship in the Mediterranean, under Admiral Sir Robert Smart. Very shortly afterwards he was given command of a three gun, gun boat. He was then promoted to navigating Lieutenant and returned home to study at the Naval College. After passing the following examinations: Seamanship, navigation and nautical astronomy, pilotage, steam and modern heavy gunnery, he joined the Nelson and proceeded to Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

He returned home to captain the ship Cerberus on its voyage to Port Philip, Australia. The ship had been ordered by the Victorian Government to help defend the Colony in the event of a Russian attack. It encountered tremendous weather in the Bay of Biscay and for 12 hours the ship was very nearly lost and was not expected to get through. Panter showed brilliant seamanship and a lesser man may not have succeeded in bringing the Cerberus safely to Port Philip, arriving there on the 9th of April 1871. In fact the ship's company nearly mutinied on several occasions. He was still only thirty years of age.

On the 2nd of July, (I thought this was 1872), he married Alice Seaton Manifold at St. John's Church, Toorak, Victoria. They had seven daughters and in July 1877 he resigned his commission and the command of the Cerberus was given to Commander Colebroke Thomas Mandeville.

Very little is known of him after this and he died on the 14th July 1915 at the age of 74 at Toorak Rd., North Malvern, City of Malvern, Australia. He was buried in Brighton Cemetery on the 15th July. "I could not find him in the Brighton Cemetery records."

Frederick D Panter's family is easily located in the Census of 6.6.1841 at the Rectory, where he is described as a "Clerk" – not a minister of any kind. Perhaps he was still studying at the time, being only 30. Also listed are Frances M his wife, who I believe was called Fanny, 25; 2 servants and a labourer; Sarah Panter 65 who was Frederick's mother; Louise Panter 25, who was his sister; John Panter 25, who was his brother; a clerk William Roche 30; and of course the four children. Louise and John could not have both been 25!

They were –

Edward Panter 5 ? born 1836

Frederick Panter 4 " 1837

Herbert Panter 2 " 1839

WILLIAM PANTER 1 month. born 1841. If he was 1 month old on 6.6.1841, he may have been born in April. I haven't been able to find an exact date.

There is a record for a "William Henry PAINTER" born in the April – June quarter of 1841, under the registration district of Billericay. This place is some miles to the north of Laindon, which is very small and unlikely to have had its own registry office. I have seen other examples of Panter and Painter being interchangeable elsewhere. Significantly the transcribed version of the 1841 census also gives Billericay as the registration district for the Panter family.

In the 1851 Census we have – "Rushford, Suffolk"

Frederick D Panter as head, 42 and now "Rector of Brittanham and officiating minister of Rushford", born Fulham, Middlesex; Frances M Panter, wife 35, born "Island" – that's what it says! Or does it – it must be Ireland! She was a Kennedy and JFK's family came from Ireland. According to an Ancestry member site she was one of 14 children and her father's name was Hugh. They give her dates as 1813-1905.

There were 3 servants, and the children –

Frederick K Panter 14 born Grays illegible Essex.

HENRY WILLIAM Panter 9 born Laindon Essex. His Christian names are reversed for some reason.

Fanny G C Panter 6, born "Prince Edward Island ? BG." What! She was born in Canada?! Surely not!

Were Edward and Herbert Panter deceased or merely elsewhere? Later I learned there was an Edward Downes Panter in the Navy, mentioned in 1867, when he would have been 31, and which explains why he was missing from the household in this year, as he was about 15 and presumably already at sea. I wonder if the family all attended the celebration in Fulham of Frederick and Sarah's jubilee – also 1851.

William Henry was appointed Master's assistant on 11.10.1855 – this was only shortly after he joined the Navy and he was still only 14! He must have shown great promise from the start. There should be more records of his early career in the Royal Navy archives.

In the 1861 Census, William, 20, was found on the "Banterer", and was "acting second Master," under a Captain EBH Franklin. One source says his birth place was Halstead Essex, but it was Laindon. This is odd, as although both are in Essex, they are some miles apart. The Census was "taken on the night of 7.4.1861, at which time the ship was at anchor, off Silver Island, Yangtze Kiang"! I looked for a Mr. Turner – see below – but without success.

The archive has a copy of a

"Master's Certificate of Service"

For William Henry Panter, which says he was born in Laindon, Essex in 1842. We know the year is wrong of course, but it attests that he

"has been employed in the capacities of Masters Apt (? = apprentice), 2nd Master & Master 11 years in the British Royal Navy on home and foreign Stations."

It is dated Rochester, 20.9.1870. This means he must have been in the Navy since 1859 at least, at which time he was 18. He was probably in the Service much earlier than that as they usually joined up as boys. According to the quote above, he joined the Navy in 1855 at the age of 14.

Further research of his Naval Records would no doubt reveal a lot more information.

In about 1870 I presume, when he would have been only 29, he came to Melbourne on the Nelson as Lieutenant Panter, and wasn't here very long before he was sent back to bring out the Cerberus which had been ordered by the Victorian Navy to protect the Colony against a perceived threat of Russian invasion. This famous vessel was described in the papers as an iron clad or armour plated monitor or turret ship, and was so much the latest thing that she was virtually unique. More vessels of a similar nature, however, soon followed. It was too costly to cost more than 125,000

pounds of which the Colony was expected to provide 25,000 pounds . Later , newspapers said that it cost more like 150,000 ; not counting the cost of refitting for her new duties in the Bay . It was designed by Mr. E. H. Reed , CB , “ Chief Constructor of the Navy . “ She was not considered suitable for the open ocean . It was to have 22 ton guns and was planned as early as 1867 and built from 1869 . The Argus stated that the vessel was to be brought out by Captain Norman of the Victoria , but that he died in England before the ship was even ready . That was why Lieutenant Panter was sent back – in order to replace him . Apparently the ship was hit by terrible weather in the Bay of Biscay and was at risk of being lost , but for the expert seamanship of Captain Panter . According to the above , they arrived on 9.4.1871 . There are many references to him in the newspapers for the year 1871 . The feat of bringing out the Cerberus through such travail obviously struck a chord with the papers and the public alike .

The Advocate , 15.4.1871

“ The Cerberus dropped anchor in Hobson’s Bay shortly after one o’clock on Sunday last . She has since been visited by a large number of persons who seemed to take great interest in examining the colossal proportion of her guns and the elaborate machinery by which the turrets are revolved and a proper system of ventilation kept up . The Cerberus is 2107 tons register , her marine steam engines are of 250 horse power , and there are in addition 8 others for working the turrets and ventilating fans . She is 235 feet long with a breadth of 45 feet , and a depth of 16 feet 6 inches . Her armament consists of 4 muzzle loading guns , each with a 10 inch bore , and carrying shot or shell weighing 400 pounds , requiring a 60 pound charge of powder . Captain Panter called upon the Governor during Saturday afternoon to officially report his arrival . The Cerberus will constitute a sufficient harbor defense for Hobson’s Bay if she is properly manned , and it is not likely that the Government will consider economy so far as to impair her usefulness . Captain Panter is to be congratulated upon bringing his arduous and tedious voyage to a successful termination , and the Colony may be congratulated upon having such an impregnable tower of defense as the Cerberus constitutes . “

The figures for the Cerberus given in Wikipedia do not quite agree with the above source , and state that it was ordered on 1.7.1867 ; laid down on 1.9.1867 ; launched 2.12.1868 ; and completed “ August 1870 . “ It was built by Palmers Shipbuilding and Iron Co. , in Jarrow . There were 7 ships in all of this group , including the “ Magdala “ , and they were referred to unofficially as the “ Monster Class “ .

“ The standard number of crew required was 12 officers and 84 sailors , except in time of war when 40 more sailors were required . Once it reached Port Philip Bay it never left again , and never fired a single shot in anger . “

The Ovens and Murray Advertiser , 29.4.1871 says –

“ The Cerberus is still the centre of interest . It is ugly , even ridiculously ugly , and yet everybody seems delighted to have it in the Bay , and Captain Panter is , not undeservedly , the lion of the hour . On Sunday there was hardly standing room on board so dense was the crowd of visitors . Even those who laughed most loudly at our Sydney friends on account of their panic at the filibustering rumor seem to be all the more comfortable now that Hobson’s Bay is safe from any force that can be brought against it in our time , for it is most unlikely that an enemy will send out here a vessel of similar calibre , and any ordinary ship of war the Cerberus could demolish without the slightest difficulty . “

The presence of the fighting ship certainly aroused a great deal of interest , as I saw items in the papers describing some of the many tours of the vessel that the public took advantage of . There was even a special train from Ballarat bringing a large group “ of over 400 excursionists “ for a day trip , and Captain Panter invited various parties including boys from an institution of some kind for escorted visits . The Ballarat group came all dressed to the nines as if they were attending a Government House garden party – the ladies complete with velvets , satins , silks , and feathers , and armed with an extraordinary number of babies from which the author surmised that there was a population boom in the town . One poor lad fell down a hole of some kind but fortunately survived with just a gash on his head .

The Melbourne Punch , 27.4.1871 , had published a poem of doggerel quality in the fulsome praise of the wondrous and brave sea captain - it was called “ The Cerberus - A Romance – in one Canto “ . Here are a few of the better stanzas –

How Panter crossed the stormy seas,
How Panter faced the angry breeze ,
How Panter stood the pelting rain ,
How Panter told and told again .

Indeed , t’is terrible to think
How Panter stood on danger’s brink –
A man of iron nerve and gristle
A man who went on deck to whistle ,
And boldly buttoned up his jacket ,
Amidst the elemental racket ,
To watch with foaming billows round her ,
The Cerberus proceed to founder .

One wonders how it fared with Panter’s
Plates , dishes , tumblers and decanters ,
And how the skipper kept his pins ,
And if he catalogued his sins ,
When clinging to the craft that claims
About the worst of ill-dog names , (see Cerberus in mythology)
He thought each hour to go to glory ,
And never live to tell his story . “ etc

Indeed he did live to tell his story , and in a manner that was to cause controversy and criticism !

I think this awful but faintly amusing poem very well expresses the slightly hysterical sounding reaction to the arrival of the Cerberus in the fledgling Colony , which was , let us not forget , only a mere 36 years old ! The arrival of the Colony’s own warship must have been incredibly exciting , especially as it was thought to be “ state of the art “ . It was to replace the outmoded Victoria . Incidentally , the above poem was not the only one published at the time .

On the 10.11.15 , I found a copy of William’s report published in the Bendigo Advertiser , 15.4.1871 , addressed to the then Treasurer , Mr. J.G.Francis , and it would have been published in other papers as well , no doubt . A full copy will be attached to this file .

To summarise –

Dated Hobson’s Bay 10.4.1871 (the day after his arrival) . He left Melbourne on the 24.4.1870 , bound for England , but did not say on what ship . (A later news item said he went “ by the English Mail “) . On the way back to England he made enquiries in Egypt about the Suez Canal and the cost of coal etc etc in order to plan his return journey well ahead of time . He arrived in England on 13.6.1870 and reported to the Admiralty . At this time the Cerberus was well short of being ready , and William suggested that he should be allowed to make trial runs as soon as possible as the journey to Victoria was a very long one . This didn’t happen as unfortunately war broke out around early July (was this the Franco Prussian war ?) and this delayed the Cerberus being finished and being fitted with her guns . William was kept waiting from early July until mid

September . He was finally given charge on 16.9.1870 but then found it extremely difficult to get a full complement of men to take on the job of manning her . (This was partly due to the very recent tragedy involving the “ HMS Captain , “ which had foundered and sunk near Cape Finisterre on the 6.9.1870 with almost everyone on board lost . (18 men out of a crew of 500 survived) . This understandably caused a reluctance on the part of likely candidates to want to go to sea . Since the Cerberus was so innovative , no one would trust it .) In a month while the ship was provisioned he could get only 25 men , who were of “ a very indifferent character , and to keep them on board I had to get a police boat to pull round the ship all night . “

There were difficulties with the balance and stability of the ship and the compasses as well , but eventually they were able to sail for Plymouth on 29.10.1870 , but due to bad weather , they did not arrive until 2.11.1870 . On the journey more problems came to light as water was getting in . He sailed on 7.11.1871 for Gibraltar , and “ on my passage across the Bay of Biscay , I encountered a very heavy gale and for some hours on the 15th I expected she would have turned over as she was rolling to 40 degrees both ways and at times some of her bottom was out of the water . (This was of concern because the admiralty had told him not to let the ship roll by more than 10 degrees if possible .) The gale lasted until the 12th when I was off Finisterre “ (something is wrong with the dates here , perhaps it should be the 17th . The Landon Archive says that the gale lasted 12 hrs – which is more credible) . From there he had good weather to Gibraltar and arrived on the 27th .

“ Here I had great difficulty in keeping my men on board , so much so that I had to get the assistance of the Military and Police . “ They recoiled and proceeded on the 20th to Malta , arriving on the 27th . (again the problem with the dates – the print is not very clear and/or there may be typographical errors) “ The crew broke out of the ship as soon as I anchored , and I had to send 25 of them to gaol . I found it was necessary to take strong measures or I should have lost them all . In some cases they would have sooner gone to prison for 6 weeks with hard labour , than sail in the ship . “ From then on he had to proceed with less than a full complement of men . They left Malta on 11.12.1870 , and arrived in Port Said on the 19th , and went slowly through the canal to Suez on the 23rd . It was a tight squeeze and they touched ground twice . The Cerberus’ sister ship , the “ Magdala “ which went through only a week later , broke her screws . They arrived at Aden on 6.1.1871 and left on the 14th and reached Galle on 31.1.1871 (Ceylon) and left there for Batavia (Djakarta) on the 4th February , arriving there on 17.2.1871 . On all these stops there was maintenance to keep up and prodigious tonnages of coal to load on board . They left for Australia on 25.2.1871 , calling in at Fremantle where more cleaning and coaling as usual followed , and from where they proceeded to King George Sound where they arrived on 22.3.1871 . They left there on the 30th and arrived in Hobson’s Bay at 1 pm on the 9.4.1871 . They were aided up the Bay by Pilot McQueen , and charged up the engines full blast so as to proceed at a greater speed than the rest of the journey had allowed – this was done to impress the plentiful onlookers . The Argus 10.4.1871 , listed some of the other officers and noted that Dr. Macan came out as her medical officer .

The Ballarat Star , 10.4.1871 , said that the Cerberus was greeted by the Nelson whose “ boys manned the yards “ and the Russian Gunboat , the Haydamack , which “ displayed a profusion of flags “ . (not a very Russian sounding name – the Haydamack !)

William went on to say that his main concerns had been the fact –

that he had not been given a chance to have trials with the ship before departure ,

that he was not familiar with the degree or otherwise of the ship’s stability ,

that the officers in the English ports considered her to be not fit for a seagoing ship ,

that she had poor steering capability ,

that her sails were almost useless - the sails were a temporary measure anyway and were later removed .

and that he had 2000 tons above the waterline and only 1500 tons below it , which made her roll very badly . This was partly due to the fact that it sat so low in the water that it was considered dangerous in open seas and so extra height (and weight) was added around the deck to protect the men , and partly due to the ship being a highly inefficient user of coal , which meant that enormous tonnages had to be stored on board even on the deck and in the gun turrets in order to allow them to reach the next port of call . As William pointed out , the sails were nearly useless which meant they were nearly entirely dependent on steam – and therefore coal .

He was then very complimentary about the quality of the officers , but scathing about the men , 32 of whom he had to leave in gaol since leaving England . Also there was the much criticized remark - “ I do not think that their behavior was entirely due to their being afraid of the ship , as I do not think either men or officers knew the state of her stability , and I have not considered it necessary to let them know that there was at any time any danger , except so far as it was necessary to make them careful . “

I can’t help noticing that in their criticism of William’s above remark , his detractors (yes , there were such people !) left out the first phrase and the all important last phrase - “ except so far as it was necessary to make them careful “ , which I think puts a different slant on the case , and suggests that he didn’t keep them in complete ignorance of his concerns , which was more or less what he was accused of doing , but told them as much as he felt they needed to know for the safety of the ship .

He also says that when he arrived in England in order to take charge of the Cerberus , the Admiralty made it clear that “ I will be called upon to serve in the Royal Navy “ . Keeping in mind that there was a war on in Europe at the time which might soon have involved Britain itself , William decided that he had a responsibility to the Victorian Government and therefore elected to go on the retired list of the Royal Navy and fulfil what he believed were his obligations to that state . The Argus , 14.4.71 , said that “ the admiralty FORCED Captain Panter to retire from the Royal Navy and go on to the retired list , before allowing him to take charge of the Cerberus “ and take it to Victoria .

The Argus , 19.1.1871 quoted a letter William had written to Mr. Verdon , who I think may have been the man who arranged the purchase of the Cerberus in about 1867 . It was sent from Gibraltar , after the terrible storm in which the ship was rolling to 40 degrees instead of the maximum recommended 10 degrees , and in which he says he “ did not think any ironclad in the British Navy could have behaved better during the rough weather encountered . ” Considering the account given above of all his “ concerns “ about the ship , this highly complementary description seems at odds with his own version of the facts .

In my abbreviated version , I have omitted references to a number of other incidents of terrible weather that William mentioned , some of which sounded every bit as worrying as the storm in the Bay of Biscay .

The Argus , 14.4.1871 said –

“ Western Australia must have a sad interest for him . “ (ie. Captain Panter whom they had been praising for his accomplishments , and had mentioned his passage through that state)

“ Some years ago , his brother , Frederick Kennedy Panter , in company with James Harding and William Goldwyer , were massacred by natives on the north coast of this Colony where they were exploring in the vicinity of Roebuck Bay . “ Apparently there were heroic and successful efforts made to recover the bodies and they were given a public burial with a monument erected at public cost .

The Ballarat Courier mentions on Saturday 6.5.1871 that Captain Panter’s Naval History was to be tabled in The Legislative Assembly as a means of establishing “ the qualifications necessary to obtain and hold a commission in The Victorian Navy “ , and the information that follows was almost the same as the report from the Landon archive that opened this section above – in fact it looks like this item may have been their source . William was in due course appointed to The Victorian Navy , and was given the continuing command of the Cerberus , which he held for the next 6 years .

As alluded to above , amongst all the adulation that William received as a result of his getting the Cerberus through that dreadful storm , there were inevitably a few carpers ! The tall poppy syndrome was flourishing even back then . Obviously the official report that William wrote for

his employers describing the adventure, an edited version of which is above, was made public as there was some criticism in the news papers in particular.

Below there is a reference to "letters" as well as reports that William wrote detailing his experiences on the trip. I don't know what these "letters" refer to, and I wonder if he also wrote a number of personal letters to various people which had been published, although I have not yet found any quoted in the papers. (There are hundreds of references to him in the year 1871 alone).

In the Melbourne Punch, 20.4.1871,
"Rather too much for a Joke."

Captain Panter, in his report to the Treasurer concerning the voyage of the "Cerberus", states that he does "not think that either men or officers knew the state of her stability." Captain Panter must be the joker of jokers. The idea of anyone not born an idiot being unable to infer a want of stability from such striking data as were afforded by the fact of her rolling her bilge pieces out of water, and throwing men from one side of the cabin to another without troubling them to use their feet, is rather beyond belief. He should remember that his officers had been to sea before he made his celebrated voyage, and it is too bad to hold them up to ridicule by asserting that they were ignorant of the ABC of their profession.

The McIvor Times and Rodney Advertiser (Heathcote) said in an item headed –

"NAUTICAL EGOTISM"

"I" took her to St. Petersburg, "I" brought her home to Shields, "I" took her to London, I, I, I, etc etc, and goes on to say, "We are glad to find that a portion of the Melbourne Press has determined to dispute the title of Lieutenant Panter to a monopoly of public praise for bravery and skill in connection with bringing out the Cerberus. He libeled the whole of the present generation of British Tars by saying that he could get no good men to sail in the Cerberus. It is pretty well known that it was not the ship men were afraid of, but that overbearing tyranny which would render the finest sea boat ever built a perfect hell afloat." The paper, and also The Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser (Grafton, NSW) 23.5.1871, both quote the "Weekly Times of Victoria" – (I have made a few minor cuts),

"It is to be regretted that the letters and reports of the Commander of the Cerberus, contain so many large "I's", and so little recognition of the services of his shipmates. To judge from these letters and reports, Captain Panter, and Captain Panter alone, did the work of bringing out the Cerberus.

Man o'war Jack had no hand in the matter; and experienced officers here in the cabin, unconscious of the fact that their "monster" lacked stability, were kept in ignorance of all that Captain Panter did on the voyage to get them safely landed. A suspicion is gaining ground that the officers of the Cerberus bore some small part in the dangers, which Captain Panter believes to have been monopolized by himself, and which according to his ingenious disclosure, he concealed from his subordinates, "I do not think", he says speaking of his ship, "that either men or officers knew the state of her stability, and I have not considered it necessary to let them know there was at any time any danger!" Really Captain Panter, you must tell that to the marines! Why, some of the officers must have had considerably more experiences of danger than Captain Panter could ever have had; (my observation – he was still just 29 years old!) "and are we to believe that these gentlemen were dependent on their commander for enjoying the bliss of ignorance as to their real position?"

The personal pronoun occurs no less than 140 times, or something like under one "I" to every three lines.

The McIvor Times go on to say that "the notion is simply absurd to suggest that the crew were in ignorance of their dangerous position, and we would like as a matter of curiosity, to hear what the officers and men have to say to it." So would I! "With every desire to recognize the claims of a zealous and brave servant of the State, we submit that Captain Panter's "I's" are far too obtrusive to be worthy of admiration. Captain Panter may grandiloquently echo the words of Coriolanus; "Alone I did it", as often as he pleases, but who will credit the assertion that he single handed kept the Cerberus afloat and by his own unaided buoyancy prevented her from turning topsy turvy in mid ocean?"

An author for the Melbourne Punch for 6.5.1871, obviously a cricket follower, wrote –

"Mr. McLellan (a member of Parliament) has opened the season with a fine display of all round hitting which gives great promise of a fine innings for the honourable member. He commenced with Captain Panter and the Cerberus, and told the house that the "officers of the ship and the sailors, humble as they might be, had declared to him, upon their honour, that they had never been in a vessel which sailed more smoothly". To this, Mr. GV Smith replied, that Captain Panter's only fault was a rather too liberal use of his "I's". If the worthy skipper had used his "eyes" a little more, he would not have made himself as ridiculous in the eyes of the Colony."

Is it not curious how William's "I's" caused so much offence!?

The quote allegedly from the officers and sailors about the "smooth sailing", also seems to be a little surprising.

Whatever one thinks of some of these comments, I rather enjoy the humour with which these remarks are laced. Having read the full version of his report, I feel that though there are an enormous number of "I's" in evidence, William was indeed the Captain and was the one who had to make all the decisions and give all the orders, and it seems to me that his report shouldn't really have offended people as much as it did. Perhaps he had a gift for rubbing people up the wrong way! What was he supposed to say – "the crew and I decided to do this that and the other, or that "we" did all these things together? Surely he was speaking on behalf of the men as well with some of those "I's" – if only he had said so.

However, I must say I feel these critics have a valid point. It is indeed inconceivable that the officers and crew were ignorant of the danger they were in, as instability is surely extremely obvious on a ship, especially to experienced seamen as many on board must have been, and even more so in such stormy weather. It was a good point to remind readers that William, at the age of 29, may have had less experience than some of the others on board!

Perhaps it was the all too obvious instability of the ship that caused so many of the crew to desert at some of the ports they arrived in.

There is also the worrying comment above in the Landon archive, and also in Wikipedia, that the crew

"nearly mutinied several times"!! I don't know how true this remark was, but Capt. Panter's own report seems to more or less confirm it. One quote above, referred to his Captaincy as "overbearing tyranny"! Crews don't threaten to mutiny or keep trying to escape the ship for no reason! Even William said that some would rather spend 6 weeks time in gaol on hard labour, than continue to serve (under him) on the ship, and that he "had to take strong measures" in order to prevent the crew escaping. I shudder to think what those "strong measures" might have been! Even William also said that he didn't think that the fear of the new and unfamiliar form of the ship, so soon after the tragedy that befell the "Captain", was the cause of their bad behavior – therefore implying that they behaved badly because they were bad men! He seemed to be in blissful ignorance of how badly his negative descriptions of the behavior of the crew reflected on himself and his leadership. Another report claimed that of the officers who began the journey in England, only 2 were remaining when they arrived in Port Philip. I think there was more going on here than we will ever know.

However since most of this information comes from the press clippings of the day and we all know the old quip about the press never letting the truth get in the way of a good story , and also we know about their universal and timeless delight in tearing down the reputations of people who have the affrontery to be more famous than themselves , then we must be careful about the information they give us as the gospel according to St . Know-it-all .

As to the quality of the men William was forced to hire for the journey , there are a few clues in the papers as to what sort of problems he faced . This is one -

The Age , 19.8.1871 said-

“ Captain Panter , of the Cerberus , was summoned to the County Court yesterday , by William Joseph Spring , engineer , for 50 pounds , the amount of a bonus alleged to be due . The plaintiff was engaged in England by Captain Panter , as third class engineer , for the Cerberus during her passage out to Victoria . Captain Panter , on behalf of the Victorian Government , engaged in writing to give him , in addition to his wages , a bonus of 50 pounds if he observed good behavior during the passage . The plaintiff admitted he was a little elevated at Malta (meaning of course that he was tipsy or even drunk ! I just love his euphemistic expression ; “ a little elevated “ !) when the steamer was there , and when he went ashore . For that the Captain stopped his allowance of liquor . He denied being elevated at any other time during the passage but said that he got drunk and disorderly at Williamstown . But the voyage was over then and those on board had to go ashore for food as none was given them on the vessel . The men and some of the officers were shamefully treated , being frequently short of food , and he was heartily glad when the voyage was over . He might have said to one of the officers that he would report to the home authorities of the conduct of Captain Panter . The other officers were in the habit of complaining among themselves , but they never vented their grievances in the Captain’s presence ; and as he did , he supposed he thereby earned the Captains ill-will . “ He claimed the papers he signed on leaving the ship , which stated he had received all due money , was “ signed under protest . “ Due to technicalities Mr. Spring’s case was thrown out and he was awarded 12 guineas in costs ! He wouldn’t have won anyway as the Judge said his sympathies were entirely with the defendant , and that Mr. Spring had lost his bonus because he didn’t fulfill his obligation to maintain good behavior . I’m sure Mr. Spring isn’t the only sailor in British history to have been keen on the demon drink !

Interestingly , this is the only reference to the famous voyage of the Cerberus to Victoria that I have so far found , that was witnessed by a person other than Captain Panter . It is significant in it’s less than complimentary description of the Captain , although it is obvious that Mr. Spring would have been very biased and perhaps out for revenge .

However , I am getting the feeling more and more that William Henry Panter , although a very good Sea Captain , was a demanding leader , a proud man , a perfectionist and a believer in absolute and unquestioning obedience and discipline , and in the strictest adherence to correct protocol . These are all qualities which may get excellent results but which may not endear a person to his work colleagues . Further events described below are very much consistent with this view .

Even when the Cerberus reached Melbourne , there was further work and modifications to be carried out to get her in to top condition as a fighting ship capable of defending the Colony . The alterations that had been done to try and make her ocean-worthy for the trip had to be removed for a start , as her role was to work Port Philip Bay only , and it was never intended that she should return to the ocean . The temporary sails were removed .

Two days after William wrote his report there was a letter from J.G.Francis , Treasurer , which fulsomely praised him for his superb work and offering him double pay “ to which you are entitled under the terms of my letter of the 23 April , 1870 . I beg to inform you that his excellency , the Governor in Council , has been pleased to appoint you captain and Senior Naval Officer in the Victorian service . “ Since I have reason to believe he was born sometime in April 1841 , it is possible he was still 29 or had just turned 30 . It is remarkable that so young a man would be given the highest Naval position in the Colony !

He was obviously extremely highly regarded by the people who really mattered and by the public at large . I don’t think we need to take too seriously the few members of the press who seemed to delight in trying to diminish his reputation . I have quoted from some of the more negative reports because they were interesting and amusing , but these sort of items were very much in the minority . Some of the quotes come from the Punch , which delighted in tongue in cheek humour , perhaps at the expense of veracity .

One reference for 1871 in the Argus , 14.10.1871 , lists a house for let – “ Williamstown South – New 8 roomed house , near sea and railway station , at present occupied by Captain Panter . Apply etc . “ Sadly the address given was for the contact person , presumably different to that of the house itself . He was still a single man at this time and still basking in his glorious reputation as a Naval hero . The house for rent it seems , was more desirable as a result of Captain Panter having lived there .

The Age in January 1872 reported that there was a problem with the pay of the men in the Naval Reserve repeatedly having their pay in arrears – “ the officer in command informed the members of the corps present that the delay entirely arose from Captain Panter’s inattention to his duties as commanding officer of the Naval Reserve . “ Whilst this article was useful in bringing to our attention another of Williams duties , I think it very unfair .

The Melbourne Punch for 4.4.1872 with tongue firmly in cheek as usual , was still going on about the power of the mighty Cerberus –

“ Quis Custodiet Custodes ? (I assume this means who guards the guardians ?)

While we have been importing the ironclad Cerberus “ (remember that Cerberus was the multi headed dog that guarded the gates of hell , in Greek mythology) “ to protect us against a foreign enemy , we little thought we were fostering a watchdog that might some day turn round on us and bite . On Easter Monday , Captain Panter clearly proved by his mimic victory over the land and sea batteries , and his bombardment of Melbourne , that he holds us in his power , and may put the city to ransom any day he likes or happens to feel in want of a little ready money . We have been blest with so many citizens who would not have scrupled at any such little indiscretion , that we feel it is wrong to leave so much temptation in the way of one man . The difficulty is to know how to appease Panter as , if he has any Imperialistic ideas he might easily found a dynasty here , and reign in triumph under the guardianship of his “ little dawg “ . We see nothing for it but send a deputation to ask him what he would take to keep the peace , with the guaranteed reversion of the office of Governor on the next vacancy . Panter must be pacified no matter what the cost . In the meantime we dwell on a volcano . “

I gather from this that William had conducted exercises in the Bay in which the guns were used ? with blanks , the noise from which induced the author to think about the possible implications of there being such a powerful ship , and by extension , such a powerful man , in the vicinity .

On the 2.7.1872 , William and Alice Seton Manifold were married at St. John’s Church , Toorak . (I haven’t confirmed this myself) . The Ovens and Murray Advertiser said on the 4.7.1872 , that they were married “ yesterday “ (which was the 3rd !) and that “ the Cerberus and Victoria dressed ship to honor the occasion . “ I assume they went back together to Williamstown , as also in this year , William was briefly mentioned in an item in the papers , as being contactable in the Naval Office there . This was admittedly on 20.4.1872 . He was in the Victorian Navy at this time , and still in charge of the Cerberus which was “ protecting the Colony against Russian invasion . “ It would appear that they lived at Williamstown from 1871 in William’s case , to 1877 when they bought elsewhere . The two eldest girls were born there . It seems quite likely that William and Charles Frederick Orr may have known one another even before their children were married in 1912 .

In the Williamstown Chronicle 15.1.1927 there was an article of the reminiscing persuasion which that town, having lost its importance to the city of Melbourne to the North, was rather prone to indulge in. It mentioned a number of names of notable persons, including "Captain Panter and his good lady, who kept the ladies school". What! Did Alice run a school? This same piece said that the Nelson (in which ship William came to Victoria) "ended up as a coal hulk at Beauty Point, Tasmania," and "that vast fighting machine, the Cerberus, perhaps in grief at her mate's ignominious end, today keeps the rude waves from tossing the dainty yachts about at Black Rock". She had been scuttled in 1924.

After the difficulties of the Cerberus voyage of 1870 – 1871 and William's unfairly criticized reportage of his, the officers and crews relative roles in it, there is sadly another matter to report that ended up causing embarrassment to the Captain, and a blemish on his otherwise spotless record.

THE GROUNDING OF THE "VICTORIA" 16.9.1872.

On this day the Victorian Navy Ship, the Victoria, was out on the Bay in the vicinity of the South Channel, when it ran aground. It doesn't sound like there was a lot of damage and it was released from the sand bank without too much difficulty after about 10-12 hours. The point was, that it should never have happened, and as a result there was an inquiry by the Pilot Board which began within days of the event. Much evidence followed by all sorts of witnesses and it is very complicated to work out what actually happened. The man nominally in charge of the Victoria at the time was Lt. George Philip Tandy, but also on board was Captain William Henry Panter, who was by far the senior officer.

According to William's evidence, which he insisted on giving under oath, even though this was not necessary as it was just an inquiry, not a Court, he had been asked by members of the Ministry to go on board and have the Victoria ready for use on the day in question. He went on board at 8 o'clock in the morning.

"I told Mr. Tandy to take the ship over to Sandridge, to the Railway Pier." Apparently there was trouble as Mr Tandy had to leave the Bridge and attend. This was something to do with the cables. Also it seems the engines were overheating and the engineer was keen to close them down as soon as possible to allow them to cool. On his return, Tandy took over the Bridge again and they arrived at Railway Pier and took on board the Ministers as arranged. The ministers wanted to go to the Breakwater Pier and so William ordered Mr. Tandy to go there and later to progress to the West Channel. Off Queenscliff "I told Mr. Tandy to go up the South Channel." After this there were more issues to deal with, involving the overheated engines, and later at about 1.45, "Mr. Langton (of the Ministers party) asked me to come down for lunch." Before doing so he gave Mr. Tandy more orders as to how to proceed. Not long afterwards, Mr. Tandy came down and said to Captain Panter that they were getting close to middle ground and that the engines would not work. He asked if he should throw down the anchor. Captain Panter went up and saw that the ship was then ashore and ordered the anchor to be let down. Mr. Tandy testified however that they didn't go aground until AFTER the anchor was dropped. I am unclear as to whether the engines were working or not at the time.

William stated, "I told Mr. Tandy he ought to have let go the anchor long before, and what was he thinking of, to which he made no reply."

William's contention was that the vessel was in the command of Lt. Tandy, "but he is bound to obey my orders as senior Naval Officer. The Ministers asked me on board but they did not ask me to take command. I did not tell Mr. Tandy in direct terms that I had or had not taken command of the ship. It was Mr. Tandy's duty to act promptly without waiting for orders when he found the ship was going aground."

Given that by his own evidence, William was issuing him with orders left right and centre, it was hardly surprising that Lt. Tandy came to the conclusion that Capt. Panter HAD TAKEN COMMAND of the ship from himself, as Panter was very much the senior officer (William's own evidence stated that Lt. Tandy was "bound to obey my orders".)

This seems to have been the main issue – who was actually in charge of the vessel at the time?

When giving evidence, even the members of the crew could not agree as to who they believed was in charge, and one of them stated that he believed Lt. Tandy was in charge, but had there been any issue, he would have gone to Captain Panter, "because he was the senior officer."

It seems to me that William was trying to have it both ways, as he admits that he was senior officer and that Tandy had to obey his every order, and there were plenty of them, but that HE, Captain Panter, was NOT in charge, and therefore not guilty of any wrong doing, and not in the least responsible for the accident, "the blame for which he placed entirely on the shoulders of Lt. Tandy". (ie. according to the papers).

The opinion of the enquiry did not agree with William's view of the matter.

In the Empire – Sydney 30.9.1872,

"A strong public feeling prevails against Captain Panter in regard to the late inquiry respecting the stranding of the Victoria, and the Government is strongly urged to thoroughly remodel the defensive marine."

On 28.9.1872 William wrote from the Williamstown Naval Office to the Pilot Board saying that the newspapers were saying that he had been found partially to blame because he failed to make it clear to Mr. Tandy whether he was or was not in charge of the ship. He begged the Board to allow him to furnish a report of his views on how the accident occurred as he felt that during the inquiry he had not been given the chance to submit all the evidence he could provide. He begged them not to act until he had a chance to submit his own report.

As a result of this on the 3rd of October, the report of the inquiry was sent to both Captain Panter and Lt. Tandy, and on the very next day William sent a letter to the Treasurer saying that as the report reflected on his conduct, he once again implored to be given a chance to clear his name of any wrong doing. So on the 9th he sent in a long statement in answer to the report of the board, in which, according to a newspaper report, he was contending that the finding of the board was "not warranted or supported by the evidence, and he attempted once again to throw the whole blame upon Lt. Tandy." In fairness to William, I must point out that I have not seen the actual words he used, but am merely quoting the papers of the day. "In conclusion, he complained that the board far exceeded the duty entrusted to it, because he believed that the task of the enquiry was to ascertain the facts of the accident and not to investigate the conduct of any person involved." (meaning mainly himself I presume; and again I am quoting the papers, not William's own letter).

The Board, trying to be even handed, wrote to Mr. Tandy on 23rd October asking him if he had any statement to make relative to the finding of the Board.

Lt. Tandy wrote a much briefer statement in which he said he had nothing further to add to the findings of the enquiry, but noted that this was the first mishap he had ever been involved in, in the 19 years of his service. (which means, incidentally, that he had a longer experience in the Navy than had William himself!) At no point that I could find, did Tandy ever try to deny responsibility, or to directly blame Captain Panter.

As the Argus reported on 14 November 1872, the results of the enquiry were presented to the Legislative assembly "yesterday, by Mr. Langton" (who was on board at the time). It seems that the board reported: –

"That the immediate cause of the grounding of the Victoria, was Lt. Tandy's misunderstanding the directions given him by Capt. Panter, when he left the deck for lunch.

That Captain Panter, HAVING ASSUMED COMMAND of the Victoria " (which was precisely what he was denying) " was responsible for the safe navigation of the vessel, and that he was not justified in leaving the deck whilst the Victoria was passing through the South Channel,"

especially as it turned out , that Tandy had never negotiated the South channel before , and as he pointed out , Captain Panter did not inquire as to whether he had had any experience doing so , (although he admitted that he didn't volunteer the information either) .

“ That Lt. Tandy , being in charge of the deck when Capt. Panter went below , and finding the Victoria drifting into shallow water , did not display that energy an officer in his position should have done , by at once either ordering the engines to be moved , or the ship to be anchored . “

“ After some correspondence with the Naval gentlemen concerned , the Government decided that Capt. Panter be censured , and that Lt. Tandy be censured and fined one months pay . “

I must confess that influenced by the version of events given in the papers , which may or may not be very fair or accurate , William's behavior throughout at first seemed to me to have been less than perfect , and his very public and persistent efforts to shift all blame away from himself , and therefore by implication on to Lt. Tandy , I did not find very honourable . He persisted in writing about his version of events to the board , and to the papers even weeks after the incident occurred . It strikes me that both men were responsible , and as such , William might have taken the enquiry's decision with the good grace that Lt. Tandy showed – I never saw any hint of denial of culpability on his part .

However I have since seen a news item which I should have noted , which described Captain Panter as a man with strong opinions and beliefs who was prepared to pursue those beliefs with dogged determination and see them through . As I have great confidence in Capt. Panter's integrity , I think it is very unlikely that he was cynically trying to transfer his own error of judgement on to the shoulders of someone else merely as a desperate effort to preserve his spotless record at any cost , but that it is far more likely that he genuinely believed to the core of his being , that he WAS NOT in charge at the time and that he WAS GENUINELY innocent of any wrong doing . Everyone agreed with his contention that Tandy did not act with sufficient professionalism and alacrity and this was reflected in the heavier punishment he received . This explains William's insistence on giving his evidence under oath , even though to the best of my knowledge , no one else did . It is obvious that William was a proud man whose blemish free record meant a great deal to him , and the conviction that he was innocent , meant that it was worth fighting for .

I think that Lt. Tandy , when he realized that they were at risk of grounding , and believing that Captain Panter was in command , quite naturally went to him to ask permission to drop anchor . Unfortunately it was too late . He should have shown more initiative and immediately acted himself , which was exactly what William was saying all along . I wonder if Tandy was rather in awe of Captain Panter and didn't dare make a decision on his own whilst the much more senior officer was on board . In fact he said just that in his evidence . It seems likely that Tandy may also have underestimated the speed with which the ship was drifting in to the shallows .

The fact that Lt. Tandy did not put down the anchor when he should have , and that he gave evidence that he believed Capt. Panter was in charge , (which the board also thought him to be , and therefore ultimately responsible) , clearly made William very angry indeed , and it is obvious that he never forgave him .

I suspect that this blemish on his otherwise spotless record severely dented William's pride .

This embarrassment at the grounding of the Victoria while William was on board , in command , and issuing orders , in the presence of members of the Ministry who had organized the exercise , did not seem to harm his career , as he remained in charge of the Colonial Navy and continued as commander of the Cerberus until 1877 when he crossed paths with the detested Lt. Tandy once again in a matter that brought an end to his distinguished Naval career .

Not a great deal of harm was done to Lt. Tandy's career either as he was still working on the Victoria 2 years later , in 1874 , although admittedly he had been replaced as commander of the ship , by Captain Stanley , in late 1872 .

The Record and Emerald Hill and Sandridge Advertiser , 21.11 1872 (these obscure papers usually took these items from main line papers) Reported –

“ The Grounding of the “ Victoria , “

“ The Government have at last brought up Captain Panter and Lieutenant Tandy for judgement , and it is really singular how they have varied from another court or authority in dealing with an identical twin case ; the Government have censured Captain Panter and fined the lieutenant in a month's pay . “

The author then mentions another case involving a Captain Thompson whom they feel was harshly treated compared to the former pair above . Unbelievably Captain Thompson grounded his own vessel off Queenscliff on the very same day as the Victoria's mishap , only a few hours afterwards . Yet he received the heavier punishment of 3 months suspension without pay ! It is significant that so far , I have been unable to find any newspaper report on the grounding of Captain Thompson's ship – but of course , he was not famous !

In 1873 , there was a reference to a Williamstown funeral of one of his fellow Cerberus work colleagues , and William was listed as one of the pallbearers .

In 1874 there were reports on the Victorian Navy at the time , which have been published online under “ Ships of the Victorian Navy “ which is based on a report dated 1.7.1874 .

At that time the complement included the Nelson , “ at present in charge of Lt. Turner “ see just below .

“ Victoria “ Lt. G.P. Tandy , the man so disliked by Capt. Panter .

(This seems to be in error , as according to other evidence , Lt. Tandy had been replaced as commander by Captain Stanley , although he did remain on board until the end of 1875 .)

“ Pharos “ Captain Panter
“ Cerberus “

who in this same piece was described as “ Commander of The Victorian Navy . “ All these vessels figure in William's history , one way or another . The story , admittedly brief , of the Cerberus does not even mention the infamous storm that it encountered on the way to Port Philip . There were several other ships in the Victorian Navy at the time , which was easily the most powerful of all the Colonial Navies .

In 1875 , Elizabeth Frances , the first of William's seven daughters , was born at Williamstown , and 2 years later , in 1877 , Violet Louisa was born there as well . (I am not entirely sure whether they were born there or whether their births were registered there – probably both) .

A MOST EVENTFUL YEAR ! - 1877 .

As noted above , Violet Louisa was born in Williamstown .

On June the 19th 1877, "The Kiama Independent and Shoalhaven Advertiser" reported that Captain Panter and a group of other distinguished Naval Gentlemen, went down on the H.M.V.S. Pharos, to Queenscliff and Point Nepean to inspect the "The positions necessary to protect the Heads". An inspection of The Volunteer Force including artillery, "will take place tomorrow, etc".

The year 1877 was indeed a momentous one as it also saw a very important change in William's life, when he felt forced to resign from the command of the Cerberus and the Victorian Navy when a man we met briefly above, who he claimed was totally unsuitable, was appointed to be his lieutenant on the ship, thereby replacing Mr. Turner, a man he respected, and I suspect befriended. This was none other than the much loathed Lt. Tandy!

I can imagine a proud man such as I believe William may have been, feeling that this was a slap in the face that was not to be borne! He felt very passionate about the issue and approached the newspapers to publicly explain his position, and win over public support. They published a notice saying

"We subjoin here the letter in which Captain Panter's resignation was conveyed to the Minister."
- and with some minor abbreviation on my part it reads -

"H.M.S. Cerberus, June 30, 1877.

Sir, - On the 19th inst, I received a letter informing me that the Treasurer proposed to appoint Mr. Tandy, late of the Victoria, to the Cerberus at a salary of 400 pounds per annum, and to remove Mr. Turner to the Nelson, with a salary of 350 pounds per annum. I was convinced that Mr. Tandy was not qualified for the important position and that his appointment would be in the highest degree injurious to the efficiency of the Cerberus. I deemed it my duty to inform the Treasurer of my opinion considering that if I did not do so, that I should lay myself open to grave censure. I received the following minute from the Treasurer: -

"Captain Panter will please carry out my instructions. When his advice is required it will be duly asked for." Ouch!!!

"Mr. Tandy has been only three or four times on board the Cerberus. He has never had any experience of the navigation, the complicated fittings, guns or drill of such a vessel. He has shown by his conduct on several occasions that he is not amenable to discipline. He has been severely reprimanded five times by different Ministers during the last five years - three times for insubordination, and twice for neglect of duty. I am convinced that the appointment to the post of Chief Executive Officer of the Cerberus, of a man who is habitually insubordinate, will be fatal to the discipline which must be maintained on board.

I would also state that had Mr. Tandy been desirous of proving himself efficient in gunnery, he might have had the opportunity of doing so when the gunnery officer from HMS Wolverine was on board the Cerberus. The Commodore was sending this officer to inspect the Cerberus and that Mr. Tandy and the other officer's qualifications should be inquired into. This inspection took place with regard to all the officers except Mr. Tandy. He left the Colony when Lt. Dugdale arrived and though the officer was on board nearly a month, Mr. Tandy did not return until Lt. Dugdale had left. " (William doesn't directly lay the charge of cowardice against Mr. Tandy, whom he never once refers to as Lieutenant Tandy even though he was so entitled, in deliberately avoiding Lt. Dugdale's inspection, but the insinuation must have been as obvious to everyone then as it is to me 139 years later).

"The command of a costly and complicated vessel like the Cerberus, is a sufficiently onerous and difficult duty even when the Commander is supported by a competent lieutenant, upon whom he feels he can rely; without such support, and with the presence of an officer whose incompetency is patent to every officer and man on board, and whose insubordination is notorious, the responsibility is one which I feel it my duty to decline. I was appointed to the Cerberus before she was finished and have been in command of her for more than seven years. I shall leave her with great regret. I beg, therefore, that I may be relieved of the command of the Cerberus with as little delay as possible.

I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

The hon. The Treasurer.

W. Henry Panter."

My goodness! Despite the formal language, the passion and venom of his feelings is very obvious! When I first came across this story, Lt. Tandy was a completely new name to me, and I was in complete ignorance of the tale of the grounding of the Victoria in 1872, discussed above, and I was struck by the seemingly extreme and bizarre reaction of William to the appointment of Mr. Tandy. Only after that story and others to do with the behavior of Lt. Tandy came to light, did I understand where that passion was coming from. The indictment of Mr. Tandy is absolutely devastating and must have been a very cruel thing for the man concerned to see published in the newspapers for all to see. (were there libel laws then?). However, perhaps Capt. Panter's assessment was quite accurate as Mr. Tandy's reprimands for insubordination and neglect of duty must have been on record in the Navy. There are more details as to what these instances were all about under the section on Lieut. Tandy - see elsewhere.

For the moment, I will summarise the incidents some of which so angered Captain Panter: -

1871 - Captain Panter recommended Lt. Tandy be given a commission without passing further tests, because he already had the necessary qualifications and held a Masters certificate. Clearly his opinion of Mr. Tandy was positive at this point of time. Odd that in 1871 Capt. Panter said Tandy WAS qualified but in 1877 he said he WASN'T! I suppose this could mean that he felt that the man was qualified at first, but that due to a failure to keep up with modern developments in gunnery, especially of the type that were present in the Cerberus, he was no longer qualified 6 years later. Then there were also the following incidents which would have caused him to greatly change his opinion about the suitability of the man.

In one of his letters, of 1875, Lt. Tandy was petitioning the Government to return him to the command of the Victoria. Citing his Naval history and experience, he pointed out that "in July 1871 I received a Lieutenants commission in the Naval forces of this Colony, and was sworn in under the Defense Act as Lieutenant Commanding, by the Senior Naval Officer."

At this time, the Senior Naval Officer who swore him in to office, must surely have been William Henry Panter!

1872 - In September, the grounding of the Victoria occurred as detailed above. This seems at present to be the real beginning of the Captain's enmity against Lt. Tandy, as I would guess that he could not forgive him for failing to drop anchor in time, or for testifying that he, Captain Panter, was in charge at the time of the accident, (even though the review board agreed with Mr. Tandy.)

1872 - In October, the Victoria was commissioned to take on extensive survey work, and the charge of the ship was removed from Lt. Tandy and handed over to the head of the survey, Captain Stanley. This was very much to the distress of Lt. Tandy, who pointed out that Stanley wasn't even in the Victorian Navy but the Royal Navy, and therefore should not have been placed over himself.

1875 - In this year, William was required to write a report on the state of the defenses for a Royal Commission. His report must have been made public because on the 12.6.1875, Lt. Tandy committed the grave error of submitting a commentary on his superior officer's effort, which was, at the very least, a gross impertinence, and at worst an act of insubordination and an insult of the highest order in the stiffly hierarchical world of the services.

As if this wasn't bad enough, he sent the report he had written, DIRECTLY to the Royal Commission instead of following proper protocol and going through his superior officer, Captain Panter! - a man for whom absolute adherence to protocol was utterly essential.

It was not surprising, that when the Captain found out, he was incensed, outraged and scathing of Tandy's indiscretion. The only thing that I can think of in Tandy's defense, is that by now he must have been fully aware of the Captain's enmity, and he would have thought that if he sent his comments about the report to Captain Panter, who was the author, and who so disliked him, then they would have had absolutely no chance of being passed on to the Commission. Even though he stated in a letter dated 23.9.1875, that it was Mr. Langton who deposed him from his commandship of the Victoria three years before, he may have believed that the Captain had a hand in this humiliating demotion as well (October 1872), and as a result it is possible he heartily returned the Captain's dislike and distrust. It was Mr. Langton who was on board when the Victoria ran aground in September 1872, and who was the very person who invited Captain Panter to go down to lunch during which time the unhappy incident occurred.

This act of foolhardiness resulted in another reprimand from the Government for Lt. Tandy.

1875 - On the 1.12.1875, Lt. Tandy made another serious error of judgement when he wrote a letter to his immediate superior, Capt. Stanley of the Victoria, still conducting the surveys commissioned in 1872, suggesting he carry out certain changes in order to improve the safety of the ship and lessen the risk of running aground in the then unfamiliar waters. Given the history of the incident in 1872, it was understandable that Lt. Tandy was hypersensitive on the matter of running aground, but Captain Stanley reacted in exactly the same manner as Captain Panter, and was highly incensed and regarded the letter as an act of insubordination. To his credit, Capt. Stanley gave Tandy the opportunity to withdraw his letter but the latter was too proud to do so. He was more concerned about covering himself from any possible charge of further neglect of duty by offering suggestions as to how to increase the safety of the ship and crew. Realising too late he had so upset the Captain, Lt. Tandy wrote a second letter trying to explain his meaning and assuring the Captain that he had no intention of being insulting, but the damage was done and Stanley sent both letters to the Government saying that he could not tolerate such a man on board and that his services were of no practical use anyway.

1875 - immediately after the first of the two letters mentioned above was written, Lt. Tandy left the Colony. He claimed it was on the advice of his doctor for the benefit of his health. I can imagine him being in a highly stressed and agitated state, and he may have been already suffering symptoms of the condition that was to end his life in the not too distant future. In fact the second letter referred to in the above paragraph was written from

“Hobart Town, 4.12.1875.”

However in his 1877 letter, Captain Panter insinuated that the real reason was that Tandy fled the Colony in 1875 to escape the assessment that was being carried out by Lt. Dugdale of the officers' abilities and qualifications in the art of gunnery. This is surprising, given Lt. Tandy's apparent qualifications and experience in that art.

Captain Panter also claimed on another occasion that the Lieutenant had left the Colony without seeking permission. In the Captain's eyes, this must have been another serious breach of protocol, and he requested his superiors in the Government remove Mr. Tandy from his commission, but for the moment they chose to ignore the Captain's request.

This was probably another of Lt. Tandy's acts of “insubordination” or “neglect of duty”, referred to above.

But later, the Government of the day, remembering Captain Panter's call to have Lt. Tandy removed from office, and now heeding Captain Stanley's accusations of insubordination, and according to the papers, describing Lt. Tandy's function on the Victoria as “worse than useless”,

at first suggested that Lt. Tandy be transferred to the Cerberus. When that was knocked back by the Treasurer (I wonder if he had consulted Capt. Panter - if so, I can imagine the answer he would have had!) the Government then arranged that Mr. Tandy was given 3 months leave with full pay, and that he was told that his services were no longer required. I presume he found other work, or may have been unemployed for quite some time. It is likely that the 3 months leave with full pay began in about January 1876.

Despite Lt. Tandy's errors of judgement in writing those well meant but unwise letters, I feel he was very unkindly treated by the Government which preceded the inception of the Berry Ministry of May 1877, by some of the press, and dare I say, even by Captain Panter.

As to his being “worse than useless”, the lieutenant was trained for a warship role, and it being a time of peace, then there was perhaps not much use for a gunnery officer to be on board a ship conducting a survey.

Captain Panter had claimed that there were 5 instances of insubordination and neglect of duty on the part of Lt. Tandy, but as the above are the only ones I have yet discovered, then there may have been one or two other similar instances that I have not yet found mentioned in the papers.

In the light of all this information regarding the grounding of the Victoria and Mr. Tandy's subsequent errors of conduct, none of which I had seen when I first read Captain Panter's scathing letter about him, I can now understand that my first impression, which was that the Captain was being grossly unfair to the Lieutenant, was in fact misguided, and that I was being unfair to Captain Panter! It seems there was good grounds for the Captain's negative feelings about Lt. Tandy, even though I still feel his reactions were a little extreme given the circumstances.

More details of the sad and troubled life of Lt. Tandy can be found in his file. I feel very sorry for him, even though it cannot be denied that he brought some of his misfortunes upon his own head. He was particularly prone to put in to writing opinions that, though well meant, should have been kept to himself. After the traumatic experience of the Victoria's grounding, he seemed paranoid about avoiding a repetition and was clearly trying to protect himself from further censures. I think that these fears were the cause of his writing those injudicious letters. I feel that both the Captains were guilty of overreacting to his indiscretions, and I don't feel he deserved the public humiliation he received from the hands of Captain Panter and the others in the Government who used him as a political football to further their own agendas. These matters should have been dealt with internally.

It is interesting that the Captain's favourite, Mr. Turner, had fewer qualifications than Lt. Tandy.

Apart from all these difficulties, Lt. George Philip Tandy had further tragedies in his all too brief life.

His first wife Nora, died childless on 8.7.1869, aged only 22;

only 2 weeks later, in his wife's grave, he had to bury Nora's older sister, the “beloved” Mary Anne, who was aged just 35; she died 21.7.1869;

his second wife Jane, died in childbirth in 1870 at 20; the child, a daughter, survived;

he married again for the third time in 1873, this time to a widow who had not only lost her young husband, but one of their three children as well; together they had a further 4 children; she was Sarah Waterman (nee Turner);

and then he himself died at the terribly young age of 40, in 1879, of a ruptured aortic aneurysm.

His health was no doubt not helped by all the stress he was unfairly subjected to in the topsy-turvy politics of the day. His early death from an aneurysm, which is usually present for quite some years before the final event, supports his claim that he left the colony in 1875 for health reasons. However, there is no denying that he should have explained the position to Captain Panter first, who surely, had he known that the

Lieutenant was ill , would have given him leave . Again I wonder if Tandy was reluctant to follow proper protocol because of his knowledge of the Captain's antipathy .

He left behind the third wife Sarah , and 7 children .

His last child was born posthumously 22 days after his death and was named after him –
Georgina Philippa .

The Government was sufficiently far from agreeing with Captain Panter's assessment of Lieutenant Tandy , that they gave him the honour of lowering all appropriate flags to half mast in a gesture of respect , and arranged for him to have a burial with Naval Honours .

He was buried in Williamstown cemetery with Jane , his second wife . However in a cruel final twist of fate , even the grave is in ruins and the marble headstone completely illegible . The grave of his first wife , Nora , is also there at Williamstown , and even though it is 10 years older , it is in superb condition . Even the cemetery records misspelled his name , where he is noted as " George P LANDY ! " They could not even get the poor man's name right !

It seems that Lt. George Philip Tandy was to be as unfortunate in death as he was in life .

His case was very much politicised at the time . An example of this can be seen in the very appointment to the Cerberus to be William's lieutenant in 1877 , despite having been as far as I know , unemployed by the Navy since about January 1876 . I suspect the change of Government which occurred in May 1877 when Mr. Berry came into power , may have meant that someone who was out of favour before , was suddenly brought back in to the fold of favour again by a new incoming ministry . Is it even possible that Mr. Berry deliberately appointed Lt. Tandy knowing full well that Capt. Panter despised him , in order to provoke a resignation ? As seen below there was an ongoing dispute between Captain Panter and Mr. Berry that may well have been a factor in these events .

Another example of the controversial and political nature of his case , was the referral to Mr. Tandy by an unsympathetic journalist with an almost audible sneer , as " A. T. Clarke's protégé " . This was in the Argus of 7.7.1877 which published a very negative item about the Lieutenant , which even questioned whether his qualifications as a gunnery expert were genuine , and stated that the Lieutenant was reemployed merely because a new Government with a big majority had just come into power and were basically reversing the decisions of the outgoing ministers almost out of spite . This new Government was the Berry Administration and this journalist clearly did not vote for them !

A very lengthy counter to this negative diatribe was published in the Age , 10 days later in which the author quite convincingly puts Lt. Tandy's history in a much more sympathetic and positive light . These two articles are quoted in full in the section on Lt. Tandy , elsewhere . An example of the different way the same event can be described according to the bias of the writer , is shown in the very head line of the first article , which says

" The dismissal of Lt. Tandy " .

As the opposing journalist says , the actual wording used by the Government was " that he should be told that he was to be given 3 months leave with full pay and that his services were no longer required " . The article goes on to say that he was never actually dismissed or sacked but only that at a time of peace there was not a suitable post available for him at the time . After all , the Government did try and put him on to the Cerberus , but that was knocked back – possibly by Captain Panter himself ! This was hardly a dismissal ! He points out the inconsistency in Captain Panter's behavior to Lt. Tandy in his recommendation of his qualifications in 1871 which turned into a total reversal by 1877 , and he questions the Captain's opinion that a less qualified officer in the person of Mr. Turner was qualified but that Lt. Tandy was not ! He concludes that an " extreme case of personal prejudice " was behind the Captains positioning . Really , one can not know the truth from what opposing journalists are posturing – the wisest course is to believe that the truth lies somewhere in the middle . I , for one , do not doubt Captain Panter's integrity , just as I do not doubt that he was not perfect .

I do hope Lt. Tandy's last job on the Cerberus under Capt. Mandeville was a happy one . It was to be tragically short lived ,

Capt. Panter had denied any responsibility for the Victoria's accident in 1872 , which was not the opinion of the Marine Board that reviewed the case , and it is perfectly obvious that he blamed Lt. Tandy entirely for his own embarrassment over the incident . This , and the other instances indicated above of " insubordination and neglect of duty " at last explains his vehement and devastating indictment of Tandy , and why it was impossible for him to work with him ever again – even at the cost of his career .

I can almost feel the hackles rising on the Minister when he received Captain Panter's letter of 1877 , stating in no uncertain terms , that Lt. Tandy was not a suitable candidate to be appointed his under officer , and describing the Minister's choice in particularly unkind and critical terms . I can understand him feeling that William was overstepping the mark here by trying to tell him how he should run his affairs , and by being so scathing about the man he had chosen for the post . I see a certain irony in the fact that Capt. Panter and Captain Stanley were so incensed when Lt. Tandy wrote letters suggesting improvements in the way his superiors might do things , and here was Captain Panter doing exactly the same thing to HIS superior !!!!

Hence the Ministers extremely terse and cutting response !

Clearly William's position was untenable after this , and he had no alternative other than to end his Naval career . I wonder if William , now being 36 and married with two children , was about ready to leave the Navy anyway and start a new life . Lieutenant Turner also resigned his commission . The two of them must have begun to seek a property to acquire together quite soon after these events - maybe even before .

According to the Bendigo Advertiser 14.7.1877 (curiously named , given that the name of the City was then Sandhurst – NOT it's old name of Bendigo . It was not renamed Bendigo for about another 20 years) , it was Mr. Berry who appointed Mr. Tandy and I believe he may have been the then equivalent of State Premier at about that time . In fact the net says that Mr. Berry came into office in May 1877 and remained Premier until 1881 . It seems that the appointment of Lt. Tandy was one of the earliest of his changes . Mr. Berry had had a short spell as Premier in 1875 as well and it is possible that there may have been some animosity between Mr. Berry and Captain Panter . The item reiterates the fact that the command of the Cerberus was taken over by Commander Mandeville as stated above . I wonder if this was the man after whom Mandeville Hall in Toorak was named , and Mandeville Crescent where Percy and Ruby Rose lived when first married in 1908 .

Interestingly , when Captain Mandeville's obituary was published in 1887 , the author says at one point that Captain Mandeville came to the Colony to visit his brother in about 1877

" AT WHICH TIME THE DISPUTE WHICH THEN EXISTED BETWEEN CAPTAIN PANTER AND THE BERRY GOVERNMENT WAS AT IT'S VERY HEIGHT . "

This wording suggests that the argument had not just been a brief disagreement, and maybe involved more than just the appointment of Lt. Tandy to the Cerberus. It is remarkable that the author saw fit to mention it even 10 years after the events took place. This all suggests that the dispute lasted some time and that it was heated and notorious!

This same item also says that Captain Panter didn't retire from the position as head of the Naval services until 1878 – quite some months after he must have left the Cerberus and bought the Breakfast Creek Station with his friend, Mr. Turner. This position was also taken over by Captain Mandeville, just as he had already taken over the command of the Cerberus the previous year.

There is a news item from 26.7.1877, in which there was a description of a test of a new torpedo, and the names of "Captain Mandeville and Lt. Tandy, of the Cerberus", were mentioned. This is important, as we now know that Captain Panter's request to be released from the command of the Cerberus in June-July, 1877, as published in the newspapers, was very promptly granted as Captain Mandeville was in command with Lt. Tandy, by the 26th of July.

It seems to me that William continued to feel some anger over the matter of his "forced" resignation, as he didn't let the matter rest, but was still writing letters to the editor even 10 days after his resignation had been accepted, requesting that his version of events as shown above be published yet again for the edification of the public. (The Age, 12.7.1877 and perhaps others I have not seen.) In fact he was claiming that his previous letter giving his side of the story had not been published. This attempt to win over public opinion and embarrass the Berry government did result in a few letters to the editor of the papers decrying the shabby treatment the Captain had received.

This wound ran very deep.

Also in this eventful year of 1877 for William, there occurred the offer for sale and purchase of a very large farming property some miles south of Cowra, NSW. This was the

"BREAKFAST CREEK STATION".

"Brunker, Wolfe and Badgery have received instructions from E. H. Badgery, Esq., to sell by auction, at the Exchange, Sydney, on Wednesday, 24th October, 1877, at 3 o'clock,

The Breakfast Creek Station,

a valuable and well secured squattage, situated near the junction of the Lachlan and Burrowa Rivers, and about 40 miles from the Binalong Railway Station and same distance from Blayney, on the Western, comprising about 32,500 acres of very agricultural and fattening black flats and lightly timbered Box ridges. The whole is abundantly and permanently watered by Breakfast, Godfrey, and Molongolo Creeks, and by numerous springs and lagoons. The stock consists of 10,000 sheep (more or less), 25 head (more or less) of quiet well bred cattle, and 12 capital working horses.

The improvements comprise new brick cottage of 8 rooms, well furnished throughout; kitchen, stable, coach house, and storeroom; woolshed, men's huts, with all the necessary yards for drafting and working the stock.

With the property will be sold dray, wagon, cart, blacksmith's and carpenter's tools, plough, barrow, and other articles. etc etc

In the year 1874 - A Mr. J.J. Ryan had sold the Breakfast Creek Station, (along with some 3300 sheep). I don't know who the purchaser was, but it may have been the Mr. Badgery mentioned above.

It was bought by William in partnership with his friend from the Nelson and Cerberus for whom he had sacrificed a great deal, Mr. Turner. It was roughly midway between Cowra to the North and Burrowa to the South.

The agents involved, later put a note in the paper saying "we have sold Breakfast Creek Station with Messrs Brock and Broughton, the property of Mr. E.H. Badgery, to Capt. Panter and Mr. Turner for over 11,000 pounds." (A huge sum!). Confusingly, the Armadale Express and New England General Advertiser, 16.11.1877, said

"Captain Panter, formerly of the war steamer Cerberus, stationed in Hobson's Bay, and Lieutenant Turner, of the Nelson, have purchased Messrs. Brock and Broughton's Breakfast Creek Station, on the Lachlan."

So who was the vendor – Mr. Badgery or Messrs Brock and Broughton?

I have found out next to nothing about this venture, but I would guess that Mr. Turner was the one who ran the property and perhaps William was more of a financial partner, because clearly the Panters seemed to move around a lot, and later they continued a life down in Melbourne, whereas the station would have needed a permanent resident boss or manager – presumably Mr. Turner at first, and after he left by managers. I just don't know how much time the Panters spent at the Station or how involved William was with the running of the place.

1879 AND BEYOND.

In 1879 Mary Grace was born in Caulfield, and/or at least registered there. Also in this year, William was one of a large number of appointees to take up positions as magistrates.

In 1881, Florence Morton was born (and/or registered) in Prahran, but in this same year, William was noted as appearing on the bench at the Burrowa Police Court, as published in the local paper on 25.3.1881. I am beginning to think that they moved around quite a lot!

In 1883, Olive Emily Constance was born, "in Cowra" but presumably at the Breakfast Creek Station whilst the family were on a stay there. Her birth was registered at the nearest town centre of significance – Cowra.

Edith May was born 1885 and Helen Kennedy 1886. Both births were registered in Melbourne. I suppose the place of birth and the place of registration may not always be the same. One source says Edith was born Sth Yarra.

In 1889, Alice had signed over to her name, a 5 acre 2 roods and 24 perches property fronting Davey's road, Frankston, "being part of lot 10 of subdivision no. 1128. She was "wife of William Henry Panter, Breakfast Creek, Burrowa, NSW." This presumably became part of Jerula. It was Vol. 2147, Folio 429208.

The partnership between William and Mr. F.H.B. Turner did not last for ever, as Mr. Turner left the venture at a date unknown, and ended up in QLD. Perhaps William bought him out. He must have left sometime well before 1891 according to his obituary – see below. I hope they had not had a disagreement of some kind, but given what I imagine to be William's strong and determined character, I would not be surprised.

In 1894, there was a brief newspaper item saying that Capt. Panter was having trouble with the shearers who were refusing to sign "the new agreement". There was no further information on the matter and it didn't even hint at what the agreement was, but I have since seen on the ABC's

“ Landline “ , that there was a great deal of unrest in this period as the workers tried to gain their rights . There was a major shearers strike in 1891 when the unionized shearers protested against the use of “ scab “ labour , and again in 1894 when there was even violence and arson . This was during the awful depression of the 1890s when there were large numbers of men prepared to work for a pittance , which suited the land owners but not the unions .

The following year of 1895 saw a Cowra Hospital fund raising event held “ at Capt. Panter’s Breakfast Creek Station . “ It was the famous “ Cowra Hospital , Breakfast Creek and CUCUMGILLIGA picnic and ball . “ Goodness , what a mouthful ! To entertain the vast hordes of visitors , there were “ Sports ; consisting of horse and foot racing , cricket , throwing at the wicket , rounders , tennis etc . A good days amusement promised for young and old . To be followed by a Ball and Supper . “ Cucumgilliga was a nearby Station .

There are a large number of newspaper references to William in his capacity as a Magistrate over the period 1894 – 1906 at least . He usually presided over the Prahran Police Court , or was on the Bench . He was a J.P. There were also a number of appearances in the Frankston Police Court , one of which was in 1895 , and another 1905 , and as noted above , the one found at Burrowa , 1881 . There were two at the St Kilda Police Court at least , 1899 and 1900 . By far the most common were the Prahran Police Court adjudications , which numbered well over a hundred I should guess . Most of these were for drunk and disorderly charges , and less often , willful damage , use of foul language and the like .

In 1898 Capt. Panter advertised 10,000 acres in the Cowra district for let . One can only assume this was Breakfast Creek Station , or part of it perhaps . It was “ first class wheat land close to railway station . Average yields on neighboring farms , 12 to 20 bushels ; average rainfall , 23 inches . For further particulars , contact CAPTAIN PANTER , Breakfast Creek , Cowra , New South Wales . “ Maybe it was another property altogether as the ad says “ close to railway station “ whereas BC Station was 40 miles from Binalong station . Perhaps in that huge country 40 miles WAS “ close . “

William Henry Panter wrote his will in 1899 , in which the Breakfast Creek Station was mentioned as obviously he still owned or had an interest in it . A little more detail is to be found below .

The Argus had a very brief note in 1900 , to say that Capt. Panter and a Mr. Whitney , “ have volunteered through the Defense Department for service in China “ . Luckily , it seems nothing came of this offer . This was during the Boxer Rebellion against British Imperialism ; 1899-1901 .

In 1900 , “ Jerula , “ 14 acres , was advertised for leasing , but the Panter name was not mentioned . It had 3 reception rooms and 8 bedrooms and was furnished . It was offered at a “ low rental “ .

Also in 1900 , Elizabeth Frances , 25 , married Andrew Hamilton Baird , (they had 2 children) . Mr. Baird was a grazier and William thought him so well off that he added the codicil to his will in 1906 and basically removed Elizabeth from an inheritance .

In 1901 there was a mention of a “ Mr. Scott of Breakfast Creek Station “ – he may have been William’s manager as I thought he still had the property at this point – but I cannot be sure . Ditto for 22.5.1908 when there was mentioned a “ Mr. Clark of Breakfast Creek Station . “ Both Mr. Scott and Mr. Clark were spoken of as men of authority in the running of the Station but were not described as owners .

On the 24.11.1902 , the papers mentioned that Mr. Justice Molesworth took Jerula , Mornington Rd , for 4 months – “ Capt. Panter’s residence . “ In 1903 and again in 1904 , Janet , Lady Clarke rented the property as mentioned in the Mornington Standard of 2.1.1904 . While there she was visited by her “ overworked “ brother , a man of the cloth , by the name of “ EVELYN SNODGRASS “ !! You’re kidding me – right ?

Later the paper of 16.7.1904 tells us that the house was leased by Commander Tickell . Presumably there were other such cases .

Mr. FHB Turner , the former collaborator of William’s on the Cerberus , and later in the Breakfast Creek Station venture , died in 1905 – “ The Late Mr. FHB Turner -

Queensland pastoralists will regret to hear of the sudden death of Mr. FHB Turner , manager of the Rockhampton Branch of Dalgety and Co. Ltd. , which took place in the Brisbane Express that left Sydney on Friday . Before Mr. Turner associated himself with pastoral pursuits he followed the seafaring profession . He was an officer in the Royal Navy and was stationed for some years on the China Station . His first connection with squatting in Australia was when , in conjunction with Capt. WH Panter , he held Breakfast Creek Station , near Burrowa . On the dissolution of the partnership etc etc . “ I would love to know what caused the “ dissolution of the partnership “ !

Apparently he then moved to QLD and managed stations there , and was considered an expert in his field . In 1891 he started the Rockhampton branch of Dalgety and Co. which he managed to the end . He was on the executive of The Pastoralists Association of Central QLD and his personal character was of the highest calibre . He was to be sorely missed by all who came into contact with him .

Reading this helps us understand why William was fighting for Mr. Turner’s position on the Cerberus in 1877 , rather than having to tolerate him being replaced by Lt. Tandy – a man for whom he had absolutely no respect or trust .

This was the “ Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser “ for 27.2.1905 .

Another similar article was headed

“ Death on a Train “ –

obviously a hitherto unknown novel by Agatha Christie ! Disappointingly for lovers of crime writing , the Coroner’s report however , was death by natural causes .

Since both William and Mr. Turner served for some years in China , perhaps that is where they met and became close friends .

The codicil to the will was written in 1906 , and in this William removed Elizabeth , his eldest daughter , from inheriting her share of his estate , as she was so “ well provided for “ , being married to a wealthy grazier , Mr. Baird .

Presumably unrelated to that momentous event , was the advert placed in the Mornington Standard for 7.4.1906 by William I am assuming , with regard to an enterprise of a bovine nature –

“ Wanted to rent , a good COW , in full milk . Apply , CAPTAIN PANTER , “ Jerula , “ Frankston . “ !

I’ll bet it wasn’t William who had to milk the damn thing twice a day for ever !

Two years later , in 1908 , Mrs. Bell advertised the sale of “ Sunnyside “ , Jackson’s Road , which was 7 acres (probably an approximation) and proudly announced that it was adjacent to Capt. Panter’s property and those of other distinguished people as well . I wonder if William bought it . I think he did – and it is the same block that was signed over to him in 1912 ; see below .

In 1909 there was advertised in the Goulburn Evening Penny Post , a sale of 1700 wethers ; 4, 6, and 8 tooth , from Breakfast Creek , Cowra . It explains that -

“ these sheep are on the market owing to the sale of Breakfast Creek Station “

This was the only clue I had found that hints at when William might have sold the property he had had since 1877 . That fits in with it being mentioned in his will of 1899 , but not in the inventory of assets after his death in 1915 .

However, on 30.11.15, I chanced upon a website quoting from "The Pastoral Review" of April 15 1914. It was headed

"The Pastoral Homes of Australia", and it mentioned

Sunny Ridge, Mulyan and Breakfast Creek; which were all owned by a remarkable man, Mr. J.H.Fagan, who had a fascinating career beginning with a spell in his younger days driving Cobb and Co. coaches from Parramatta and Penrith across the Blue Mountains and well beyond. On one occasion he was held up by the famous bushranger Gardiner and the Eugowra coach he was driving was robbed. He received a bullet hole in his hat! After that harrowing experience, he found it more convenient to own the coaches rather than drive them, and when the railways put an end to the industry, he went into property and acquired a hotel for a time. After that he eventually ended up with the 3 properties mentioned above.

Breakfast Creek comprises about 13,200 acres in the Young district. It was purchased by the late Mr. Fagan (who had died in 1912) in 1910 from Captain Panter. When purchased, the property needed a good deal of improvement and this work is being undertaken in the thorough manner which characterises Sunny Ridge and Mulyan. At this point of time they were grazing sheep still, but there was also wheat being grown. They had a terrible rabbit problem which was costing Mr. Fagan's sons a lot of money to try and combat. It is curious to ponder as to whether there were any rabbits in the area when William and Mr. Turner bought in 1877, which was about 18 years after the foos released them at Barwon Park in Victoria. There were rabbits with the first fleet and early on in Tasmania, but this release is often cited as the source of our modern problem. The same site where I saw this, said that rabbits reached NSW in 1880. This suggests that William knew the property at its pristine best, when he bought it, and sadly at its rabbit decimated worst, at which time he chose to sell. Keep in mind that William and Mr. Turner were quoted as paying 11,000 pounds between them in 1877 and yet his entire estate after his death in 1915 was worth well under half that figure. This article has a number of lovely photos of the Fagans, father and son, the properties and fine views of the houses on Sunny Ridge and Mulyan. Frustratingly there is not a single one of any part of Breakfast Creek. (? because it was too run down to be worth photographing).

Breakfast Creek Station went on to achieve some notoriety after this, as a promising reef of gold was discovered on the property in 1929 (which I presume didn't pan out – pardon the pun!), a man was found shot dead there in 1939, another young man was found dead in bed in 1942, having had what seemed like a minor blow to the head earlier, and a third elderly man was found drowned in the nearby river Lachlan in 1951.

I think it is a working farm and holiday place nowadays, but I won't ever be going to stay there, as it sounds a little too dangerous to me!

In 1911 William was on the bench in a case where the vessel Yambacoono collided with the Wyrallah on the Yarra – this was the Court of Marine Inquiry. The former's captain, George Bennet was being charged.

William had signed over to his name on 4.4.1912, a 6 acre 3 rood 18 perch block tucked in the corner of Watt's Pde and Jackson's Rd., which was very close to, but not adjoining Alice's block of 1889 – see above. He was William Henry Panter

of "Critchell", Brighton Rd., St. Kilda.!

This was the same block offered for sale in 1908 by Marian Bell, a widow of John McKenzie Bell to whom it was signed over in 1886. He had died in 1897.

In 1912 both Edith May and Olive were married. Edith married Mr. Alistair Gilmour McCover? Marshall of "Ramuera", Armadale, on 27.2.1912 from "Critchell", Brighton Rd., St. Kilda. She was the daughter of WHPanter of "Jerula Frankston". It looks like the Panter's often ran two households at once, maybe three, counting Breakfast Creek. William was "of Jerula", but his daughter was married from their town rented address, which was then "Critchell".

Olive married Charles Frank Orr, 26.9.1912. She was the daughter of "WHPanter" of "Tarlee", Orrong Rd., Toorak.

Captain Panter's daughter Olive gave birth to her first child, Bill, just a few days before Christmas 1913. I presume the christening was held in early 1914 once the Christmas season was out of the way, and that the party went home after the ceremony to the parents house at 745 Malvern Rd Toorak to have a family get together. Luckily for us, a delightful photograph was taken of the group on the front verandah, copies of which found their way in to both the collections of the Orr family and the Gunn family. Only Charles Frederick Orr was missing, and I wonder if he may have been the photographer.

The papers tell us that in August 1914, William was on the bench for an unnamed Court investigating a collision of 2 vessels – also unnamed, and on 2.12.1914 he was on the Bench again over a case of a fire on the "Suffolk".

In "Table Talk", 1.4.1915, we are informed that Capt. Panter took "Mr. H. Martin's house in Toorak Rd, Malvern for a term". This move was only 3 months before William died, and I suspect that this address is the "Woongan", also of Toorak Rd., Malvern, where that sad event took place.

On the 29.5.1915 the Australasian told the readers that The Kooyong Archery Club held a meeting on the 22nd and included in the list of results was Captain Panter who scored 200 points, which in the list of 10 people, was the highest score, whatever that means. What it does mean is that William was still well enough at this time to even be there. Interesting, that he was into archery!

The Mornington Standard, Saturday 10.7.1915, reported that a recruiting campaign was held Wednesday, and that Captain Panter who was due to attend, and who I can imagine would have been in his element in all the brou-ha-ha and jingoism occurring at the beginning of World War one, had to send his apologies.

Just four days after this was published, on the 14.7.1915, William Henry Panter died at his home.

The death notice says –

"At his residence, "Woongan", Toorak Road, East Malvern, William Henry, beloved husband of Alice Seton Panter, aged 74 years - no flowers."

The story of the Cerberus is quite interesting, and amazingly there is a connection between it and the J Class Submarines, one of which was photographed in Duke and Orr's Dry Dock, the print of which is to be found in the Gunn collection (and now copied into the Rose Archive). I was showing this image to David Orr at the Dry Dock Heritage meeting at the Pump House in 2015, when a man next to him, took great interest in it and keenly implored me for a copy, as did David as well. This man was Mr. Lindsay Rex, and he was an expert in ships etc and knew all about the J class subs which he had recognized instantly in the photo. He told me there was a derelict wreck of one of them at the Sandringham yacht club, which I eventually went to visit. (I think there were only 6 in all, which were gifted to Australia from the UK. Actually they turned out to be very expensive to run and not exactly of great use, and I suspect that the UK was only too glad to get rid of them! They were used only for a few years before being dropped.) It might possibly be the same one as seen in the photo itself. Also seen in the photo is the merest glimpse of the Protector, which was also a Naval ship.

Everything I have seen about the Cerberus suggests that it was a terrible ship – ugly, heavy, slow, hopelessly inefficient, expensive to run, and with appallingly bad conditions for the crew to work and sleep in. (see also William's report of 1871). Lieutenant Tandy even blamed the terrible conditions for his last illness, which given that he died of a ruptured aneurysm, was actually not likely at all.

There was a news item which claimed that at its most economical pace of 6 knots, it consumed a staggering 24 tons of coal per day, and at full bore of about 9.75 knots, an even more astounding 50 tons per day! I saw one article describing an exercise in which she was firing shots at a target but couldn't get even one of them anywhere near it! I think any Russian ships invading the Bay would have been quite safe!

Later there was an incident, when they were exercising with explosives in the vicinity of Queenscliff, when careless behavior caused the deaths of four men. Apparently the men were in a small boat setting a mine when the senior officer, who held the firing device, accidentally triggered it off too soon! This tale was in one of those "reminiscing about the old days" articles, and it didn't hint at a date when the tragedy took place. However Wikipedia, disagreeing with the above report, says that this was "on the 5.3.1881," (during Capt. Mandeville's period), and that the number of men killed was 5. This item gives a link to a report in the Argus of 7.3.1881, which says that there were 4 men and one officer killed, and that it occurred when the electrical line became fouled up with something unknown and that when the men tried to clear it, the explosion took place unexpectedly. It quotes Captain Mandeville's report to Mr. Berry, in which he said that the cause was unknown and that it was not the fault of the man in charge of the firing device, as it was not connected at the time. One man survived the accident.

By 1909, the Cerberus was incapable of generating enough steam to propel herself, and by the time of the outbreak of the Great War, she was without the use of her engines and main guns, and for a while it was used as a store for explosives. Later, in 1921, it was renamed HMAS Platypus II and used as a depot for the submarine base at Geelong and assisted the six J class subs. At the same time, the Protector, mentioned above, was renamed the "CERBERUS II"!! By 1924 it had been stripped bare and was offered for sale as scrap. It was bought by the Sandringham Council for 150 pounds and sunk as a breakwater off Half Moon Bay. In 1993 it suffered a serious collapse. She remains the only survivor of all the Colonial Naval ships and is a great nautical rarity. There is a society which is working to preserve her.

In October 2015 I looked at a tiny portion of the Duke and Orr's archive which is now in the collection of the Melbourne University (Bailleau Library). I found two more copies of that very same photograph, mentioned above, a letter of apology from Rupert Orr and ditto from DP Rose – both dated 1954. Later in early November I checked some more material from the archive and found that the sub photographed in the dock was the J4 and that it was docked 2.8.21 and undocked on the 11.8.1921. The photo shows the merest glimpse of the "Protector", which was also an Australian Navy vessel and which was docked with the J4 Sub in Duke's Dock. This was a very long dock capable of double dockings.

EPILOGUE

Having spent so much time in the company of Captain William Henry Panter in the last few months, what is my impression of the man as a man, rather than as a famous person? One thing is most certain, and that is that I would love to have known him and spent many an hour in his company, in front of the fire at Jerula, he probably with his pipe, listening to his tales of the sea and the amazing adventures he had serving in the Royal Navy. I don't mean to suggest from this that I think William was "cozy", because I am sure he had far too strong a personality to ever be that, and I am sure there would have been times when I felt it would have been better for me to have held my tongue!

I am equally sure there would have been many fascinating tales of the 32 years or so that he owned The Breakfast Creek Station up near Cowra, including his experiences with his friend Mr. Turner, who attracted such a glowing eulogy in 1905. He could have told us about the arrival of the rabbit at the property and the devastating impact that had on the land and the value of the Station – a disaster that was to be duplicated on a massive scale all over the country. It is so sad that the vast majority of people like William who led extraordinary lives, never kept diaries which would today be considered priceless social documents of remarkable importance.

What do I see when I look into that lovely photo portrait of him in Jan Orr-Weston's wonderful collection?

I see the face of a handsome and distinguished gentleman in the best possible sense of the word, in whom age has softened the eyes and given a look of keen intelligence and even kindness, the latter of which was perhaps not so evident in younger days. I see also the remains of a steely will and determination that would see him pursue anything he believed in with everything he had to give – which was a great deal. I see a man of great integrity and honour with an even handed, honest and outspoken forthright speech, which sometimes caused offence in those with less self confidence self awareness or integrity than he had. I would imagine that he could be misinterpreted as being opinionated and even arrogant, and this was why he seemed to rub some people up the wrong way. I believe most, if not all the negative comments about him quoted above are to be taken with a pinch of salt, as all they tell us is that he was not perfect, as none of us are. Many of them were written by people who had their own particular axes to grind, and it suited their purpose to be negative about the Captain, even when such criticism was not justified.

He was clearly a man of great patriotic fervor for the mother country as his volunteering to serve in 1900 when he was 59 years old with a wife and 7 daughters to support attests, and his eager (I would imagine) attempts to help in the war effort in the early stages of The Great War suggest, had death not claimed him.

If only William could tell us all about the story of Jerula, which I hope further research will sort out. It is beginning to look like they owned the property for at least 27 years from the time lot 10 was signed over to Alice in 1889 (the actual date of purchase could be some time earlier than that) and the house was built in the early 1890s, right up to 1917 when it was finally offered for sale 2 years after his death. Why was it named the same name as the property just outside the town of Cowra? It is well known that that property was owned for over 60 years, I believe, by the Campbell family, and perhaps they were personal friends of the Panters, and that was why they wanted to use the name down south.

So many questions yet to be asked and no where near enough answers! As for Alice, like so many women of the period, she remains elusive and shadowy, simply because, as a woman she was "not important enough" to write about. I am sure she was a strong person in her own right as photographs of her more than suggest. I believe she may have been the more financially well off of the two of them, and that she was a pillar of strength throughout their 43 years of marriage – and I don't imagine that William was always easy to live with.

The Laindon Historical Society claimed that William was buried in the Brighton Cemetery, and although I could find no records of them there, Jan Orr-Weston has said that they are indeed there.

It is a pity that so much of the above is based on newspaper reports which may not always be accurate, and which are so often biased one way or the other. Sadly I am not aware of how to go about locating all the original documents and letters quoted above which would give a more accurate picture of what really happened. That could be a task for a researcher more experienced and professional than my amateurish efforts are capable of.

These are merely idle thoughts about people I never knew, some of which may well be off the mark. The fact remains that I admire these people and their extraordinary lives very much indeed and wish them eternal rest and peace.

A Postscript on WILLIAM HENRY NORMAN , 1812 – 1869 .

Captain Norman was the highly regarded career sea Captain who was sent to England to bring out the Cerberus in 1869 . Sadly he became ill and died before it was anywhere near ready . That was why Lieutenant Panter was sent as a replacement choice .

The Argus , 22.1.1870 , and also from the “ Burke and Wills Web “ ,.

“ Telegraphic intelligence via Galle has brought the news of the death in England of Captain William H Noman , late Commander of HMCS Victoria who had been sent home about a twelvemonth since to superintend the fitting for sea of the ironclad Cerberus , promised by the Imperial Government as a present to this Colony , and to bring her hither . His health , it appears , broke down shortly after he reached England . “

The Burke and Wills site says his date of death was the 12.12.1869 .

The paper goes on to inform us that he died of heart and lung disease , and that he left a widow and large family in Victoria . He was born in “ March 1812 , in Uphoe in Kent , “ and was thus just 57 when he died . He had a fine career in the mercantile marine and in the early 1850s he was in charge of the Queen of the South , on which vessel he returned to Victoria with Sir Charles Hotham , KCB , who was to take up the post of Governor of Victoria (to replace Governor La Trobe) . This was the man who signed the document of appointment of great grandfather , Alexander Ramsay Rose , to the post of Tide Inspector for the port of Williamstown , in 1855 , at which time he had only been in the Colony from Nova Scotia for about 2 ½ years , and was only 19 – 20 years of age . This beautiful document is in the Richard Rose archive .

Sir Charles was impressed with the abilities and character of Capt. Norman and sought his services in the fledgling Colony . He it was , who commissioned the construction of the Victoria and the Captain was put in charge of the project . The Victoria was designed by the British Naval architect , Oliver Lang , built at Limehouse , and in due course , was launched on 30.6.1855 , by Lady Constance Talbot . She came to the colony (ie . the Victoria , not Lady Talbot !) and served admirably under the excellent guidance of Captain Norman .

Included in these duties was a 12 month service in the Taranaki wars in NZ , in 1860 , for which he received glowing thanks from the Government there . After this the Victoria was sent to the Gulf of Carpentaria in order to render assistance to the Burke and Wills expedition which was known then to be in difficulty . While in the area the Captain carried out valuable surveying work in the Torres Strait area , for which he received more fulsome praise .

Another task he carried out , of interest , was the transport of salmon ova to Tasmania in June 1864 , which was the start of the industry there and which is still carried on to this day .

There were many other instances of fine service carried out by Captain Norman , including a rescue of stranded shipwreck victims from King Island , and it is easy to see why he was the first choice to go to England to bring out the Cerberus .

He took part in the celebrations to welcome the Duke of Edinburgh (Prince Alfred , second son of Queen Victoria) when he visited the Colony in late 1867 . This journey by the Duke is a story of great interest in it’s own right as an embittered Irishman tried to assassinate him in Sydney not long afterwards . The madman shot the Prince in the back , which must often have been a fatal injury in those days , so long before antibiotics and modern surgery techniques were in use . Remarkably , he recovered and was eventually able to return to England . His ship was the Galatea , and it was photographed by the well known Williamstown photographer , Andrew Rider , whilst moored off the Williamstown shore . This photo is in the archive of Richard Rose .

The papers noted that at the time of these celebrations , Captain Norman’s lieutenant was none other than Mr. Tandy , the man who so upset the sense of decorum in the proud heart of William Henry Panter !

“ Captain Norman has always been regarded as one of the ablest seamen who has ever entered this Port . “

When he died , he left a widow with perhaps 9 living children , the youngest of whom must have been just three . Lt. Tandy took over the charge of the Victoria formally , as he had been in that position anyway since the departure of the Captain for England , which may have been in late 1868 or early in 1869 . Actually one of Lt. Tandy’s letters says that it was February , 1869 .

It is clear that Captain Norman was a greatly admired and highly esteemed gentleman and Naval Officer of the first order , and it is surely significant that such a man recommended Lt. Tandy and worked with him without incident , as far as we know , for several years .

Sarah Stretch	(1)	m	Captain William Henry Norman	1849	m	(2)	Mary Jane Holberton				
			1812 - 1869				d. 1873				
William Thomas			Mary	Henry	Charles	George	Eva	Edgar	Anne	Victoria	Catherine
			1852	1852	Ernest	Harold	Louise	1863	Eliza	Elizabeth	Florence
					1854	1856	1860-3		Norman	1862	1866
										1858	

A Further Postscript on Captain COLEBROOKE THOMAS MANDEVILLE , ? 1847 - 1887 .

who replaced Captain Panter as the OIC of the Cerberus and as head of the Naval Service .

From the Argus 4.7.1887 , and the Illustrated Australian News 23.7.1887 .

The death of Captain Colebrooke Thomas Mandeville , RN , was announced in the papers , as following the development of

“ congestion on the lungs “ , which ensued after he caught cold on being left out in the rain after a social event about 10 days prior . He was just 40 years of age . He died at his home , “ Noval “ , Marine Pde. , St. Kilda , on the 3.7.1887 . I presume the modern diagnosis would have been pneumonia .

He joined the Navy at 14 and served for a period in the American Civil War (which lasted from 1860 to 1865) . He was appointed a Lieutenant on 14.10.1869 , and spent some time on the West coast of Africa where efforts were being made to stamp out slavery . He was placed on the retired list of the navy as Commander on 14.10.1876 , and shortly after came to this colony on a visit to his brother , “ WHILST THE DISPUTE WHICH WAS THEN EXISTING BETWEEN CAPTAIN PANTER AND THE BERRY GOVERNMENT WAS AT IT’S HEIGHT . “

“ On the retirement of Captain Panter in 1878 from the command of the local naval forces in consequence of that dispute , the vacant position was offered to Captain Mandeville by Mr. Berry , and accepted . When the defense forces were reorganized about 4 years ago , Capt. Mandeville was superseded in the command , by Captain Thomas , RN , who still holds that office . Some months afterwards , in 1884 the deceased was appointed inspector of fisheries , a position which he held at the time of his death . “

In 1880 , he was accidentally injured in one foot when an explosive went off unexpectedly , and he walked with a limp for the rest of his life . He had married a widow with children a few years before , but had no children of his own . He was buried at St. Kilda with full naval honours .

It is of interest that this article refers to the “ dispute existing between Captain Panter and the Berry government was at it’s height “ . This suggests to me that it was a much more protracted affair than I thought , and that it must have been quite a torrid dispute to be still remembered and commented upon by the author even 10 years later . Also it says that the Captain didn’t retire from the command of the local Naval forces until sometime in 1878 , well after his letters of resignation to the ministry and the newspapers , which were dated mid 1877 , and even after he had bought the Breakfast Creek Station in conjunction with Mr. Turner . This suggests that he was replaced as commander of the Cerberus in 1877 , but that he remained as chief of the Navy forces until 1878 .