



1875 Voyage of the Ship "*Daylight*" to Western Australia

The article below is adapted from a page on Warren Jones's website (<https://woz.wozemy.com>). Warren kindly gave his permission for his work to be used on Minter Exchange. The original document includes a list of all the passengers on the voyage. The list hasn't been included here but can of course be seen on Warren's website. Among the passengers were John Hepworth and his family: John (36, labourer), Sarah (35), Clara (15), Ernest (12), Herbert (7), Esther Hanna (4), Elizabeth (2) and Raymond (9 months).

Presented here is some background to the voyage which departed London, England on Thursday 27 May 1875 arriving in Fremantle, Western Australia on 28 August.

In September 1874 the Legislative Council of Western Australia decided to sponsor immigration in order to overcome the shortage of labour. A Stipendiary Magistrate, E. H. Laurence, was on long service leave in England at the time and advantage was taken of this fact to appoint him a temporary immigration agent. Laurence was supplied with a list of 220 people nominated by friends in the colony and a list of applicants requiring labour. He was authorised to charter a ship to convey 400 migrants and to make arrangements for later consignments.

He hired premises in London, communicated with the nominated individuals and several agents of the Emigration Board. He also went out to the country, addressing meetings and distributing handbills amongst friends and working men's clubs. The task was far from easy as recent similar efforts on behalf of Queensland and New Zealand had drained the numbers of potential migrants. He therefore decided to aim for his quota of migrants by sending them in installments.

The first group of 141 migrants sailed on the *Lady Elizabeth* from Gravesend on 9th March 1875 with his younger brother, the Reverend Henry Laurence, who had been offered the Geraldton parish, taking passage as ship's chaplain.

The second group left England in May aboard the *Daylight* bringing another 160 people including EH Laurence. Although he was still below his quota, he had organised with ship owners to take further groups on subsequent voyages. The captain of the *Daylight* was Captain Bush.

I have found four references to this voyage of the *Daylight* in the JS Battye Library, LISWA, Perth, Western Australia. The first two are articles published in [The Royal Western Australian Historical Society Early Days Journal](#):

- JHM Honniball, "E.H. Lawrence, Stipendiary Magistrate - Part 2", Vol. VII, Part VIII, 1976, pp 8-.
- JHM Honniball, "The Experiences of a Migrant of 1875. The Letters of Robert Lind", Vol. VII, Part VIII, 1976, pp 69-.

These give a general background, as indicated above, and some details of the the journey including a list of rations for weekly consumption. Robert Lind was also a passenger on the *Daylight*.

The third reference is a transcript of the Diary of John Turton, also a passenger. These are sparse diary entries written before, during and after the voyage.

- J. Turton, private diary transcripts kept in the private collection of the JS Battye Library. (reader's card required)

Most of the details of the ship's journey can be found here and a brief summary of general happenings is below. There are of course more personal recordings including the death of one of Turton's sons.

Instructions were provided to passengers. "Emigrants must provide their own outfit: Smallest quantity for males over 12: 6 shirts; 6 pair stockings; 2 warm flannel shirts; 2 pairs of good boots or shoes; 2 complete suits of strong exterior clothing; 4 towels; 2 lbs of best yellow soap."

- 27 May: Departed London Docks. Sang songs.
- 26 June: In the tropics. Many of the sailors and passengers are sleeping on the decks. There was a sudden rain shower so they ran for pails to fill with rain water. Later there is a great downpour and the men ran naked and half-naked across the deck with pails filling.
- 11 July: Very little breeze - ship is slow.
- 28 July: Very heavy hail storm. Position: Latitude 36°40' S, Longitude 18°42' E.
- School classes and exams were conducted on the journey. Prizes were given to the best students.
- 26 August: Speed was 10-11 knots all day, covering 220 miles. The order was given for the anchor to be taken out of the hold, which occupied the whole day.
- 27 August: Strong winds make the vessel roll and high seas break over the ship.
- 28 August: Heavy clouds over the sea and occasional rain. 11 A.M.: "Land Ho" was called and they soon saw the lighthouse at Rottneest Island. The ship cast anchor at 1:30 P.M., opposite Fremantle.
The Laurences, the Captain and the doctor were all given "testimonials" by the passengers which were received "with pleasure"
- 29 August: The Emigration Commissioner came on board and told passengers they would be taken to Perth by steamer and their luggage would follow on another steamer.

On the journey there were 2 births and 5 deaths: A child born the previous day; a child of 2 years 10 months ("constipation of the bowels"), a 9 year old boy ("brain fever"); a 44 year old man ("asthma" - but was 'far gone before he came on the ship'); and a sailor of about 26, injured whilst steering the ship in rough weather.

Generally the passengers were satisfied with the comfort and food supplied.