

and the date, name of the chaser and its number were cut into the flesh, information needed by the flensing parties ashore.

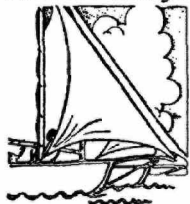
It occasionally happens that a flensing party discovers a short white metal tube in a whale. This bears a number and is one of the tubes that were fired into whales from a 12-bore shotgun by Professor H. Clarke while on a research trip in 1949. The number is checked against records and the movements of the whale can be charted.

The day remained anything but ideal. Visibility was poor and the sea continued choppy. The *Carnarvon*, it was decided, would have to come out to take its daily quota of whales.

The charting room contains a two-way radio which keeps the ship in constant touch with the shore. Normally whales are sighted only a few miles from Babbage Island, but on grey days the chase often takes the whalers thirty miles from shore. Before we sighted the *Carnarvon*, a whale lashed to its side, the chase was on again. This time the Captain made an outright kill, the female being taken first, her mate quickly joining her. With three whales secured to the ship's side, speed fell to 8 knots, while the *Carnarvon*, encumbered with only one whale, did about 12 knots.

The sun was setting when we sighted three more whales. They were so close together they were almost touching each other, and the harpoon was sent leaping to its mark. The wounded whale dived, taking the full length of the rope. The ship was halted and the line hauled in, at first slowly, the speed being gradually increased, for this drowns the whale.

At the beginning of the season, whales are so numerous that the *Gascoyne* has counted 94 in a day. North of Babbage Island, at the North-West Cape, schools of thousands of humpback have been seen rounding the Cape. "Blue" and "fin" whales have also been sighted, but these types have no set migration route and when going north usually keep well clear of the coastline.



Sharks, which are numerous, are a menace, for they are very fond of whale meat, and a badly damaged whale losing a lot of blood quickly attracts hordes of sharks. As they have been known to eat a fifty ton whale worth 3,000 dollars in a night, steps have been taken to guard against them. The shore station is supplied only with the number of whales it can deal with promptly, thus avoiding leaving whales lashed to chasers overnight.

A deckhand told me that he had seen sharks leap across the bodies of other sharks to reach a badly torn humpback, so choked with sharks were the waters around the carcass. All sorts of shark repellents have been used, but when fresh blood is staining the water around a dead whale, nothing deters these attackers. Killing with a rifle only attracts more sharks, which come to feed on their dead comrades.

The work is hard and the days are long, but there is no shortage of men seeking employment on board the whalers. The life has just about every attraction that appeals to the imagination of men who love the sea.

## Praise for Home

*Mr. N. Coleman, Editor of the Nowra News, writes:*

I'm enclosing herewith a photograph of a group of children of the Aborigine Children's Home at Bomaderry, taken by the writer on the occasion of the celebration of the Home's jubilee.

These kiddies frequently pass my home on their way to church and it would be hard to find better mannered children anywhere. They are certainly a credit to Sister M. Kennedy who is responsible.

While there, I met Sister L. H. Fowler who was matron at the Home from 1912 to 1932, and relieving matron from 1951 to 1955, when she handed over to the present matron, Sister M. M. Kennedy.

As Editor of "Nowra News" I see your good little journal which is doing a good job for the less fortunate people, and it occurred to me you might be interested to get a photograph and a line or two.



Children from the Aborigines Children's Home at Bomaderry



Laura Jones, of Wilcannia, with her young sister and Caroline Bates with her baby sister