

The *Gannet* and the Guano

Sunday 6th June 2025 at 2.30pm in the Volunteers Lounge.

This is the story of the *Gannet*'s first commission. Designed for anti-slavery operations she was diverted to join the RN squadron in the Pacific Ocean which needed extra ships to monitor the international crisis that culminated in a war between on one side Chile and on the other Peru and Bolivia. The *Gannet* spent a lot of time observing diplomatic attempts to prevent war. She was involved in assessing the strengths and intentions of the disputatious participants, observing the ships of the three navies as well as those from several other countries who had also gathered to protect their own national interests. Fortunately, we have a fascinating diary by the *Gannet*'s Warrant Officer Carpenter, which provides details of fun on board and ashore. There are games, hunts, entertainments, cricket, skinny dipping crashing down rapids, visiting the failing first attempt to build a Panama Canal, racing other ships, participating in navigation competitions, and observing the scuttling of Peru's outclassed fleet. Much of this was off modern Chile and Peru, but the *Gannet* also visited Esquimalt, San Francisco, Hawaii, and the beautiful Chilean Fjords.