

SYNOPSIS

Fortuyn was built in 1722 for the Amsterdam chamber of the United Dutch East India Company. In the company of a small flotilla the ship left the island of Texel, north of the Netherlands, on 27 September 1723 bound for Batavia, via the Cape of Good Hope.

Fortuyn was lavishly dressed in fresh paint. Balanced on a pearl, the goddess of luck decorated the stern. Gold filigree ornamented the galley. The ship was Amsterdam class, 145 feet long, with an armament of thirty-six cannons and swivel guns. Stowed below deck, the Company's trading cash—200,000 guilders in silver bullion—was sealed with double locks in ten oak money chests.

After a passage of three months and five days, Fortuyn anchored at Table Bay, Cape Town. The Captain reported the Undermerchant dead and three sick men were taken ashore. On 17 January 1724, wary of pirates known to operate in Cape waters, Fortuyn sailed for Batavia in a convoy of East Indiamen. Stern lanterns blinked in the darkness, illuminating the flotilla's wake in a halo of light. Ahead lay thousands of miles of empty ocean.

The Captain noted the position of the moon and estimated speed using hand log and sand-glass. High above the deck, lookouts swayed in webs of rope as constellations shifted in the southern sky. Slowly the lanterns of the other ships faded, beyond sight of a mariner's eye. Ahead lay thousands of miles of empty ocean.

The other ships in the flotilla arrived at Batavia on 1 April, 17 April and 21 April, respectively, but Fortuyn never reached its destination.

WRITING STYLE

Prologue:

The Shipwreck Coast is well known for nautical hauntings. Many tides have ebbed and flowed since Batavia's mutineers swung from the gallows. Three centuries have slipped through the sand-glass since Zeewijk was wrecked on Half Moon Reef.

Old seafarers believe an ancient vessel, veiled in spray, still plies the storm-tossed waters. Once every year, on a three-quarter moon, a bell tolls, marking the minutes to midnight. And a rotted timber backbone slowly rises from a watery grave...

Illustration: Ghostly Fortuyn becalmed on a mirror ocean

Fortuyn sailed on alone, and into a belt of calm. Canvas hung limp from the yards as the ship drifted on a mirror ocean. When food supplies dwindled to daily rations of dry grits, anger brewed among the crew, but most were too sick to care. They shuffled about with loose teeth and bleeding gums. Passengers complained of burning fevers and unquenchable thirst. Scurvy took a deadly toll, with no regard for age or rank. Under the patchwork shadows cast by sails, corpses blotched with black and blue spots were sewn into hammocks and tossed to the sea.

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Illustration: Captain Westrik whistles for wind. Superstitious crew whisper behind his back.

Captain Westrik cast his worried eyes across the calm. He stroked the ship's rigging and whistled to conjure a breeze to fill Fortuyn's sails. A faint breath of air ruffled the surface of the sea. He felt it on his cheek, soft as a cat's paw.

AUTHOR INSPIRATION

The story of shipwrecks off the coast of West Australia is a rich vein of material essentially untapped in picture book format. There are three Dutch ships that in all probability were wrecked somewhere along the coast but have never been located. They are the Ridderschap Van Holland (1694), the Fortuyn (1724), and the Aagtekerke (1726). With a wealth of material available on the 'found' wrecks such as Batavia, Zuytdorp and Zeewijk, the challenge exists to introduce to young readers a ship that hasn't been reported in detail, and to this day remains mysteriously lost at sea.

Set in 1724, Fortuyn's Ghost is based on the ill-fated journey of a Dutch East India ship. The book aims to inform and inspire further study of our maritime history with the objective of pursuing an ongoing theme of my recent books (The Legend of Moondyne Joe and The Legend of Lasseter's Reef, UWA Press) to make the study of Australian history entertaining and educational. The Fortuyn, with its evocative name, is unique because so little is known of its fate. This offers a wonderful opportunity to fuse history with real life mystery. Students are drawn to the past when there is something inexplicable, strange, unknown or puzzling. Legends of sightings of a 'ghost ship' enhance the mystery of the Fortuyn's fate. Ghost ships, lost treasures and other similar nautical legends engross and intrigue students so the study of maritime history becomes enjoyable.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION – RESEARCH

The historical development of the book involved a tour of VOC sites in Amsterdam and required detailed research of the Dutch East India shipping archives in the Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague, Netherlands and the Western Australian Maritime Museum (Shipwrecks Galleries) and South African archives. The existing records from departure from Texel leading up to the last sighting of the Fortuyn at the Cape of Good Hope provided the historical detail of the ship's fateful voyage. Further historical detail addressed through illustrations is based on archive records of the Fortuyn and other Dutch ships of the similar time period, class and size.

ILLUSTRATING FORTUYN'S GHOST by Mark Wilson

Illustrating Fortuyn's Ghost appealed to me because of my boyhood love of old sailing ships and because the author's writing style left space in the narrative that allowed me to develop my own ideas. The drama builds subtly, which provided me plenty of room to add drama and a sense of the mounting horror facing the crew and passengers of the Fortuyn.

At the time I was working on the first sketches for the story a replica of an old Dutch ship sailed into Melbourne from Fremantle. This ship is similar to the Fortuyn, though slightly older and smaller, but the detail in the rigging and structure were very close to those in the old etchings Mark sent me. The hours I spent drawing and photographing the ship gave me plenty of material to work from. Mark also sent me a box full of maps, books, photographs and reference he had collected in Holland, where the Fortuyn was built and commissioned. He included pictures of old paintings that showed the type of clothes the people wore and how they looked back in 1723. The Dutch books he collected over there also contained many old drawing and paintings of Dutch East India Company ships from the era, these were highly detailed and showed every rope, plank of wood and rigging arrangement that I needed for the illustrations.

There is a lot of input that goes into each picture book I do - from the author, the editor and from me to them. I like to see if I can make some of these combined visions come to life. My first drawings for the story were a bit like an adventurous seafaring story, but Mark and the editor suggested I work on the terror the crew and passengers went through in the latter part of the story, in particular, to show the desperation of the captain, trying to hold onto a thread of hope in the face of imminent disaster. I went back and worked on the drawings with this in mind. The result was well worth it. I think we have ended up with a pretty dramatic picture book.

STUDY NOTES & ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS

Mapping – Locate sites where Dutch shipwrecks have been found and discuss the events that followed. (Batavia, Zuytdorp and Zeewijk)

Map the first Dutch landings on the Australian coast and identify any place names of Dutch origin along the WA coast.

Imagine you are the captain of Fortuyn –write an account of the voyage just as he would have written in his sharkskin journal.

Imagine you are old seafarer – write an account of a sighting of Fortuyn’s Ghost.

What was life at sea like aboard Fortuyn and other Dutch ships? What were the duties at ports of call and during different weather conditions?

Discuss scurvy - causes and symptoms.

What were the main causes of the known Dutch shipwrecks along the shipwreck coast.

Research the other two lost ships - Ridderschap Von Holland (1694), and the Aagtekerke (1726).

Discuss the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and its trading empire.

Discuss the difference between maritime archeology and treasure hunting.

Using the endpaper map plot and follow Fortuyn’s sailing route and timeline.

Imagine you survive a Dutch shipwreck. What are your basic needs and how do you survive?

Visual Literacy

In the illustration on p2-3, what tells you something about the fate of the Fortuyn?

On pages 6-7, is the ship coming towards the viewer, or going away? How can you tell?

Can you name the objects and instruments in the illustration on p8-9?

On p18-19, what do the expressions on the sailor's faces tell you?

On p27, what do you think the last words written in the captain's journal were?

Mark Wilson has not done an illustration of the actual shipwreck of the Fortuyn. Why do you think this is?

Art

Design an A3 poster for the book as you might see in a bookshop window. Include heading, illustration, graphics, a catchy blurb a bit about the book.

Do a painting of how you think the ship may have looked just after it struck the reef.

Do a dolphin's eye view of the ship coming through the water during a raging storm towards you.

Imagine the captain has ordered you to go up into the crow's nest on the tallest mast of the Fortuyn. Draw the ship as you might see it from above. Look at the illustration on pages 6 and 7 for reference.

What illustrations if any, would you do differently if you illustrated the story, and why? Do your own illustration for that page.

Do some research, and paint a picture of what a reef might look like off the coast of Western Australia. Look at the types of coral, sea life, seaweed and other features that make the coast unique.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Mark Greenwood is a storyteller with a passion for Australian history and folklore. Two of his previous books, *The Legend of Lasseter's Reef* and *The Legend of Moondyne Joe* (with Frané Lessac), have both won Western Australian Premier's Book Awards.

Mark Wilson drew on his boyhood love of old sailing ships to illustrate Fortuyn's Ghost. Mark's previous children's picture books include the Extinction Series (Wilderness Society Environment Award for Children's Literature) and Yellow-Eye (Wilderness Society award, CBC Notable Book).