

Our knowledge of this highly successful voyage is substantially enhanced by the excellent narrative account kept aboard the *Julius Caesar* by Dr Nathaniel Taylor who spent much time with both Captain Rogers and John Beaumis.¹⁴ He commented that the friendly relations which existed between the rival captains (who often represented rival owners) resulted in an equal division of all beaches which the sea elephants frequented for the main elephanting season in 1852. This may have been one factor in their combined success. His account of daily life there adds warmth and detail entirely lacking in Rogers' journal, including, for example, that Captain Morgan's wife was aboard the *Julius Caesar*, that Captain Brown's wife and daughter held piano recitals aboard the *Peruvian*, and that on the *Corinthian* on 25 December Mrs Williams (of the tiny 119-ton schooner *Franklin*) was delivered of a 10 lb son. Rogers mentions none of these ladies and appears to have been a bachelor.

Rogers Returns to Desolation Again

A record number of vessels were active at Desolation by the end of 1853 when there were four ships and seven schooners, plus many shallops and longboats, active along the coasts.

The ship *Corinthian*, again under the command of Captain Erasmus D. Rogers, left New London on 15 November 1853.¹⁵ After brief stops at Brava and Tristan D'Acunha for potatoes, and a close inspection of Bouvet Island, Rogers brought the *Corinthian* into Pot Harbour at Desolation Island on 16 April 1854. Bay whaling commenced promptly with the early capture of a humpback. Rogers had unusually good luck and caught right whales throughout the 'bay whaling' season: three in April, at least five in May, and three small whales in June. Their whalebone would be a bonus worth almost as much as their oil. No catches are mentioned in July, which in part is because from 15 to 24 July Rogers took the *Atlas* around the southern shores where 224 stray 'winter' sea elephants were taken. Whaling was resumed until 25 August, apparently without any further success.

The main sea elephant season began on 1 September when Rogers set out in the *Corinthian* to deposit gangs along the north coasts, and to participate in the sealing along the exposed western coasts until early December. He then transferred to the *Atlas* to collect depots along the north and north west coasts before returning to Pot Harbour to rejoin the *Corinthian* and the tenders for the New Year.

An extraordinarily lucrative week of whaling ensued in Pot Harbour from 4 to 11 January when no less than twenty-four whales were taken, four by the *Corinthian*. None were recorded before or after that profitable week.

It will be recognised that a seasonal pattern of activities was well established. The main elephanting season was limited from between