

Nautical  
Liverpool Research  
Society



***BULLETIN***

vol. 30 no. 1

March 1986



S.S. "Usoga" at Bukoba, Lake Victoria

C. 22

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#### N.R.P. - AN APPRECIATION

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These initials will be familiar to all readers of 'The Bulletin' and they are of course those of Ray Pugh, Editor and major contributor thereto. During his editorship he produced no less than seventy quarterly editions over a period of 17 years and the cover of a number of volumes has featured one of his drawings.

Each edition is found to be of scintillating interest and his literary style and crisp prose are an example to many present day journalists and writers. I have been approached by a number of people, not active members of the Society, who have expressed their appreciation of 'The Bulletin' and the quality of its contents. There can be no doubt of its importance to the Society and it is not only a record of the proceedings but the provider of much information of general maritime interest diligently gleaned by 'your reporter'. A feature which I particularly relished were the carefully chosen snatches of poetry which added such a sparkle.

Ray, alas, decided that the time had come for him to step down and although the Council did its best to dissuade him, he remained resolute. However he remains a Vice-President and continues to support the Society as he has done unstintingly over the years and we are glad we can still rely on his wise counsel.

Those who attend the annual socials will recall the delightful drawings which he brought along and which were so full of character and interest.

Well done N.R.P.! and thank you from us all.

W.P.R.

(In the difficulties of taking over the editorship of The Bulletin this item was overlooked; it should have been printed in the September issue. The Chairman offers his sincere apologies to Ray Pugh and also to Wilf Raine).

January Meeting: -

For this meeting we had the benefit of the restaurant in the Pilotage Building, warm and quiet. However the weather proved to be most inclement with a six inch covering of snow deterring all but nine stalwarts to hear the Chairman talking on Bryan Blundell.

**BRYAN BLUNDELL - Master Mariner and Mayor of Liverpool**

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Liverpool's growth from a small haven on a creek of the Mersey estuary to a port of world renown began towards the end of the 17th century. It was then that Liverpool maritime merchants began to acquire riches out of all proportion to their previous wealth, mostly due to wars against the French, Spanish and Dutch driving English shipping away from the Channell. The merchants were quick to take up trade with the West Indies and North America - they were not permitted to encroach on the East India Company's lucrative trade with the Far East. The Liverpool merchants entered business first as shipmasters and after some time as part owners of their ships, ultimately giving up command to a younger man and remaining ashore to arrange the business matters. A typical example of one of those shipmaster-merchants was Bryan Blundell, who was to become Mayor of Liverpool at the age of 37 in 1721 and again in 1728.

William Blundell was a successful shipmaster who left the sea to become a merchant and was able to educate his family in fairly prosperous conditions. His second son, Bryan, kept a copious journal of his sea-going career which survived to be deposited and preserved in the Lancashire Record Office in Preston.

Bryan Blundell first went to sea at the age of 13 on the RESERVE of Liverpool (Christopher Moore, Master). She sailed for Barbados with a crew of eight in November 1687 and returned exactly one year later. In 1689 she carried troops to Londonderry to support William of Orange and lay at anchor for two months before disembarking the soldiers. All told, Blundell remained six years on the RESERVE, trading almost exclusively to the West Indies and when he left in 1693 he had completed a voyage as Second Mate. In the same year he was appointed Mate of the AMMETY (Amity) of Liverpool (Lewis Jones, Master) where he remained, sailing to the West Indies for the next three years.

The year 1696 was an eventful year for Blundell - his first command and he married a girl called Samuel (sic) Williamson who was to bear him four children (of which only one survived infancy) and who came from a family of maritime merchants.

His first ship as Master was the MULBERRY of Liverpool (owner Alderman William Preeson, Mayor of Liverpool 1696). She was a regular trader to the West Indies and Virginia and in fact by 1704 Blundell had made a total of 14 voyages to those places during which times he

"was never sick never at lowance of meat or drink nor never met with eny disappointment in eny of all the voyagis so as the Lord hath been bountiful in blessing my indevors to the inlargement of a temporal estate".

After five years on MULBERRY Blundell became Master of LEVER of Liverpool and continued trading to the West Indies and Virginia until in 1706 when he found himself approaching Britain rather later than the other traders and thought that the price of tobacco would have been too low on his arrival at Liverpool. He decided to try selling his cargo on the east coast and made for the Channel where he suffered the misfortune of having his ship taken by a French privateer and himself and his crew cast "into a nasty stinking prizon". A year later he returned home to collect the insurance on his share of the LEVER and the freight. Immediately on arrival home he despatched a letter ordering a new vessel to be built on the banks of the Delaware at Philadelphia - the latter town was even then larger than Liverpool.

Remaining a mere two months at home, Blundell sailed for the Delaware in the ENDEAVOUR of Liverpool (her Master, Edward Tarleton, was his cousin) in company with "ye ELINOR of Liverpool (brother Ralph Williamson, Master) and ye INDIAN QUEEN of Livpool (brother William Williamson, Master)". On the voyage out they spent some time avoiding ships seen as mere sails on the horizon thinking they were being pursued and one day met the homeward-bound OAK of Liverpool (John Scarisbrick, Master), exchanging letters and information and spoke to "each other for about two howers" before continuing their respective voyages. The passage was fairly quiet, taking 68 days probably due to their taking the northerly great circle track close to Newfoundland to avoid privateers.

A few days before leaving Liverpool Blundell had sent "ower sloop PHOENIX" ahead with rigging for the new vessel but she "arrived just before us and found ye new ship upon the stocks not neer finished however I got ower own (men) to work A rigging we launched ye 9th day of June (1707) shape of ye ship pleased me very well".

The new ship CLEVELAND of 300 tons (for conversion of necessary into a privateer of 20 guns and 50 men) was launched at 11am "starn foarmost into 21ft of water she being very thin behind struck very deep so that she stokt ye ground prity hevaley with her keel but went off verry well was very stiff Drawd 9ft water abaft and 6ft foradon. She proved leaky ye 24th day we haled her upon ye ways and graved and lade a good coat on her we found several bad places which we stopt we then went up river with ower sloop fetch two tuns balist then I put rum and ginger and malosos in to ye sloop and sent half ower hands with her about to ride in (to Chesapeake Bay) Maryland where we had a cargo of dride goods: so left one half of ye hands to Rigg ye ship we went to Maryland by land there fixt ower concern for purching ower loading and fixt hands in ye sloop and at ye Prizes to make ready ye

tobacco against ye ship come round: in 3 weeks I returned to ye ship. Again and made ye all dispatch I could in getting ye ship redy while carpinters and salours was at work I had ye joyner and carver doing her mast so that by ye third of August I had ye ship Rigged careened and painted and completely finished balasted and all ower provisions on board and only wanted ower sheet cable which was on board ye AUGUSTEEN that not comeing I was forced to exchange A cable designed for a Brigantine cable for one that by chance was in ye town A larger about 11 inches andl that with sutch another I had served us ye voyage".

Blundell then took CLEVELAND round to Chesapeake Bay to rendezvous with the PHOENIX which, having collected tobacco from the isolated plantations, lay ready to transship the cargo to her parent ship. Whilst CLEVELAND anchored on the eastern shore Blundell went foraging for cargo on the western shore meeting old friends and contacts. One day he rowed up the Potomac to find the ELINOR and INDIAN QUEEN at enforced anchorage whilst his brothers-in-law, the Williamsons, recovered from fevers.

The voyage was a successful one and as he had a share in the vessel he made a nice profit for himself.

He remained in command of the CLEVELAND until about 1714, making yearly voyages to the West Indies and Virginia bringing home tobacco, cotton and molasses and there were increasing cargoes of tar. He also made several successful voyages to Russia.

Between 1710 and 1714 Blundell had an income of about one hundred pounds per month possibly equal to one hundred times that today, which enabled him to stay ashore and leave seagoing to others. But this left something to be desired, for the new masters of the CLEVELAND did not make the profits Blundell had engineered from his knowledge of the commerce on the other side of the Atlantic. Ultimately in 1717 Blundell was able to get permission for the ship to sail to Madagascar to obtain a cargo of slaves.

The ship was lost: "for never harde moare of ship or men. So ended the Ship CLEVELAND in which providence had Blest us wonderfully 10 prosperous voyages and at last I did not lose by her being fully Insured when lost at Malligaska".

Blundell then spent most of his time importing and selling tar; something over 120,000 barrels in 40 years from Virginia.

He did not neglect his moral and social duties. He was one of the more important founders of the Liverpool Blue Coat School - a charity school which, like many others today, remains, but with fee-paying pupils - being treasurer of the school for over 40 years. During this time he followed his cousin Edward Tarleton as Mayor of Liverpool and

during his office saw the opening of the first Liverpool Dock, the basis of Liverpool's future prosperity.

His second son, also Bryan, was one of the founders of the Liverpool Pilotage Service and was a member of the Pilotage Committee of the Borough Council and who introduced the faster sailing qualities of the cutters and sloops so successful in the West Indies and Virginia.

Bryan Blundell senior died aged 81 having seen seven of his 14 children reach adulthood: he survived his third wife by 20 years.

I am the English sea-queen; I am she,  
Who made the English wealthy by the sea.

The streets of this my city is the tide,  
Where the World's ships, that bring my glory, ride.

Far as the tide along my highway swings,  
The iron of my shipwrights clangs and rings.

Far inland as the gulls go are my stores,  
Where the World's wealth is lock't with iron doors.

And these my merchants gather day by day,  
The wealth I bring, the wealth I send away.

John Masfield

A Masque of Liverpool

#### A NEW YEAR'S EVE S.O.S.

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At the end of Summer 1940 a Liverpool cotton merchant and his wife hearing of Dunkirk and the fall of France, hurriedly tried to get passages home from Port Sudan in the Red Sea. But berths on ships travelling north were full of people also on their way home. The couple made for Khartoum on the Nile where they were advised to travel south to Mombasa. The journey up the Nile, through Lake Albert and overland to Lake Victoria took two weeks and a vessel carried them around the shores of Lake Victoria, taking six days to reach Entebbe where they caught a train for Mombasa.

The first available ship was the SPRINGFONTEIN (Netherlands) which sailed for Sierra Leone where a convoy would be made up for the hazardous passage home. Stops were made at Durban and Cape Town (two weeks each) and they arrived Freetown on Christmas Day 1940.

The first convoy was to sail on January 1st and during the waiting the merchant's wife noticed wisps of smoke coming from the ventilator

at No.3 hatch forward of the accommodation: the Second Mate had everything under control. But at dinner on New Year's Eve there was the acrid smell of singeing paint and by 11 p.m. the wooden decks were extremely hot and were beginning to lift. The crew hosed the decks but at 11.45 the Master ordered emergency stations.

Distress signals were made on the whistle and flares were lit. The Third Mate called the Naval signal station on shore with the aldis lamp. Back came the reply "it is not permitted to use the whistle or flares and besides there are still 15 minutes to midnight"!

It was not until a Royal Marine boarding party arrived that the authorities took notice. The convoy sailed at 6 a.m. next day, leaving the SPRINGFONTEIN behind. The bones of the ship were still to be seen in the harbour in the early 1950's.

The couple ultimately arrived safely home in another ship. The wife, now in her 80's and living at Heswall, related the story at Christmas 1985.

For on the deck each starry night  
The wild waves and the tame  
I counts and knows 'em all by sight  
And some of 'em by name.

And then I thinks a cove like me  
Ain't got no right to roam  
For I'm homesick when I puts to sea  
And seasick when I'm home.

Wallace Irwin

#### A BRIEF HISTORY OF MARINE SERVICES ON LAKE VICTORIA, KENYA - UGANDA, 1900 - 1961

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The inland marine services on Lake Victoria may be said to have had their beginning in 1890 when, as a result of the Brussels Conference, the world powers decided the building of railways and the 'establishment of ships on the inland navigable waters' would be 'the most effective means for counteracting the Slave Trade in the interior of Africa'.

In 1899 a marine survey party, under Commander B.Whitehouse R.N., began a survey of the British portion of the lake in preparation for the ships which were to use these waters. The work was delayed by the illness of the surveyor and was not completed until May 1901.

The last rail of the Uganda Railway, linking Lake Victoria with the Indian Ocean, was laid in December 1901. The objective of those who planned the project was then attained - the railway had reached the shores of the lake and a steamer service was in operation between Port Florence (Kisumu) and Uganda.

One of the earliest steamships operated on Lake Victoria was the KENYA which had been built at Glasgow in 1890 and shipped to Mombasa in packing cases, none of which weighed more than 70 lb. - the maximum which could be carried by one man. After considerable delay at the coast the sections were despatched to Port Victoria, which was at that time expected to be the lake terminus of the railway.

The component parts of the ship were carried most of the way by African porters and, while crossing the Uashin Gishu Plateau, scores of plates and other important parts were dropped and lost in the long grass. Until the missing parts had been replaced assembly was impossible and, before they arrived, it had been decided that the terminus should be at Port Florence. This involved another journey but the KENYA was eventually assembled and launched and for many years she plied between Kisumu and Entebbe. During the First World War she became a man-of-war and finally a cargo tramp.

Not less adventurous was the early career of the 62-ton cargo steamboat WILLIAM MACKINNON. In 1899 the Railway undertook, on behalf of the Uganda Protectorate, the carriage to the lake of the component parts which had been lying at Mombasa since 1895, all previous efforts to transport them having failed. For a considerable portion of the journey the parts of this steamer also had to be carried by African porters. She was finally launched in June 1900, but due to the repeated thefts of parts of the ship by the Nandi tribe, she could not be fitted out and handed over to the Uganda Protectorate until November of the same year.



The s.s. "WILLIAM MACKINNON" on the slipway at Port Florence 1900.



The completion of the railway facilitated the rapid transport of the parts required to build two more ships - the WINIFRED, which made her first trip with passengers early in 1903, and the SYBIL completed in 1904. The tug PERCY ANDERSON was brought from Kilindini at about the same time together with six lighters which had previously been engaged in off-loading railway stores at the coast.

By early 1906 the development of the lake traffic was straining the capacity of the small fleet to the utmost. Indeed, it was impossible to move the traffic on offer and goods lay for months at lake ports, particularly at Mwanza, awaiting shipment. The situation became worse when the SYBIL went aground, causing her cargo to be jettisoned and the ship to be drydocked for repairs.

The construction of a new ship, the CLEMENT HILL, was started in May 1906. 'She will be ready' wrote the Traffic Manager 'about a year after she was needed' and he urged that a fourth cargo ship be ordered on the grounds that 'the rapid development of the valuable staples produced in both the British and German regions around the lake requires serious and immediate attention and ships must be provided to cope with it, for without this, the only means of transport, disaster would result to producers and traders, while the Government revenue must also suffer'.

The CLEMENT HILL was launched on December 21st 1906 and sailed on her maiden voyage on 27th March 1907. The Traffic Manager's plea for another cargo ship was promptly met, for exactly a year later, on the 21st December 1907, the NYANZA was launched by Lady Hayes-Sadler, the wife of the Governor. The NYANZA was of 1,146 tons displacement and designed to carry 525 tons of cargo as compared with the 150 tons capacity of the WINIFRED and the SYBIL and the 250 tons of the CLEMENT HILL. However the latter three ships carried passengers as well as cargo. During the year 1907/1908 the tonnage lifted was 13,858, the steamer mileage being 49,317.

The annual report of the year ended 31st of March 1913 revealed that the small fleet of steamers and tugs was not adequate to transport the mounting traffic on the lake and stated the two new steamers, the USOGA and RUSINGA, and a tug, the KAVIRONDO, were being built but they were not in commission until long after they were badly needed. The steamer services were at that time earning 17 per cent on the total capital invested in them. The USOGA was placed in service in 1913 quickly followed by the tug KAVIRONDO and the RUSINGA. All three vessels burned oil and were among the pioneers in using this type of fuel which at that time was carried to Kisumu in barrels. The successful use of oil fuel led to the conversion of the older ships and tugs and the whole fleet was using oil by 1914. During 1915 navigation beacons were established to permit night running.

On the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 the Royal Navy took over most of the the Lake Marine steamers to prosecute the campaign against the Germans on Lake Victoria. The only craft then left for commercial traffic were the CLEMENT HILL, the RUSINGA, a steam tug and a few lighters. Owing to the commandeering of steamers there was a substantial decline in the traffic carried and serious difficulties were experienced in maintaining the economic life of Uganda. During the naval operations the SYBIL ran aground in enemy waters in November 1914 and was severely damaged by enemy gunfire as she lay. The cost of repairing her when she was eventually salved some seven months later is noted as £14,000 - a substantial sum even for those days.

After the war the work of maintenance and repair, which had been sadly neglected during the previous four years, was put in hand but by the early 1920's the fleet was hard pressed to cope with the increased tonnages, particularly of cotton, to be transported. The rapid increase in traffic caused grave congestion at ports on the lake and this gave rise to public criticism of the delay in moving traffic to and from Uganda.

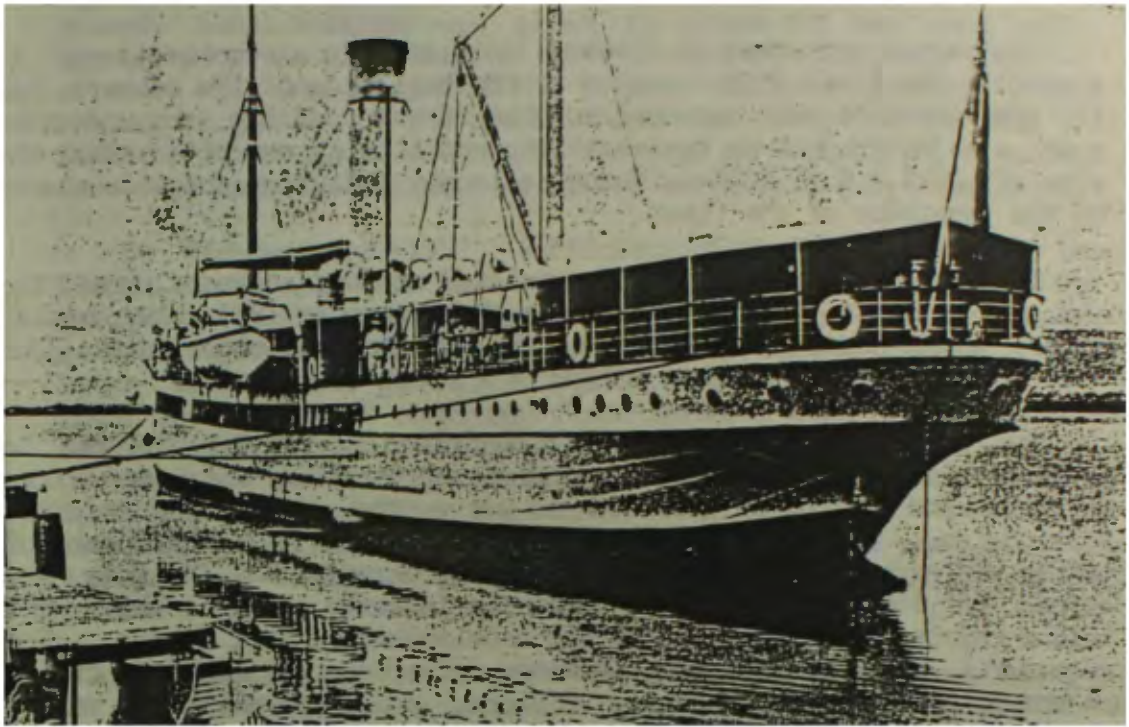
The main criticism was that the railway had not provided more steamers and piers, but the General Manager pointed out that it was impossible to build steamers, tugs and lighters in England, ship them to East Africa, transport them in sections to Kisumu and there assemble them within a few months.

Piers and wharves at several of the lake ports were extended during 1925 and improvements were also carried out to the steamers USOGA and WINIFRED, and the SYBIL was converted to a 400-ton lighter.

In April 1927 a new tug, the BUVUMA, was commissioned and four new lighters were added to the fleet. The CLEMENT HILL was given a major overhaul but unfortunately it was necessary to withdraw the steamship RUSINGA as a result of a serious fire which occurred in May 1927. The vessel was later reconstructed at a cost of £25,000.

The completion of the railway linking Kampala with the coast in 1930 resulted in a temporary decline in the tonnage of goods transported on the lake, but inter-port traffic doubled between 1932 and 1936 (40,332 tons in 1932 and 81,125 in 1936).

The services on Lake Victoria were then maintained by two ships and five tugs while another ship and tug were held as relief vessels. The USOGA and the RUSINGA were both in commission but a survey of the CLEMENT HILL and the WINIFRED revealed them to be unseaworthy and they were sunk off Luamba Island in 1936 to form a breakwater to the causeway connecting the island with the mainland. Two years later the tug HUSSENI was also sunk as a breakwater for the Bukakata wharf.



The s.s. "CLEMENT HILL", named after a Chairman of the Uganda Railway Committee, was launched in December 1906 to help the overworked s.s. "WINIFRED" and "SYBIL". In 1936 both the "CLEMENT HILL" and "WINIFRED" were withdrawn and sunk to form a breakwater.

The Second World War resulted in increased military traffic on the lake and greatly increased tonnages of goods being carried to assist the general war effort. By 1943 the total tonnage handled on Lake Victoria had risen to 120,000. At the end of the war the RUSINGA and the NYANZA were chartered for use in the movement of Tanganyikan, Rhodesian and Nyasaland troops for demobilisation.

During the intervening years, solid steady progress was made, not only in regard to the operation of the marine fleet on Lake Victoria but in the construction of new passenger launches, a bulk oil tanker, a vessel for transporting cattle and several new lighters. The building of these craft locally saved the East African Railways and Harbours a considerable amount of money for the initial construction of a vessel in the United Kingdom, with subsequent dismantling, carriage by sea and rail and the final assembly before going into service, is a costly business both in time and money. The policy of constructing craft locally wherever possible also enabled a considerable number of African staff to be trained in this specialised work.

The high standard of marine maintenance throughout the 60 years in which the ships have been plying Lake Victoria was in 1961 reflected in the age of some of the ships still in service, typical examples

being the SYBIL (57 years) the NYANZA (54 years) and the RUSINGA (47 years).

The marine workshops at Kisumu, initiated in a very small way to assemble the first ship launched at the beginning of the century had in the meantime been expanded so that it was possible to undertake such a major project as re-assembling and fitting out of a vessel the size of the R.M.S.VICTORIA without seriously affecting the maintenance of the remainder of the fleet.

In 1910 the marine flotilla consisted of four steamers, one tug and six lighters. On Lake Victoria there were in 1960 six capital ships, eight tugs, forty lighters, six launches and motor boats, four mobile craft and one suction dredger - a total of 65 units.

The most important function of the Inland Marine Services was to provide a link in the network of communications which the East African Railways and Harbours provided to serve the three East African Territories. In 1910 the Lake Victoria fleet carried 19,000 tons of goods and earned 29,000 Pounds but in 1960 carried 242,000 tons and earned 461,000 Pounds. These increases indicate the part which the Inland Marine Service played in the development of East Africa. The successful operation of these services reflected considerable credit on the 1,000 people, comprising officers, crews and workshops staff, who were engaged in them.

#### R.M.S.VICTORIA

The East African Railways & Harbours, in the years after the 1939-45 war, steadily developed and expanded the transport facilities of the East African territories to meet the needs of a rapidly developing economy. Included in the overall plan was provision for improved passenger facilities in the steamship services operated by the Railway on Lake Victoria and late in 1949 the marine consultants in the United Kingdom were invited to design a modern steamer primarily for the carriage of passengers on this lake. Changes in circumstances necessitated the amendment of the original plans, but in 1956 a final design submitted by the naval architects, Sir J.H.Biles & Company, was approved and tenders were invited from United Kingdom and Continental shipbuilders for the construction of the vessel. The construction was awarded to Messrs.Yarrow & Company of Glasgow at a total cost, completed in East Africa, of 686,000 Pounds. The cost of the vessel included bolt-assembly at the builders' yard, dismantling into sections suitable for shipment, and re-erection at Kisumu.

The keel of the new ship was laid down in Messrs.Yarrow's yard in Glasgow on 20th June 1958 and the main structure of the ship, bolt-assembled, was completed in June 1959. Dismantling of the component parts for shipment to East Africa was begun late in June, after the

ship had been inspected and passed by the naval architects and 'Brown Agents' inspecting engineers. When the contract for the new ship was placed, consideration was given to a name for her and, with the agreement of the three East African Governors, the name VICTORIA was selected. In September 1958 Her Majesty The Queen graciously gave her consent to the use of the prefix 'Royal Mail Ship' to the ship's name, since she was to be used for the carriage of Her Majesty's mails, and from that date onwards the vessel was known as R.M.S.VICTORIA.

By mid-December 1959, sufficient of the steelwork had reached Kisumu to enable the keel to be laid. From then onwards the re-erection of the vessel advanced rapidly, the work being under the general supervision of the Railway's Senior Marine Engineer, assisted by a small number of skilled staff provided by the builders. The total dockyard staff comprised three foremen, some 50 skilled artisans and 150 semi-skilled artisans and labourers, all of whom were either permanently employed by the East African Railways & Harbours or were specially engaged for the work. On the 5th September 1960, construction had reached the maindeck and the vessel was successfully launched and moved to the drydock at Kisumu for completion and fitting out.

The new ship, the largest bolt-assembled vessel ever to be built in one country for re-erection in another, was also the largest ship ever built for service on Lake Victoria. The slipway at Kisumu could only just accommodate her, so that her weight at the time of launching had to be kept to an absolute minimum. In shipbuilding yards in the United Kingdom and other countries, ships are usually launched with the upper works completed and frequently with the machinery installed, but in the case of the VICTORIA only the main hull plating up to the maindeck could be completed before launching. Once the vessel was afloat, work began on the installation of the machinery and electrical equipment, coincidentally with the re-erection of the upper decks. Work progressed satisfactorily and by mid-1960 it was possible to make a start on the installation of the refrigeration equipment and the fitting out of the passenger accommodation.

Early in June 1961 sufficient progress had been made to allow preliminary basin trials to begin and on 9th June the ship left the drydock to start trials under power on the open lake. These were sufficiently satisfactory to allow the official trials to be carried out on the 15th/16th June 1961 and the ship was officially accepted by the East African Railways & Harbours from the builders on 1st July.

The R.M.S.VICTORIA has been specially designed for the carriage of passengers in tropical conditions. She has a loaded displacement of 1,500 tons, is 261 feet (79.3M) long, with a beam of 40 feet (12.2M)

and was so designed that her maximum draft when fully loaded did not exceed 9 feet (2.7M). Her service speed of 13-1/4 knots enabled her to make two voyages round Lake Victoria in a week, thereby providing a fast service between the major ports of Lake Victoria at a frequency similar to that offered by the two existing steamers, USOGA and RUSINGA.

#### ACCOMMODATION

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Cabin and lounge accommodation and deck space was provided for all classes of passengers and to ensure the comfort of passengers and crew all accommodation ventilated by the Thermotank system. The First Class passengers were accommodated in 18 two-berth cabins equipped with modern furnishings. There was also a spacious lounge bar and a dining saloon to seat 36 passengers. A fully-equipped electric galley situated on the maindeck served the pantry adjoining the dining saloon. Second Class passengers were accommodated in 11 six-berth cabins and a separate cafeteria, equipped with modern appliances and comfortably furnished, provided for their exclusive use. The 500 Third Class passengers were accommodated in two comfortable lounges equipped with upholstered seating. A tea-bar served hot and cold drinks and snacks and was conveniently situated to serve both the upper lounge and open decks. Spacious quarters immediately below the bridge were provided for the ship's officers, the remainder of the crew being accommodated in airy well-equipped cabins on the maindeck.

#### REFRIGERATED CARGO

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Although the ship was designed primarily for the carriage of passengers, provision was also made for the carriage of some 5,000 cubic feet of reefer cargo.

#### VEHICLE TRANSPORT

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Provision was made for the carriage of up to 12 motor vehicles.

(This Article, giving machinery details of R.M.S.VICTORIA, will be continued in a subsequent issue of The Bulletin).

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On stormy nights when wild north-westerns rave,  
How proud a thing to fight with wind and wave!  
The dripping sailor on the reeling mast,  
Exults to bear and scorns to wish it past.

Where lies the land to which the ship would go?  
Far, far ahead is all her seamen know,  
And where the land she travels from? Away,  
Far, far behind is all that they can say.

Arthur Hugh Clough

## FEBRUARY MEETING:

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In spite of a bitterly cold easterly wind, twenty people listened to B.S.Branigans's excellent talk on the ROYAL CHARTER incident. The meeting was held in the education room of the Museum's D Block. Beautifully carpeted and fitted, the room proved not to be as warm and cosy as promised mainly because the heating was only on the brink of being switched on for the first time. The speaker produced an enlightening and new look on the tragedy through the eyes of a naval architect.

### THE ROYAL CHARTER DISASTER By D.S.Branigan

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The ROYAL CHARTER was wrecked on the North coast of Anglesey in 1859 with the loss of almost five hundred passengers and crew - at that time one of the greatest marine tragedies ever.

The ship was built on the Dee at Sandicroft, a half mile above Queensferry, where there had been a quay since about 1747. The site was acquired by an engine builder (Rigby) who, after making pit engines, turned to marine engines and bought the yard in 1830, building his first iron ship in 1843. Three years later the yard closed and lay dormant until 1853 when George Cramm took it over. It is known that Cramm built at least three ships including WINIFRED and ROYAL CHARTER.

Originally ordered by Charles Moore & Co. of Liverpool, ROYAL CHARTER was designed by Grinell but after being taken over on the stocks by Gibbs, Bright & Co., shipowners of Liverpool the design was changed and the vessel which had been intended to have a length of 280ft. was lengthened (according to William Scoresby) to 336ft. Normally the lengthening process would have been to cut the vessel amidships and insert a section. In this case however, the extension was by stretching the ends. The final length of keel was 308ft. with a beam of 40'6" and a draft of 20ft.

From information that 400 tons of rock ballast taken out of the ship reduced the draft by 18 inches, our speaker, a naval architect himself, calculates that the displacement could have been about 3,800 tons against a gross tonnage of almost 2,800 tons.

The ship was launched in 1855 and due to the narrowness of the fairway was launched diagonally upriver, but stuck half-way down the slip and lay there until the next Spring tides a month later. She also grounded in the Dee Estuary on the way round to Liverpool for fitting out.

ROYAL CHARTER was a three-masted full-rigged ship with auxiliary steam engine. The 200 hp machinery powered a 14ft. diameter

propeller which gave the vessel a speed of up to eight knots. She carried bunkers of 600 tons which, burning at the rate of 20 tons per day, gave her about thirty days steaming. As she was known to have made 14 knots the claimed average speed of 10-1/2 knots between the U.K. and Melbourne was not fanciful. With thirty days steaming the ship made the passage to Australia in little more than twice that time (and once in a record-breaking 59 days) and normally used less than half the bunkers, which proved she was an extremely fast sailing vessel.

The passenger accommodation for those days was quite remarkable with 14 staterooms in the poop for first class passengers, with ladies boudoir across the stern. The alleyways in the accommodation seem to have been named after streets in the centre of Melbourne: Bourke, Swanson, Elizabeth, Lonsdale, Stephens, Bond and Flinders Streets.

There was a 10,000 gallon fresh water tank in the forepeak for the use of passengers.

The maiden voyage was in January 1856 and two years later the sailing notice in the newspapers read:

**SAILING NOTICE** Appointed to leave the River Mersey for Melbourne, Port Philip, Thursday.

This noble clipper, built expressly for the Company, one of the finest models yet constructed, combines all the advantages of a steamer with those of a clipper sailing ship and offers the only opportunity yet presented to the public of certainty in the time required for the voyage. She has just made the extra-ordinary passage of 59 days to Melbourne, a performance never before accomplished. On this voyage she ran one day 358 knots, during which she attained the astonishing speed of 18 miles for the hour. Her average daily for the whole distance to Melbourne was 223-1/4 knots or 10-1/2 knots per hour. Her accommodation for all classes of passengers are unrivalled.

#### Fares to Melbourne

After Saloon:	60 to 65 and 75 guineas
2nd Class:	25 and 30 guineas
3rd Class:	16, 18 and 20 guineas

Dogs: 5 Pounds each, Children from 1 to 12 years, half-price.  
Infants free.

There is no question about it, this was a very successful ship. She was able to make 16 voyages before the final fatal voyage.

She left Melbourne 29th August 1859 and was likely to make one of



the fastest passages ever for this run when she passed Holyhead at 5 p.m. on October 25th.

The wind was fairly strong from the NW but increased first to gale force and at the same time veered to NE - a head wind. Under the combined weight of wind and tide the ship almost stopped. The signals for a pilot were observed by the pilot cutter on station but the schooner, itself damaged, could not sail to windward and was not able to put a pilot on board.

ROYAL CHARTER began to drift to the South and towards the dangerous Anglesey shore. The port anchor was let go at 10.45 p.m. in 15 fathoms and 100 fathoms of cable payed out. Even with engines at full speed ahead this proved to be insufficient so the starboard anchor was let go with 72 fathoms of cable payed out half an hour later. This mooring held for over two hours, when at 1.30 a.m. the port cable parted and the ship began dragging the starboard cable. Under the weight of this the starboard cable parted at 2.30 a.m.. In the darkness the ship drove toward the shore. To reduce the effect of the wind, by now hurricane force, the masts were cut down; unfortunately one fell over the quarter where the rigging fouled the propeller. The last resistance of the ship was gone.

She grounded on the rocks of Port Heleath at 3.30 a.m., quite near the shore, and although the danger was present there remained still fairly good chances of the passengers and crew being saved. A sailor (of Maltese origin) managed to swim ashore with a line which enabled a bosun's chair to be rigged. Sixteen passengers were got ashore this way before the lines fouled the wreckage and parted.

At about 5.00 a.m. all the passengers were mustered in the saloon and they were still there when the vessel suddenly split open, spilling the crew and passengers into the raging seas. A further 22 were washed ashore and saved: over 450 perished.

The Underwriters sold the wreck to the owners and most of the salvageable cargo, considerable parts of the ship and engines were recovered for scrap.

THE DOSSIN GREAT LAKES MARITIME MUSEUM  
Belle Isle, Detroit, Michigan



This Museum is situated beautifully on the Detroit River a short stretch of waterway which links Lakes Huron and Erie and through which most of the Great Lakes shipping must pass to reach ports such as Chicago, Duluth and Thunder Bay. Looking towards Canada half a mile across the waterway, visitors can see ships passing at less than one half of that distance.

The Museum was established in 1960 as development of the Marine Branch of the City of Detroit Historical Museum. The Great Lakes Maritime Institute, which began life in 1952 as the Great Lakes Model Shipbuilder's Guild, is now based on the Museum in a supportive role similar to that of the Friends of the Maritime Museum here in Liverpool. The Institute arranges regular meetings with speakers appropriate to the Museum and film and slide shows. It also organises annual events such as the Ship Models Contest.

The Museum has a major collection of Great Lakes vessels both sail and powered together with many items collected from vessels being broken up and from wrecks around the shores of the Great Lakes of which (wrecks) there are literally thousands. There is a collection of marine art and paintings and an in-house research library on commercial vessels and racing craft. On permanent exhibition is the racing hydroplane MISS PEPSI and the Gothic Room - a saloon from the steamer CITY OF DETROIT II - has been installed in the building, an impressive example of steamship architecture.

To mark the silver anniversary, the Museum has undertaken a major exhibition entitled "Michigan's Nautical Time Capsules". Using items chosen from their collections, including many artifacts brought to the surface from vessels discovered intact on the lake bed around the Lakes waters. Together with known details from the original builders or owners or crew records the Curator, financed by State, City, The Great Lakes Maritime Institute and a Shipmasters Association, has been

able to put together a fascinating display.

In this way Great Lakes maritime history from 1840 to the present day is well documented and exhibited.

\* \* \*

#### More on Palm Line:

-----

Elder Dempster's MENESTHEUS is to be renamed APAPA PALM. This is to comply with the Conference Agreement and to keep the name of Palm Line alive in the West African trade.

#### Ocean Fleets:

-----

The MARON and MYRMIDON have been sold to the Nigerian Green Lines of Lagos and renamed YINKA FOLYAWIYO and BELLO FOLYAWIYO respectively. The fleet is now reduced to eleven vessels; one gas-carrier, two ro-ro vessels and eight "combo" ships.

James E. Cowden

#### Notes:

-----

These winter months have brought a flurry of survey activity in the region of Liverpool Bay. CARIBBEAN HORIZON has been replaced by NORTHERN HORIZON on seismic surveys. There have been rumours of a new and important gas field in the area and hopes that we may see an increase in marine traffic in the Mersey approaches.

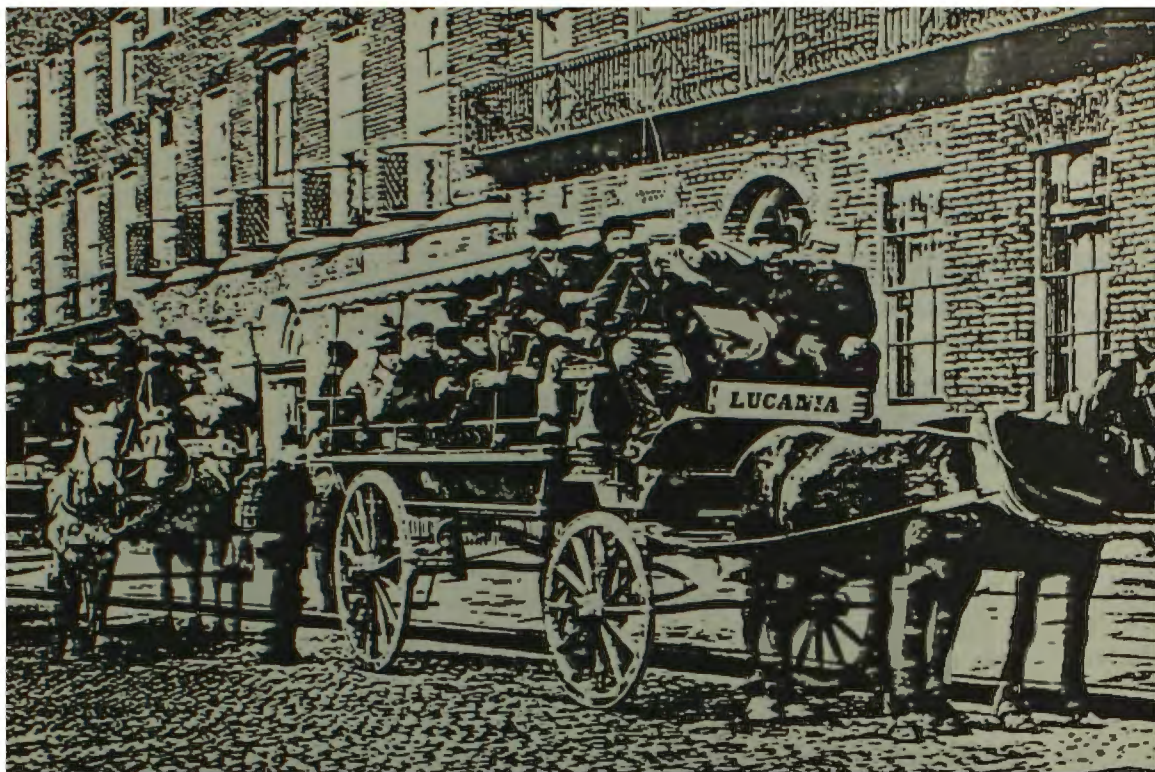
#### Isle of Man Steam Packet Company Ltd.

-----

MANX MAID is now breaking up at Garston. MONAS ISLE (ex TAMIRA ex FREE ENTERPRISE III) is reported to be sold to Arab interests. ANTRIM PRINCESS will be coming to the Mersey for refit shortly and is to be renamed TYNWALD.

Complaints have been made that large and deep-drafted tankers are using the Minches on the West Coast of Scotland. The local M.P. for Ross & Cromarty has asked the Government to deter these potentially dangerous vessels from using the Minches. The Minister responsible has refused.

Cammell Laird are down to a single contract, HMS CAMPBELLTOWN, a type 22 frigate laid down December 1985 for completion February 1989



#### Emigrants Transport from City Lodging Houses to Ship

The Emigration Exhibition is now open and well worth a visit. (See Bulletin, "Emigrants to a New World" Vol.29, September 1985, p.65.)

---

#### QUERIES

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85/4 - still not answered. BETA was owned by the Mayor and Aldermen of the Corporation of Liverpool and operated as a refuse vessel dumping off the N.W. light vessel.

86/1 - Can anyone supply a picture of CAMBRIAN QUEEN of the 1880's or furnish any information as to her ownership etc.?

86/2 - Can anyone supply information as to how I can trace the career of my great-great-grandfather, Captain Alexander Keay, born 1794 in Scotland?

Answer - From 1836/6 to 1855/6 all seamen had to have a Seaman's ticket which gave details of their careers and date of birth etc. These records, reasonably well indexed, are held in the Public Record Office at Kew. From these you may be able to obtain the names of ships served in etc. and possibly get details from the muster rolls of the ships. Most of these are held in the P.R.O. but are incomplete. Muster Rolls were superseded in 1855 by the Crew Lists and Articles of Agreement.

# LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

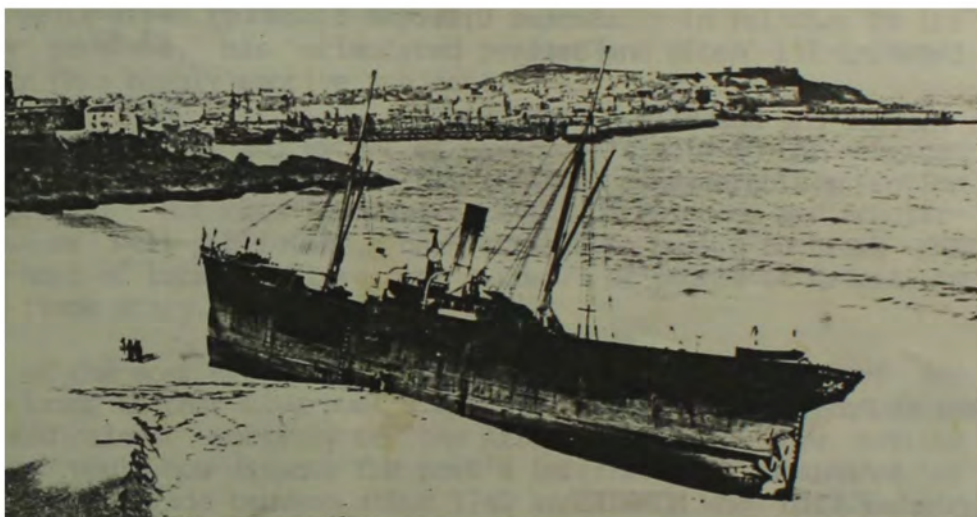
(FOUNDED 1938)



Vol 30 no.2

June 1986

## *BULLETIN*



s.s. ROSEDALE

Can any reader give detail as to where and when?

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\* \* \*

1986/87 Programme

September 11th	NOBBIES	Len Lloyd
October 9th	Charles McIver	Harry Hignett
November 13th	Elder Dempster Fleet	Jas. E. Cowden
December 11th	Christmas Social	Rev. Bob Evans R.N.℄
January 8th	12.30 Maritime Museum	
February 12th	- do -	Informal discussion
March 12th	Brocklebank Apprentices 1820 - 1890	Val Burton
April 9th	LNRS Achives	Alan Rowson
May 14th		Annual General Meeting
June 12th	Food in the Great Liners	Kate Lomas

LIVERPOOL and the WEST AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE

by Alan J. Scarth

Liverpool's involvement in the African or Atlantic Slave Trade between about 1700 and 1807 remains the largest skeleton in her cupboard and still exercises a strong grip on the popular imagination. During the present century this 'skeleton' has manifested itself most strongly at times of particular stress or uncertainty for the port and people of Liverpool.

For example, the port's slave-trading past was used as propaganda by Dr. Goebbels immediately prior to the outbreak of World War II. Further, more exaggerated references to this subject were made by Goebbels' 'master of misinformation' Lord Haw-Haw (William Joyce), following the Liverpool Blitz of May 1941. In more recent years increased media attention on Liverpool, especially in relation to its inner-city problems, has stimulated renewed and often ill-informed interest in this highly emotive subject.

The general nature and extent of Liverpool's role in the African Slave Trade is well documented and has received considerable attention from historians. But this impressive weight of evidence and scholarship, however well-publicised, has still been unable to break the vice-like hold of local folklore over a number of points of detail in the slave trade story.

One of the most often-repeated legends concerning Liverpool and the slave trade is that Liverpool's maritime and commercial prosperity was founded almost entirely on 'the African trade'. Few serious researchers would now dispute the port's international dominance of this notorious trade between about 1760 and 1807, when trading in slaves by British subjects was outlawed by Parliament. Similarly, few would deny that the slave trade made a significant contribution to Liverpool's growing prosperity during the eighteenth century. But as F.E. Hyde and other historians have shown, Liverpool's maritime prosperity was firmly established before her entry into the slave trade, being based upon three main trades, namely the refining of salt and sugar, and the importation of tobacco from the Virginian plantations. Moreover, as H.S. Klein has recently demonstrated (The Middle Passage, 1978, p.169) by the late eighteenth century the slave trade represented only a small part of the total shipping activity of the port of Liverpool and was no longer a dynamic force in the growth of the port's economy.

Another long-established myth is that African slaves were brought to Liverpool in large numbers, presumably to await auction or shipment across the Atlantic. The usual corollary of this is that the slaves were either imprisoned in underground cellars in the town or chained to iron rings beneath the arches of the Goree Piazzas. These were the

imposing warehouses which stood near the Pier Head between Water Street and Moor Street until their destruction by bombing in 1941 and final demolition in the early 1950's. It is true that contemporary local newspapers reveal that small groups of African slaves were occasionally sold in Liverpool, at least prior to 1772, when the lawyers decided that any slave touching British soil automatically became free. Such slaves, particularly those who were children, appear to have been sold (mainly) as household servants. However, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of slaves, because of the very nature of the 'triangular trade', were shipped directly from West Africa to the plantations of the West Indies and the Southern States of America. The alleged 'slave cellars' and 'slave rings' are deep-seated in the Liverpool consciousness and are presumably the result of historical and psychological association. The Goree warehouses were named after the French island of Goree off the coast of Senegal in West Africa, the site of an infamous slave-trading settlement. The very sight of this huge, brooding structure with its vast brick cellars and cast-iron rings set into walls added to the imaginative force of the legend. But it should be clearly understood that the Goree warehouses which stood until the middle of the present century and which are crucial to the 'slave cellar' stories were not built until 1810, that is three years after the last Liverpool slave-ship sailed from the port. They were in fact the second group of buildings to bear that name, the first having been built of wood in 1793 and completely destroyed by fire in 1802. In relation to the first Goree Piazzas, it should be re-emphasised that there appears to be no evidence that any slaves were sold in Liverpool after 1772.

Anyone who still doubts the strength of Merseyside folklore in the face of serious historical research on these topics would do well to consider the strenuous and sometimes despairing efforts of the late Arthur C.Wardle, sometime Hon.Secretary of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society, as recorded in the Liverpool newspapers of the late 1930s and early 1940s. Extracts from his long and sometimes bitter debate with a series of correspondents can be consulted in the newly-opened Maritime Records Centre at Merseyside Maritime Museum.

\* \* \*

The AMAZING GRACE of JOHN NEWTON - erstwhile Chief of Customs at Liverpool by H.M.Hignett

John Newton, son of a shipmaster, was born in Wapping, London, in 1725. His mother died when he was eight and three years later he made his first trip to sea as ship's boy with his father, a strict disciplinarian. He came into close contact with the rough crew on the ship and, being of a rebellious nature, found an outlet from the tight bounds applied by his father by taking up the coarse language and ideas of the lower deck. In 1744, returning from a voyage to the Mediterranean, he was forced into the Navy by the Press-gang. With his own seafaring experience and some influence exerted by his father,



Newton was promoted to midshipman. However, shortly after being appointed to HMS HARWICH at Plymouth, he deserted to continue his association with a rather lovely young girl he had met near Gravesend. After a few hours ashore he was recaptured, returned to the ship, flogged with the "cat o'nine tails" and reduced to ordinary seaman.

HARWICH sailed for Madeira a few days later. His expectancy of five years overseas with the Navy was relieved at Funchal: he was able to persuade the master of a ship anchored there (an acquaintance of his father) to exchange one of his crew for John. So he became a member of the crew of a slave trader. On his second voyage in the vessel he was offered a job ashore as assistant to a slave master on the African coast. Within a few months he took ill with fever and on recovery had an argument with his employer, only to find himself too ill and weak to avoid being chained and penned in with the slaves. Oddly enough, the slaves were to help him recover his health and one even managed to smuggle a letter to a ship anchored offshore, to be delivered to his father.

Through his father's efforts Newton was able to get a passage in a vessel loading African timber for Liverpool. This was the GREYHOUND, which encountered a violent storm in the North Atlantic during which several of the crew were washed overboard and he spent several days manning the pumps. Fortunately the wood cargo gave a certain amount of buoyancy and although the bad weather lasted 27 days, the ship limped in Londonderry after two months at sea.

This incident caused Newton to turn for a time to religion. On arrival in London he found his father had sailed a few days earlier to take the post of Governor of Fort York on Hudson's Bay. He was never to see his father again, for the latter drowned in a boating accident three days before he left Fort York at the end of his term.

A couple of years later, in 1750 and now married, Newton obtained his first command - a Liverpool-owned slaving vessel. He did not see any conflict between his religion and slavery. Four years in the slave trade made him sufficiently prosperous to leave the sea and live in his father's house. It was at this time that he met the Methodists John Wesley and the fiery orator George Whitefield.

By 1756 Newton and his wife were in Liverpool where he applied for a minor post in the Customs & Revenue Service. A friend of his father used influence in an attempt to get him the job he had applied for, but he was turned down. Then to his surprise, a couple of months later, he was appointed Chief Officer of Customs.

Newton's actual title was Tide Surveyor of Customs. His duty was to attend the tides visiting the arriving ships and those anchored in the river during one week; the following week he was to inspect the ships in the docks and so on throughout the year. He wrote that the latter was a sinecure but the former duty required constant attendance

day and night. He had a "good office with fire and candle", and 50 or 60 persons under his direction including a coxswain and crew for a handsome six-oared boat to carry him about the river.

In his diary he wrote in 1764 "There has been in awful accident at the river. An outward bound ship blew up, 11 person perished. I had a providential escape. I was going down the river but was unexpectedly delayed about 20 minutes beyond my intended time otherwise I should probably have been very near her, but she blew up just as I was going into the boat!". (The vessel's name was the LOTTIE. Her figurehead can be seen in the museum pilotage building. A similar explosion occurred in the river in the 1860s and coincidentally the vessel's name was LOTTIE SLEIGH !)

Eight years in this post were enough for Newton and he began to look for a post as a Church of England minister. In fact he was turned down by three bishops who were somewhat worried about his friendship with the Wesleyans. Finally he was ordained Vicar of Olney in Buckinghamshire. (Olney's chief claim to fame until then was the annual pancake race which had been held on Shrove Tuesday for over 500 years).

The village of Olney was not the liveliest of places, but William Cowper the poet lived there and he and Newton formed a firm friendship. Cowper encouraged the new Vicar to write religious verse. The verses became hymns such as "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds", "Glorious things of thee are spoken" and "Be still my heart". These are the most well-known of the 'Olney Hymns'. But the most famous hymn written by Newton only became really so in the past 15 years - "Amazing Grace - it is still a well-played 'pop' song to this day.

From 1780 to 1807 Newton was vicar of a church in Lombard Street in the City of London, where he took part in the long campaign to abolish slavery; which battle lasted for over two decades.

The Bill to abolish slavery was finally passed in mid 1807. John Newton died a couple of months later aged 82.

\* \* \*

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost but now am found  
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear  
And grace my fears relieved,  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come,  
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far  
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me  
His word my hope secures,  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures.

Yes, when this heart and flesh shall fail  
And mortal life shall cease,  
I shall possess within the veil  
A life of joy and peace.

\* \* \*

### THE ST.LAWRENCE RIVER CANALS

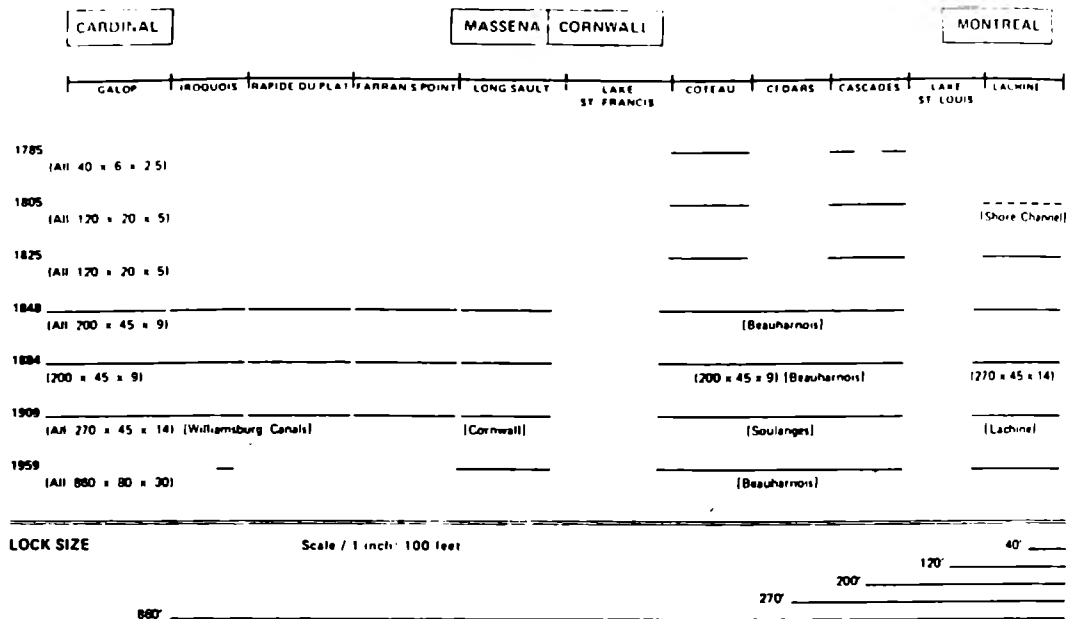
by Daniel C.McCormick

To many, the term "St.Lawrence River Canals" conjures up a picture of the channel and lock system which has been in service since 1959, the "Seaway". All too few realise that a canal system, tying the Great Lakes to the Atlantic, has been operative since the late 1840's. We can perhaps understand the Lakes - deep sea connection if we but turn back in time.

While there had been some minimal attempts at canalization on the upper St.Lawrence prior to the War of 1812 it was that conflict which pointed out to the British government the vital nature of the waterway. Had the American forces succeeded in cutting the route during that unhappy conflict, supplies to all British posts in Upper Canada would have been cut off. Hence in the immediate postwar period, Colonel By and the Royal Engineers were assigned the task of constructing a canal on the Ottawa and Rideau systems, thereby establishing a route connecting Montreal and Kingston via Bytown (Ottawa). The resulting canal, though less likely to fall to an invader from the South, was limited in size. The Rideau did play a part in the development of the area but since the neighbours never again resorted to the force of arms, its original purpose was never tested.

Even while the Rideau Canal was under construction, there were those who felt it was a waste of both time and money. Yet it took the supporters of the First Commercial Canal on the St.Lawrence until the 'forties to consolidate their efforts and see the completion of their dream, a canal by-passing the various rapids of the upper river, one which stretched from Montreal through the International Rapids. Once opened to traffic in 1848, the new St.Lawrence Canals provided a direct route between the Lakes and Europe, through locks which were 200' x 45' x 9' over the sills.

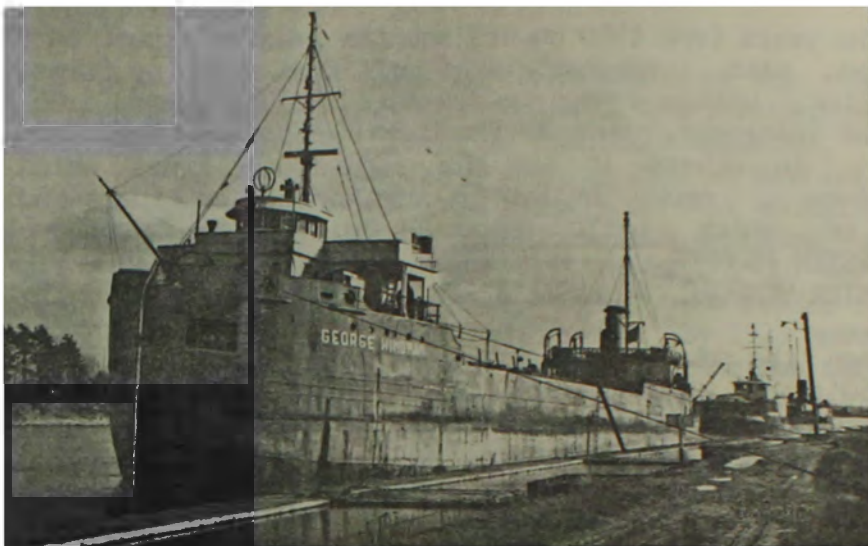
# 1785 - The Canals of the St. Lawrence - 1959



from THE WISHBONE FLFET. Daniel C. McCormick, Massena NY USA, 1972



VILLE DE QUEBEC (b.SUZY 69 c.SLAVIC PRINCE 70 d.SUZY) French Line, upbound in Soulanges Canal June 30th 1955. 258/250 x 43 x 24. 2,388 gross tons.



Canaller GEORGE HINDMAN (a.GLENCLOVA 26 b.ANTICOSTI 48 c.RISACUA 53, e.ELIZABETH HINDMAN) Upbound lock 20, Cornwall Canal November 24th 1956 showing bow damage as a result of a collision with MANCHESTER EXPLORER on Lake St.Louis, November 13th. 253.7/246.0 x 42.5 x 18.5. 1,925 gross tons.

In the years leading up to the American Civil War, the number of ships trading between those far inland ports and those of the United Kingdom continued to grow. The upswing seen before and during that conflict tapered off in the 'seventies and 'eighties, only to enter a period of resurgence as the century drew to a close. The reason behind the latter development was the construction of yet another, still larger, canal system on the river, one involving locks of 270' x 45' x 14' over the sills. It was this canal, begun in 1884 and completed in 1909, which served domestic and foreign shippers until the inception of the current "Seaway".

While we noted growth in transAtlantic traffic in the Civil War era, we also see increases during the Depression years of the 'thirties and in the immediate post-World War II period. Larger numbers of ships were beginning to move between fresh water and salt. It might be noted here that the "canallers", the ships evolved to utilize the St.Lawrence Canals domestic runs, were distinctive in appearance (bridge far forward, machinery far aft) and in that so many of them were products of British shipyards. While large numbers of them traded deep sea during both world wars, they cannot be counted in the stream of deep sea ships, sail, steam and diesel, which made the tortuous trek up the river and on into the Lakes.

By the mid-1930's there were those Europeans who were thinking in terms of scheduled cargo liner services, Anthony Veder of Rotterdam and Olsen and Ugelstad of Oslo among them. Yet these were not the

first. "Lines" had operated from Liverpool to the Great Lakes since the days of Shaw and Company and the Templar Line in the late 1850's.

The years from 1950 onward saw the greatest spurt in traffic from overseas, with large numbers of well know shipping firms seeming to sense that, within a very few years, the Seaway would be a reality. In some instances, such as the Hamburg-Chicago Line, consortia were formed; in others it was the individual lines which committed themselves. Among the latter were Manchester Liners and Head Line, both of which built ships especially for the old canals (MANCHESTER PIONEER, MANCHESTER EXPLORER, MANCHESTER VANGUARD, MANCHESTER VENTURE, BALLYGALLY HEAD, FAIR HEAD).

When the new Seaway was opened in 1959 a total of seven locks, each 860' x 80' x 30' over the sills, replaced the former system with its twenty-two\* hand-operated locks. It remains to be seen whether or not the Seaway will fully realize its potential. The unfortunate accidents which have marred its performance in recent seasons are, hopefully, not to be repeated.

\* Of the 22 locks on the old canals, 17 were lift locks and 5 were guard locks.

Dan McCormick was awarded the title "Historian of the Year" in 1983 by the Marine Historical Society of Detroit, Michigan.

\* \* \*

### Book Review

CHAMPION OF SAIL - R.W. Leyland and his Shipping Line (Conway Maritime Press 1986, £15)

The transition from sail to steam was not easy for many people, authorities and shipowners alike. Local man R.W.Leyland attempted it and failed; this book is his story and gives firm ideas as to why he did not succeed. Most of the 18 vessels built for the firm were named after Liverpool suburbs. One survives, the WAVERTREE, preserved as the centrepiece of New York's South Street Museum.

The ships are listed in an appendix, with details and a potted history of each and there are numerous pictures of the ships. (One obvious error is the picture of the stern of a sailing ship with the caption "RIVERSDALE with her figurehead gone").

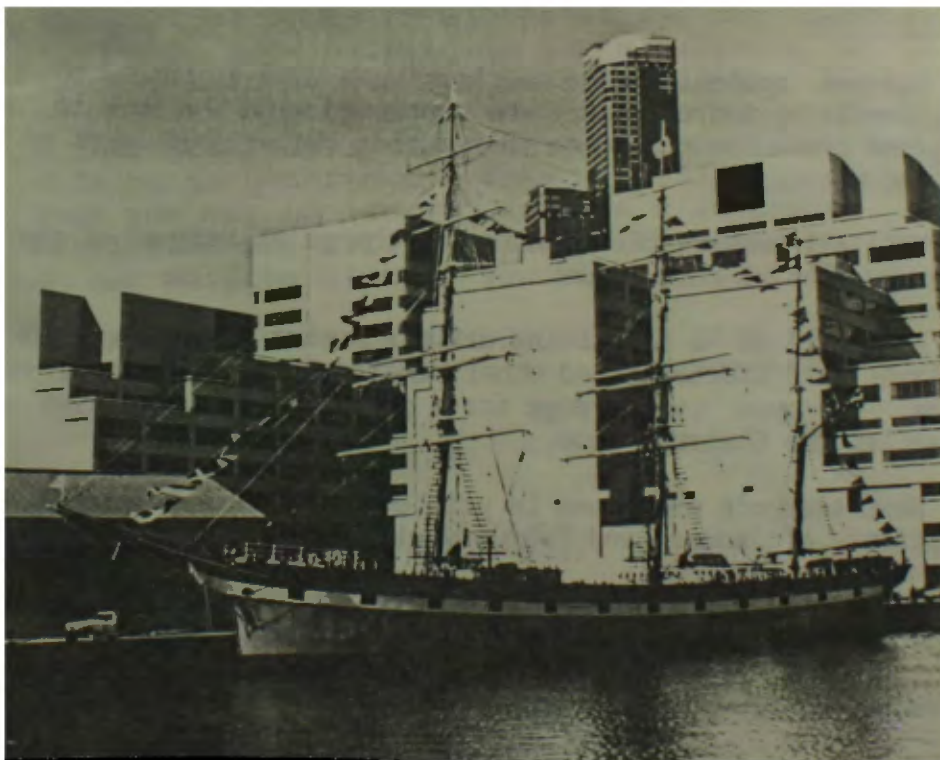
The history is presented from contemporary papers, private and business, giving a fascinating insight into the workings of shipowning at the turn of the century. Every page is full of interest.

On the Yarra waterfront quite near the centre of the city, the people have been able to see the slow, careful and faithful restoration of the barque which began working as the POLLY WOODSIDE, the name of the wife of the owner. The vessel was launched at Belfast in 1885 and built of wrought iron. From the first the POLLY WOODSIDE plied the South American trades for which she had been designed until in 1904 she was sold to New Zealand owners A.H. Turnbull & Co. and renamed RONA. A very successful buy for the new owners, she traded round the Tasman Sea and across the Pacific to California. By 1925 however, with world recession, there was little work for her and she was cut down to be a coal lighter at Melbourne. During the Second World War the RONA was used in New Guinea for transshipping munitions and other wartime cargoes. From 1946 she was a coal hulk at Melbourne until there was little use for coal in the 1960s.

In 1968 her owners donated the hulk to the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) which undertook to preserve and if possible restore the vessel to her original condition.

Now remasted and re-rigged with new yards she lies afloat as the centrepiece of the small Maritime Museum par. A delightful sight under her old colours, painted ports and former name POLLY WOODSIDE.

(It is a pity that no-one has yet been able to find a photograph of her under her old name. There are plenty of pictures of the RONA).



She was not a large vessel, the dimensions being 230ft overall, 192ft length of hull, 30ft beam with a load draft of 14ft. The height of the mainmast above the deck was 108ft, the mainyard 65ft long, sail area about 1000sq.ft and in suitable conditions she could make a speed of about 14 knots. With a gross tonnage of 648 she could carry 1100 tons of cargo and for most of her seagoing time there was a crew of about 16 men.

The material for this Article was kindly donated by Ralph Varns, our member in Melbourne.

Grey sea dim, smoke-blowing, hammer-racket, sirens  
calling from ships, ear-breaking riveting, the calthrops  
of great grey drays, fire-smiting on the cobbles, dragging  
the bales of cotton

The warehouse roofs, wet-gleaming, the ship's bedraggled  
awry-swung yards, back't on the main, the jib booms  
run in, the winches clanking, the slings of cargo  
running up, jolt

LIVERPOOL 1890

-

from "The Wanderer" by John Masefield

### Society Notes

Sincere apologies for overlooking a vote of thanks to Jill and Alan, retiring Secretaries, who continued with the work in spite of the great pressures placed on them during the establishment of the new Maritime Museum.

Will all members please note the change of address of the Society as per page 44 of this issue.

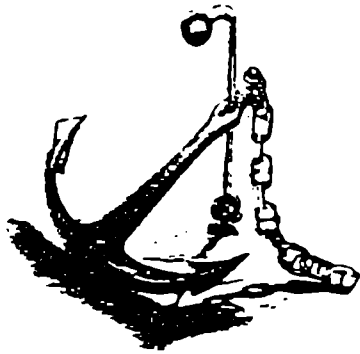
As part of a recruiting drive a number of posters are to be displayed at Libraries and other public places during the next few months. If you can arrange for a poster to be displayed anywhere please let the Chairman know.

Next season's programme is printed on p22. All meetings with the exceptions of January and February will be held at 6.45pm at William Brown Street, Liverpool.

The meetings in January and February will be held at lunchtime (12 - 2pm) at the Maritime Museum and will be informal discussions, topics to be introduced by any member.



# MARINE BOOKS



NAVAL & MARITIME BOOKSELLERS.

(M. A. & V. W. Nash)

'NILCOPTRA',  
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#### NEWS:

The upper Mersey port of Weston Point on the Manchester Ship Canal has now been re-opened by Ocean Transport & Trading. The port closed in the summer of 1984. The Company now operates a stevedoring and transport business there. Recent cargoes have been cattle food inwards, steel both inwards and outwards and in future up to half a million tons of maize will be imported annually from the Continent and carried by road to Brown and Polson's corn products mill, Trafford Park, beginning next year when the upper reaches of the canal are expected to close.

The Guinness vessels were not after all transferred to new management. (See BULLETIN Vol 29 No.4 p78)

#### IN FUTURE ISSUES:

The loss of the OCEAN MONARCH in 1848

The R.N.V.R. Motor Launch Patrol in the Irish Sea 1916-18

The Battle of New Brighton 1755

Crew Lists and Articles of Agreement in NW Record Offices

This advertisement was printed in the 1834 edition of GORE'S LIVERPOOL DIRECTORY.

It was a forerunner of the 'Pool' run by the Shipping Federation Ltd, a company run jointly by the National Union of Seamen and the shipowners associations and first established in 1922.

# SEAMEN'S SHIPPING OFFICE

11, BATH-STREET,

OPPOSITE 11

NEEDHAM GATES & CO. PRINCE'S DOCK,

BRANCH OFFICE,

No. 1, Kitchen-street, East-side Queen's Dock,

ESTABLISHED IN 1827,

SUPPORTED BY THE PRINCIPAL SHIP-OWNERS OF THE PORT,

AND CONDUCTED BY

W. H. HODSON.

The principal advantages of which are:—

1st. The certainty of the Crew being complete, and on board at the time of sailing.

2nd. The having a more efficient Crew, through a regular Register being kept of their conduct.

3rd. The check which it is already found to have upon the general conduct of Seamen sailing out of the Port during the Voyage.

In proof of which, Masters who have not shipped their Crews at the Office, are respectfully referred to the annexed respectable Testimonial, (among many others,) as well as to Masters of Vessels now in Port.

*" Liverpool, Sept. 25th, 1833.*

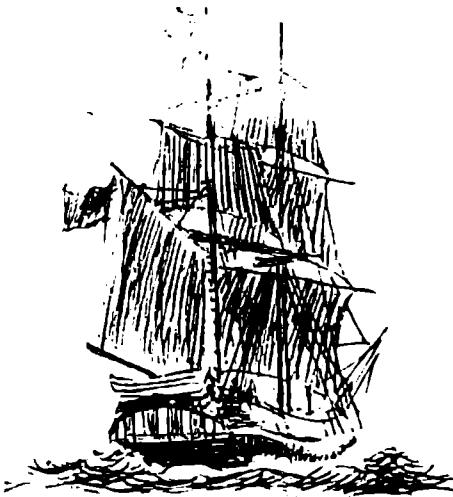
" We, the undersigned, having been Masters of Vessels in the employ of Sir John Tobin for some years, consider it nothing more than justice to give Mr. Hodson, of the Merchant Seamen's Shipping Office, this Testimonial of our approval of the manner in which he conducts that Establishment, and we have no hesitation in stating that the Owners of Vessels are consulting their own interest in employing him to assist Masters in the Shipping of their Crews.

" The advantages which we have found more particularly are, the having the Ship's Company complete, and on Board at the time of Sailing, be the hour ever so early, thus relieving the Master from any anxiety at a time when matters of greater importance occupy him. The having a more efficient Crew, from Mr. Hodson being always on the spot, and after Six Years' experience having made himself personally acquainted with the best Seamen sailing out of the Port. Fewer Applications for Monthly Money, consequently less trouble at the Owners' Office, and getting younger men; and lastly, we have found that of late Mr. Hodson's Establishment has had a very material Check upon the irregularities and general conduct of Seamen, for as Mr. Hodson is now employed by the major part of the most respectable Ship-owners in the Port, a Seaman misconducting himself is reported accordingly upon the Vessels' arrival, and thus prevented from imposing upon others.

In conformity with the foregoing, we do consider that Mr. Hodson's exertions deserve support from both Owners and Masters, and that in so doing they are only consulting their own good and that of the Port of Liverpool generally; and whilst the Shipping Interest is so much upon the increase here, the greater the necessity for such an establishment.

JOHN RUSSELL,  
RICHARD LETHBRIDGE,  
RICHARD CUMMINS,  
DAVID McNAB,  
J. R. STROYAN,  
ALEXANDER PEEL,

ROBERT HIGGAT,  
PHILIP GELL,  
THOMAS FORSHAW,  
GEORGE FORSTER,  
RICHARD WALKER."



AEM

## A DYNASTY THAT BROUGHT PROSPERITY TO MERSEYSIDE

### The Legend(s) Behind the Names(s)

by J.E.Cowden

Many of the earlier shipowners who set themselves up in business on the banks of the Mersey more often than not named their ships after members of their family or after places that their ships traded to.

This, in the case of Alfred Holt, was not to be.

Alfred Holt was born 13th June 1829, the third son of five sons of George Holt, an important figure in the cotton, banking and insurance business in Liverpool. Alfred developed a strong engineering bent and subsequently was apprenticed to Edward Woods, Engineer-in-Charge to the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, (later to become the London and North Western Railway) spending all his spare time on locomotives. On completion of his apprenticeship, however, he was engaged in both marine and locomotive engineering and in 1852 set himself up as a consultant engineer and the following year entered the shipping business.

"A.H." was primarily an engineer, therefore he was most fortunate in that he was joined in the business by his younger brother Philip, who was the one with the business acumen and whose complementary qualities of patience, resource and tact were to prove invaluable.

Come 1864 Alfred and Philip had accumulated sufficient capital to enable them to launch their most cherished enterprise - the birth of the Ocean Steam Ship Company Limited, better recognised both on Merseyside and throughout the world as the Blue Funnel Line. In the setting-up of 'Ocean' they saw this as the greatest adventure of their lives and because to them the Odyssey was the finest adventure ever written they from then on in applied Homeric names to their ships.

When most of the up-and-coming shipowners of the day were absorbed in plans for fast passenger-carrying ships, Alfred concentrated his abilities in perfecting the most efficient long distance cargo carrying ship which could compete favourably with sailing ships. Opinion held that steam driven ships could be a challenge to sail powered ships in the short sea routes. It was felt, however, that in the longer trading routes, i.e. Liverpool to Valparaiso, ships would be obliged to carry large amounts of coal bunkers thus losing valuable cargo space. Also steamship routes to South America, and to China via the Cape of Good Hope, did not have sufficient bunkering stations en route where ships could replenish their stocks; therefore competition to sail might not be so effective as in the short sea routes.

Messrs Randolph & Elder in 1856 had developed, and embodied in the building of a paddle steamer, a compound engine which had almost halved the fuel consumption and which would in part overcome the difficulties of replenishing bunkers on long ocean routes.

The introduction of the Randolph & Elder compound engine had not gone unnoticed by Alfred Holt. His proposed concept however consisted of an iron screw steamer to be driven by a tandem compound engine with a longer stroke and much higher boiler pressure than normal at the time. Alfred believed that such a ship could steam at about ten knots on a coal consumption of 3 lbs per ihp per hour. Indeed a novel idea at the time, but however the soundness of Alfred's plans was more than realised when in later years the most economical freighters of their day steamed to China on a coal consumption of only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lbs per ihp per hour. Without contradiction, Alfred Holt contributed more than anybody to the evolution of ocean carrying steamers to their present day high standards.

The Ocean Steam Ship Company Limited was registered on 11th January 1865 with its Head Office at India Buildings where it is still based, although a new India Building has since been erected.

A three-ship order, at a cost of £156,000 was placed with the Scottish shipyard of Scotts of Greenock. It was at this point that Alfred and Philip extracted the first of many Homeric names, Agamemnon, Ajax and Achilles, as a start to their great adventure.

The three ships were of identical design, 309.05ft length, 38.08ft breadth, 2,200 gross tons, 1,550 net tons and powered by a single crank compound tandem engine.

The legend behind the chosen names being:

Agamemnon, who was king of Argos and the most powerful prince of Greece and who had been likened to Zeus in appearance, stature and majesty, was elder brother of Menelaus, king of Sparta, married to the lovely Helen. Her flaming beauty so inflamed Paris that he carried her off to Troy and thus sowed the seed of war. Menelaus called to his aid his brother Agamemnon and a host of fellow rulers to take arms to avenge the rape of his wife and the violation of his home. His plea was answered; princes and warriors with more than a thousand ships assembled at Aulis in Boeotia, and the mighty Agamemnon was chosen as the leader and commander-in-chief.

Achilles, the central figure of Homer's Iliad, was the son of Peleus and Thetis whilst the name Ajax was held by two heroes of the Trojan War, Ajax the son of Telamon, often called Ajax the Greater, and Ajax the son of Oileus.

Very fitting names for the start of the 'Holt Dynasty'.

The sailing of AGAMEMNON (Captain Middleton) from Liverpool for China, via Mauritius, Penang, Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai, on 19th April 1866 was, for Alfred Holt, something more than the successful conclusion to his long years of patient endeavour in the

construction and design of the iron steamship. This voyage marked the beginning of one of the finest shipping companies ever to grace the ports on Merseyside. It was one thing however to have designed a steamship capable of reaching China; it was quite another thing to be able to make that ship pay its way. It seemed unlikely at the time that any newcomer running steamships to the China Coast could possibly make headway against the old establishment of both merchants and shipowners already in control of the major part of the Eastern trade routes.

The reasons for the success of the Ocean Steam Ship Company are however easy enough to distinguish in retrospect. They are to be found in the continual improvement in the performance of the steamship to the point where speed and carrying capacity eventually produced a cost structure more economical than that of the sailing ships; in the increasing enterprise of Liverpool and London merchants in establishing orderly and efficient trading connections to the Far East; and in the skills of the Holt management. Above all, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 not only shortened the trading route to the East by some 3,300 miles but ultimately gave the steamships, proceeding by a providentially arranged system of coaling stations, a winning advantage over sail powered ships. The conjunction of all these factors was irresistible and as far as Alfred Holt was concerned, turned what might have been a most hazardous undertaking into certain, successful and profitable venture.

Within three years of the departure of AGAMEMNON to the East, the Odyssey was again re-opened when the Hebburn shipyard of Leslie Company delivered the DIOMED (son of Tydeus) and NESTOR, (son of Peleus). Both these ships being a little smaller than the initial three 'A' class steamers. They were soon followed by nine additional ships of larger dimensions. Scotts delivered PRIAM (son of Laomedon) whilst the Hebburn shipard delivered SARPEDON (a mythological hero of Lycia)

ULYSSES	(called Odysseus by the Greeks, was married to Penelope by whom he became father of Telemachus)
PATROCLUS	(grew up in the court of Peleus and became the intimate friend of Achilles)
ANTENOR	(a Trojan prince related to King Priam)
DEUCALION	(was the son of Prometheus)
HECTOR	(the eldest son of Priam and Hecuba)
MENELAUS	(son of Atreus and brother of Agamemnon)
GLAUCUS	(was the son of Sisyphus, king of Corinth)

Over the succeeding years Blue Funnel went from strength to strength with new ships joining the fleet, new trading routes being opened up and the acquisition of one of their competitors - the China Mutual Steam Navigation Company.

At peak, Alfred Holt & Company were managing some one hundred ships which clearly demonstrates the faith that the brothers Alfred and Philip had in their great adventure of 1864.

In both world wars, Blue Funnel ships and personnel played no mean part in defence of their homeland. Their ships proved ideal for wartime conditions, consequently therefore they played an important part in many spheres of operations, transporting troops, munitions and military supplies.

The war of course took its toll. By 1917, 79 out of 83 ships had been requisitioned by the Government during which time 29 main line ships suffered enemy attack out of which 16 were sunk and 10 badly damaged. At the outbreak of the second world war the combined fleets of Blue Funnel Line comprised 52 steamers and 24 motorships aggregating some 601,203 tons. On cessation of hostilities 41 ships had been lost through enemy action.

It is safe to say that but for the toughness and solid construction of their ships, combined with the fine seamanlike qualities displayed, more ships would have been lost.

That is how the Holt Dynasty commenced. What of it today?

Shipping, like most major industries, has been faced with change which could never have been envisaged one hundred years ago.

We today have witnessed the introduction of large container ships, capable of carrying cargoes that normally would have taken five or six general cargo ships to carry. The container age coupled with the roll-on/roll-off concept of carriage of cargoes by sea has brought about the demise of what we have known as Blue Funnel Line. However that is not to say that the blue with black topped funnel colours of Alfred Holt has disappeared from the sea-lanes of the world. Although we no longer see seven or eight 'China boats' loading and discharging in Gladstone Dock, Liverpool or Vittoria Wharf, Birkenhead, they can still be found plying their trade as part of a consortium of shipowners operating under the title Barber Blue Sea Lines who trade United States of America - Middle East - Far East - W.S.A. Some sailings also take in calls North Europe, United Kingdom, South Africa and Australia.

### Machinery details of R.M.S.VICTORIA.

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Main propulsion machinery installed was two Crossley 'HR Vee' ten cylinder v-type direct-reversing naturally aspirated two-cycle diesel engines. Each developed 850 b.h.p. at 400 r.p.m. and was direct-coupled to a propeller. With a bore of 10.5 inches (267mm) and a stroke of 13.5 inches (343mm) they possessed a favourable power/weight ratio and were designed for long life and easy accessibility to all working parts. A notable feature was their low height allowing ample room for piston and connecting rod withdrawals, which can be readily seen in the accompanying photograph. Working on the loop-scavenge principle together with the advantages of the Crossley system of Exhaust Pulse pressure charging, these engines are of the most modern design and are based on the well-known 'H' series of engines that have earned for themselves an enviable reputation in service. They are offered at various speeds, slow speed for direct-coupling and higher speeds for geared applications and can be supplied in powers up to 2,130 b.h.p. at 600 r.p.m. in their naturally aspirated form and 3,200 b.h.p. as turbo-charged units.

### AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT

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With few exceptions most of the auxiliary machinery was driven by electric motors and this feature, together with the use of electrically-operated equipment in the galleys and pantries, resulted in a comparatively high electric load. The necessary power was supplied by two 125 kW diesel generators. For harbour use there was a 30 kW generator set.

Auxiliary equipment in the engine room includes pumps for lubricating oil, fresh water and sea water, oil coolers, purifiers for lubricating and fuel oil, air compressors, drinking and sanitary water pressure units and refrigerating plant. An oily bilge water separator is fitted to prevent pollution of the lake water.

### DECK MACHINERY

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On deck there was an electric windlass forward, an electric warping capstan aft and a deck crane to serve the forward cargo hatch. The steering gear was of the electro-hydraulic type and was arranged on the maindeck aft, directly over the twin rudders which were fitted to give a large range of manoeuvrability.



MINUTES OF THE 46TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY held at the Maritime Museum, Liverpool, on Wednesday 9th April 1986 at 12.30 pm.

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The meeting was opened at 12.30 pm by the Chairman, Mr Hignett.

1. Apologies for absence were received from Mr R.Pugh, Mr W.Raine and Mr A.Rowson.

2. Minutes of the last meeting were read out and approved.

3. Treasurers Report. The Hon.Treasurer, Mr Witter, circulated copies of the Society's annual accounts for the year ending 30th April 1986. There was an overall deficit for the year of £52.40. This was due mainly to a further fall in subscriptions. Bulletin costs were similar although production costs had been reduced. Only 80 issues of each Bulletin were now being produced for the the Society's 60 - 70 members, whereas in previous years up to 140 - 150 had been produced. Mr Hignett pointed out that five issues had been included in costs for 1985-6 instead of the four which should have been. He added that a new, bigger and cheaper Bulletin was in the course of production. The accounts were approved by the meeting with thanks to Mr Witter.

4. Election of Officers 1986-7. Mr W.Raine has confirmed his wish to relinquish his position as Vice-President. Miss Sweetnam and Dr Scarth wish to stand down as Honorary Secretary and Honorary Assistant Secretary/Archivist respectively due to pressure of work at the Maritime Museum.

The meeting approved Mr Hignett's proposal that he should fulfil the duties of Honorary Secretary until a successor to Miss Sweetnam could be found. Miss Sweetnam and Dr.Scarth were elected as Members of the Council. Mr A.Rowson was elected to succeed Dr Scarth as Archivist. All other Officers and Council Members were re-elected for the 1986-7 season.

5. 1986-7 Programme. A long debate took place regarding the time and place of future meetings. It was eventually agreed that next year's meetings should take place on the second Thursday of each month at 6.45 pm at either the Maritime Museum or the Liverpool Museum, William Brown Street. The venue will be finalised and announced to members via the Bulletin.

Mr Davidson's proposal that informal midday 'Journal' meetings be held in the months of January and February was approved.

Mr Stuttard confirmed that a very promising programme of meetings was in prospect for the coming season.

6. Any Other Business. Dr Scarth outlined present and future plans for

the Maritime Records Centre at the Maritime Museum and urged members to make use of its facilities.

Mr Hignett announced that selected members of the Society who had made a positive contribution to the development of the Records Centre may be eligible for free annual readers' tickets (usual cost £3.00) at the Records Centre.

Mr Hignett thanked Mr Noel Jones for producing the new Bulletin on his word processing equipment.

Mr Jones proposed that a list of all members actively undertaking research should be published in each Bulletin. This was approved.

Mr Hignett reminded members that the Editorship of the Bulletin is still vacant.

Mr Stuttard proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Hignett for his hard work for the Society throughout the past year.

The meeting was closed at 1.45 pm.

\* \* \*

#### RESEARCH NOTES:

##### Maritime Records in Cheshire Record Office, Chester

Crew lists and official log books for vessels registered at Runcorn 1863 to 1913.

Dee Navigation. Commissioners' minutes, appointments, notices, plans etc 1733 - 1867.

Mersey & Irwell Navigation. Appointments of commissioners 1726 - 1861. Inquisitions 1800 - 1826.

Weaver Navigation. Accounts, minutes, papers concerning Parliamentary Bills 1733 - 1948. (County Council records from 1889)

\* \* \*

#### QUERIES:

86/3 A correspondent is researching the history of the Fernie family, a prominent shipping family and firm based in Liverpool from 1850 to 1920. The firm was Henry Fernie & Sons, also trading under the name of The Merchants Trading Co. and The Liverpool Shipping Co.Ltd. The researcher has already traced at least 143 vessels owned by the family. Have any of our readers any information about the firms or the family?

86/4      A correspondent is interested in any further information on the following:-

SAN DEMETRIO: hearsay has it that she passed through Irish waters on the passage to the UK and that a motor torpedo boat was sent to escort her and that it depth-charged a suspected submarine contact.

Another such instance was the ERROS which was mined off Tory Island on the 9th of June 1940 in a convoy from Canada. She was successfully beached at Falcarragh Bay, Co. Donegal, and believed to have been successfully salvaged.

Sometime in 1940-41 the Irish patrol vessel MUIRCHU came across the British LARPOOL towing the Greek PANOS off Galley Head and under attack by aircraft. The patrol vessel provided an escort until the aircraft departed. Both vessels are believed to have arrived safely at Liverpool.

In October 1942 or 1943 the BARRISTER lost her convoy in fog and grounded near Inisturk, north of Slyne Head and became a total loss.

Answer to Query 86/1:

The CAMBRIAN QUEEN was an iron barque of 1394 tons built in 1868 by Oswald & Co. Sunderland and owned by the Ship Cambrian Queen Co. Ltd. and managed by the Liverpool-based Thomas Williams & Co. who owned and operated the Cambrian Line with about half a dozen sailing vessels. The CAMBRIAN QUEEN was 221.7ft long, 36.8ft beam with a loaded draft of 24ft 3ins. There are no photographs of the vessel in the Maritime Museum here. The firm of Thomas Williams went out of existence in the 1930s.

\* \* \*

#### Notes from N.R.P.

The Towing Co. has added to its fleet at Douglas I.O.M. the former Mersey barge HASLAM.

A new ding craft, L.C.1, produced by MacTays of Bromborough began trials on the Mersey in mid-April.

Name change: BIO KOVO ex CEDAR VOYAGEUR ex C.P.VOYAGEUR.

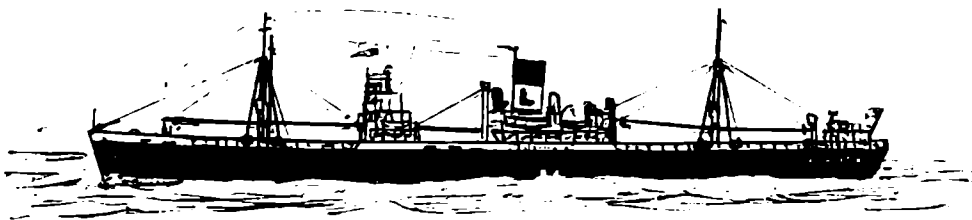
BALMORA commenced her season's cruising in April, first Bristol to Penarth after a refit costing £300,000 largely subscribed by enthusiasts.

In 1924, the year the pioneer motor, shelter-decked tramps VINEMOOR and WESTMOOR were built for Messrs. Runciman, Beardmore of Dalmeir launched the bulk-carrier SILURIAN for Owen and Watkin Williams of Cardiff. At the time she was one of the largest single-deck drycargo ships with machinery aft to be completed outside the Great Lakes. Propelled by two sets of 6-cylinder 4-stroke single-acting air injection engines, each of 1,400 bhp, she had a service speed of 10 knots.

With a deadweight capacity of 11,000 tons the SILURIAN's five holds, including a deep tank, were served by sixteen 5-ton derricks. Deep coamings for her 24ft wide hatches served to increase longitudinal strength. For reasons which the writer has been unable to determine in detail the SILURIAN proved unsuitable for her owners' requirements. Sold to the Furness Withy Group, she was wrecked as the CYNTHIANA during a voyage from the Pacific Northwest coast to Britain.

The significance of the SILURIAN lies not only in her hull layout and power plant but in the fact that she was built for Cardiff owners - a motorship for the strongest, most influential centre of the coal and steam lobby. It is unfortunate that the activities of larger operators such as Andrew Weir's Bank Line and Lord Kylsant's King Line have overshadowed the interest in diesel propulsion demonstrated by small tramp-owning concerns such as Owen & Walter Williams, Dalgliesh and Souters. There is a case here for some careful researching.

\* \* \*



AMS '86

Duxford diesel shelterdeck tramp circa 1945

Articles and other contributions to the BULLETIN to be sent to the Chairman, LNRS, 39 Mockbeggar Drive, Kings Park, Wallasey L45

the

Any reader wishing to take up membership of our excellent please write to the Honorary Secretary, Maritime Research Merseyside Maritime Museum, Pier Head, Liverpool L3 1DW.

Society  
Centre,

# LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

(FOUNDED 1938)

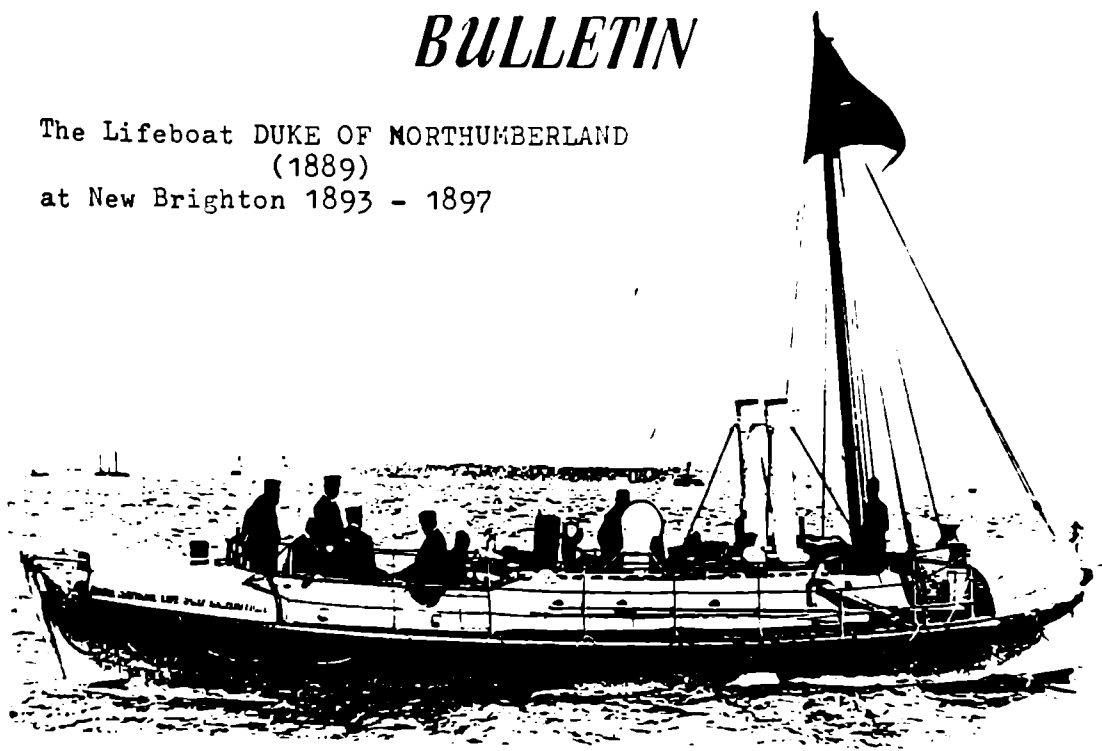


Vol 30 no.

September 1986

## *BULLETIN*

The Lifeboat DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND  
(1889)  
at New Brighton 1893 - 1897



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LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY, Maritime Records Centre, Merseyside Maritime Museum, Pier Head, Liverpool L3 1DN

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All correspondence initially to be addressed to the Honorary Secretary of the Society at the above address. Articles and material for the BULLETIN to be addressed to the Editor at the above address.

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Officers 1986/7

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Treasurer	:	K. Witter
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#### SOCIETY NOTES:

##### Welcome to New Members

Mr D.Head of Liverpool: has an interest in steam coasters.

Mr D.Blackler: researching the history of Fernie Brothers. See also article p49.

Capt W.N.Haydn-Evans: Merseyside man working in the Middle East. Is making enquiries into the history of the firm of Samuel Wakeham & Son, shipowners. Is a descendant of the founder.

Mr J.R.Price: from Ormskirk area.

POSTERS advertising the LNRS are now placed in a dozen or so Libraries and Record Offices around Merseyside. Can you arrange for a poster to be displayed?

Vice-Chairman A.S.Davidson, as Honorary Curator of Paintings at the Maritime Museum, had an important role in selection and research of paintings displayed in the new exhibition "Port Panorama". Congratulations, Sam, on a very fine job.

The new Maritime Records Centre on the ground floor of the Albert Dock warehouse building at Merseyside Maritime Museum opened to the public for the first time on March 10th 1986. Its development is expected to extend over several years. In the short term, this is because original archive material cannot be installed until the correct environmental conditions have been established. The long-term reason is because of the sheer size of the archives concerned. When complete the Records Centre will hold a vast array of archives, including the original plans of the Mersey dock system, records of dock administration, of shipping companies and local trades allied to the shipping industry, ships' plans and logs, photographs and sound archives. It will, therefore, substantially complement and augment the extensive sources already available to maritime researchers at the City of Liverpool Central Libraries and Record Office.

In this first stage of its development the Maritime Records Centre will function largely as a 'self service maritime information centre' and will provide access to duplicate and secondary source material. The main contents are:-

1. A select library of books, articles and periodicals, e.g. Lloyds Registers (1764-1983), Sea Breezes (1920-1985), Mariners Mirror (1946-1985), Marine News (1949-1969) and an excellent selection of reference books.
2. Information files, e.g. the Port of Liverpool, other Mersey and local ports, Liverpool shipping companies, the Slave Trade, Port at War, Emigration, Mersey Ferries, Training Ships on the Mersey, Shipwrecks, Ships on Stamps, Sailing Ships, Steam Ships.
3. Newscuttings - more than 200 volumes of newscuttings compiled by the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board on a wide variety of topics relating to the Port of Liverpool from the late 19th century until c.1970.
4. Photographs and ship plans - a selection of reference copies from the Museum's extensive collections.

The Maritime Records Centre is now open each weekday (Monday-Friday) from 10.30 am to 4.30 pm. It has already proved its worth in providing the public with access to a wide range of information on the maritime history of Merseyside, and Society members are cordially invited to make full use of its facilities. Museum staff will be available each day to help you find the information you require. Admission is by day-ticket (20p per day) or by Annual Reader's Ticket (£3.00 per year). Please note that you do not need to buy a separate ticket for entry to the Maritime Museum to obtain admission to the Records Centre. Access is via public walkways from the Pier Head and from the Dock Road (Albert Dock entrance opposite Canning Place). For further information, please contact the Reception Desk, Maritime

## THE WRECK OF THE CARIBOO

by J.E.Cowden

Members may be interested to read that after some fifty-eight years on the sea-bed the remains of the s.s.CARIBOO has changed hands.

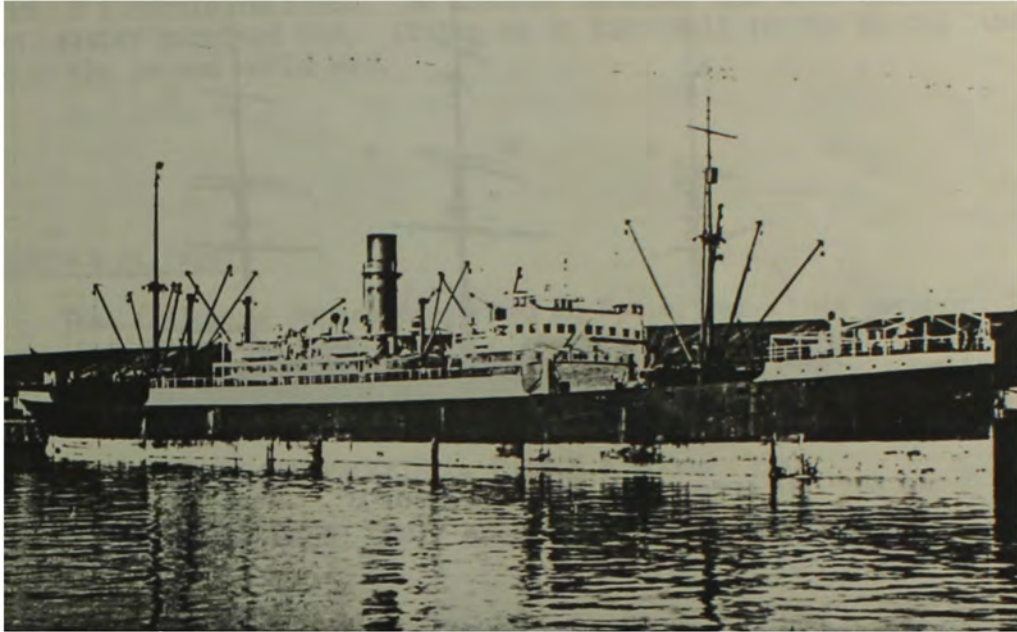
In the early '20s Elder Dempster placed an order for four ships with the Clydebank yard of John Brown & Co. These four ships were fairly large for their day being of 7200 gross, 4486 nett; measuring 440.01 x 58.02 x 31.01. Engined by the shipbuilder they were driven by three Curtiss steam turbines, double reduction geared to one shaft. Working pressure of 215 lbs per square inch with 667 nhp: forced draught giving a speed of 11 knots. The first of the four delivered being the CALGARY registered under the ownership of the British & African Steam Navigation Company whilst the remaining three went to (CALUMET) African Steamship Company: (COCHRANE) Imperial Direct Line and (CARIBOO) Elder Dempster & Co. respectively.

It was during this period of time that Elder Dempster pioneered a regular service carrying sugar to Montreal and St Johns N.S. from ports on the South and East African coastline. At that time their cargoes were bagged however despite this, there were some remarkable loading rates achieved in the absence of mechanisation. On one occasion more than 2000 tons of bagged sugar were loaded in a normal working day with no nightwork. Trade between Canada and South Africa was, at the time, more or less a one way affair. The ships ex Canada well filled with general merchandise, pit props for the mines. However, on return voyages they were moderately filled except when they lifted large quantities of Natal sugar.

On the 24th of November 1928 CARIBOO (Capt.A.Mitchell) on charter to the Union Castle Mail Steamship Company, voyage Beira to New York with a cargo of chrome ore encountered dense fog off the port of East London. Soundings were regularly taken with CARIBOO steaming at about three knots until they indicated a depth of water of 19 fathoms. Suddenly five bumps were felt indicating the vessel had struck an underwater obstruction. It soon became apparent that there was substantial damage, and within an hour of striking, speed fell off and CARIBOO was making water rapidly in the stokehold and after hold. Capt.Mitchell anchored in about 28 fathoms to prevent the ship from being driven ashore, the coastline being some 5-6 miles distant. Sadly, a few hours later the afterdeck was awash. Shortly afterwards R.M.S.WINDSOR CASTLE, which had received CARIBOO's distress call, arrived and took the survivors aboard; Capt.Mitchell remaining with his ship. The harbour tug BUFFALO now arrived and attempts were made to tow CARIBOO to safety. This proved unsuccessful - Capt.Mitchell boarded the tug - and CARIBOO sank stern first. The court of enquiry found that the vessel had struck an object between Meiskama Point and



the mouth of the Golana River. No blame was attached to Capt. Mitchell or his officers.



s.s. CARIBOO

In December 1981 the "Cape Times" reported that the wreck had been located in 20 fathoms. Although the hull was completely demolished some copper and a few pieces of porcelain carrying the Elder Dempster crest, were brought to the surface. In March 1986 Ocean Offshore (Pty) Ltd of Cape Town purchased the remains of CARIBOO with the intention of raising the remaining copper cargo.

#### HENRY FERNIE & SONS of Liverpool

by A.J. Blackler

Henry Fernie arrived in Liverpool from Fife in about 1840, followed a few years later by his younger brother, William James.

About 1849 they became involved with ship-owning, when they became the managers of the Red Cross Line of sailing packets to Australia. At that time they were trading as Fernie Brothers. The fleet expanded and during the 1850s they partnered J & R Reed of St John N.B. in the Canadian Black Ball Line trading from St John to Liverpool.

During the Crimean War Fernie Brothers managed transports for the Government, owning several of them and in addition acting as brokers. They also had links at this time with Edward Oliver and John Fisher and W R Wright in Canada. They bought many of the Wrights' ships in Liverpool at the end of their delivery voyage, selling them fairly soon afterwards, although they kept some for their own trades.



*ARISTOMENE of LIVERPOOL*

In 1863 Fernies started a passenger service from Liverpool to New York, with Guion & Co. acting as brokers. The ships traded under the name Guion Line which became the National Steamship Navigation Co. Fernies handed over control in 1864.

During the 1860s Fernies had strong links with A G Line, Robert Kerr and the Mersey Line. In May 1866 there was a collapse amongst the shipping companies of Liverpool but Fernies were rescued and with a few others started the Merchants' Trading Company.

The formation of Henry Fernie & Sons occurred about 1871; the sons appear to have been Henry Jr and David; the third son does not appear to have been a partner. William James had two sons, William Henry and James but these seem to have had no part in the shipping scene. W J Fernie died on March 8th 1910, his 84th birthday. There were also some daughters and a Robert Kerr Fernie (a connection with Robert Kerr, shipowner?). David Fernie also owned his own ships trading from the same offices as Henry Fernie & Sons, 7 Rumford Street, Liverpool.

David was a member of the Committee of Lloyds from the end of the 1890s. Henry Fernie Fernie (sic) was chairman of the Liverpool Shipwreck & Humane Society and from 1910 was a member of the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board. A James Fernie was a member of the Institute of Naval Architects from 1903 until his death in 1933. Henry Fernie Sr had died in 1881 aged 73 and his grandson then became prominent in the firm.

At the turn of the century the Company appears to be styled the Liverpool Shipping Co. and had by this time started using steamships, all their names being suffixed -AZAN. The last sailing ship was sold in 1909. At the end of the First World War the Company ceased trading when H F Fernie retired. He died on December 2nd 1933 but I believe his sister survived him, living on at Raby Hall in the Wirral until after the Second World War.

\* \* \*

### Reprints of Papers

The following papers presented to Society meetings between 1942 and 1944 were printed as articles in the "Journal of Commerce & Shipping Telegraph". Photocopies of the articles can be supplied to members and readers of BULLETIN on request.

WHITE STAR AUSTRALIAN PACKETS by Capt.E.A.Woods (35p)

BRIGANTINES & SCHOONERS: their origin and development, by W. McQ. Mather (35p)

SHIPS DEPICTED ON POSTAGE STAMPS by W.E.Argyle (35p)

SAILORS ARE SUPERSTITIOUS by Mr J.B.Hetherington (55p)

(Requests to Hon.Sec. please)

\* \* \*

### Research Notes

It is quite usual for local newspapers to give detailed reports of incidents relating to maritime affairs. They are excellent, if not always true, sources of information for maritime historians.

Copies of the news reports are available from that very efficient institution:

The Newspaper Library  
The British Library  
Colindale Avenue  
London N9 5HE

The Library affords only a limited amount of time for search but if the date of an event is known, occasionally they advise on the most appropriate news report available.

## NEWS, NOTES & QUERIES

Near the end of the Falklands War in 1983 the Admiralty chartered, at about £9,000 per day, Messrs T. & J. Harrison's ASTRONOMER (27,868 tons) for conversion into an RFA helicopter carrier and changed her name to RELIANT. The conversion is said to have cost £25m.

Using ARAPHY equipment and landing pads, the RELIANT was able to carry upto 6 Sea-king helicopters with all the necessary back-up. From November 1984 and after a spell in the Mediterranean, RELIANT was at sea for an unbroken spell of 550 days - a record - returning to Plymouth in April this year.

In July she returned to her home port of Liverpool where Seaforth Welding had a four-week contract to remove the flight-deck and ARAPHO equipment whilst the vessel was lying at Seaforth Container Terminal. The equipment cost £15m to install.

Apart from removing the equipment and flight-deck, the cost of converting the vessel back to her original condition would cost even more than the £25m. The British Admiralty now propose selling the RELIANT, without the ARAPHO equipment, to the US Navy before the charter expires. Harrisons are not opposing the sale.

To the breakers: Shell's CINULIA (1955) a frequent sight in the Mersey, although under the Netherlands flag.

UGANDA (1952) of P&O/BI, well-known school ship.  
A society was founded in an attempt to preserve the vessel.

BEBEN (ex SUN XXII). For a time a mystery surrounded the disappearance of this tug, formerly owned by Alexandria Towing Co. Under new owners, she sailed from Banjul (Bathurst) on June 6th for Las Palmas, crewed by seven men - a four-day passage. Later in the month there was no sign of her. She was found at last, wrecked on rocks off the the South Moroccan coast. Her crew were imprisoned for a time but later freed.

The Single-Buoy-Mooring for supertankers placed by Shell off Amlwch, Anglesey, will no longer be used as the through-put has not over the past few years come anywhere near expectations. Costing over £14m and connected to a crude-oil pipeline trenched across Anglesey, the Menai Straits, North Wales and the Wirral to Stanlow, it has failed in its purpose. Local fishermen warned Shell in the mid-1970s of likely difficulties due to the known excessive undertow in the area.

The Mersey Docks Company lost considerable revenue with fewer tankers discharging at Tranmere: this will be reversed in their

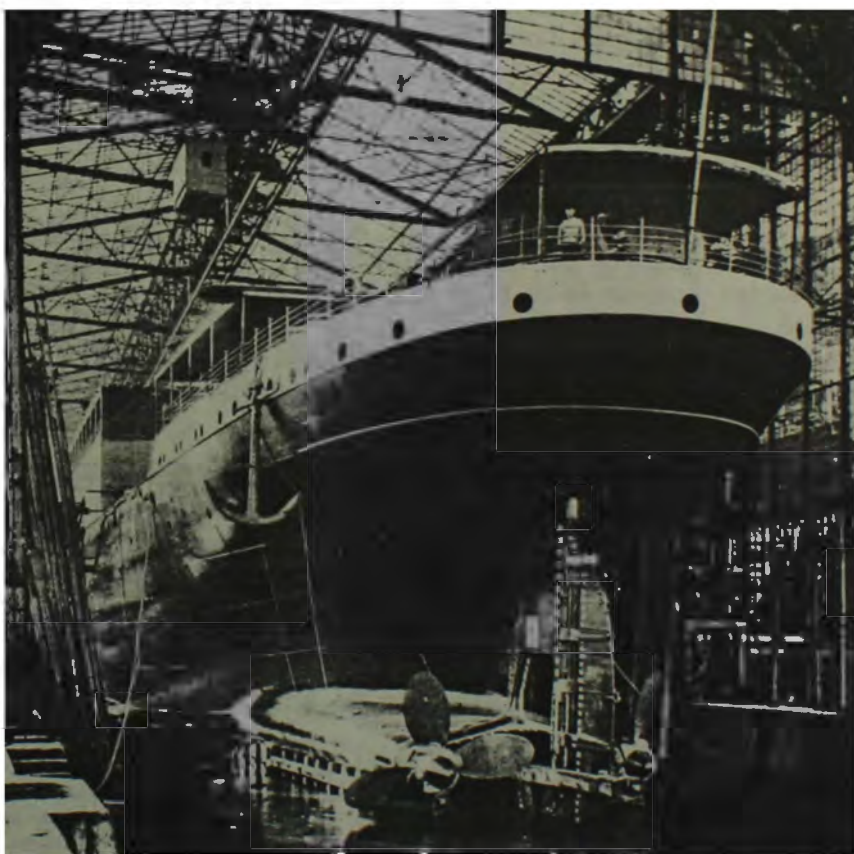
Coming into operation in 1977, the SBM and pipeline seemed a notable engineering feat but has turned out to be an expensive folly. The first vessel to use the terminal was NORSE QUEEN on April 4th 1977. She was delayed in getting alongside by strong northerlies and completed discharge at Tranmere.

In spite of the passage between the SBM and Bull Bay being a prohibited area, the long trailing hoses were fouled several times by passing craft.

N.R.P.

Answer to Query regarding the picture on page 21, June 1986 issue:

This seems to be the SS ROSEDALE (Off.No.68963) at St Ives, Cornwall on November 18th 1893, on passage from Southampton to Cardiff in ballast. She subsequently became a total loss. She was built by J.Laing in October 1877, owners T.C.Heatley & Co., London. 910 gross, 591 nett. 211.8 (l.o.a.) x 30.6 x 15.9. Jas.E.Cowden



KRONPRINZESSIN CECILIE ready for launch - under glass, Hamburg 1905

This article was inspired by an analysis of three contemporary photographs in the possession of Mr Robert E. Jones of Tattenhall, Chester, who served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in the First World War.

The Admiralty commissioned no less than 580 motor launches (ML's) to patrol the coast of the British Isles during the latter part of the 1914-18 War. Some also operated in the Mediterranean, West Indies and the White Sea. They were intended to replace the earlier MB class vessels and their duties included scouting, anti-submarine work, in-shore minesweeping, smokescreen-laying and hydrophone monitoring.

The concept of an armed motor launch anti-submarine patrol was first proposed in February 1915 by the American HENRY R. SUTPHEN of the Electric Boat Company, (Elco), at a meeting with an Admiralty representative in New York. Sutphen proposed a 'mosquito fleet' of 19-knot 80-footers each armed with a quick-firing gun. In subsequent communications these craft were referred to by the code-word "Sutphens"!

The first fifty ML's were ordered in April 1915. These vessels were 75ft x 12ft x 4ft and were laid down at the Elco yard in Bayonne, New Jersey. The scale of the job meant complete standardisation of construction. In order not to compromise the neutrality of the United States Government it was arranged that the components be overlanded by rail to the Davie shipyard at Quebec and therefore the hull carcasses had also to comply with the intervening railroad loading guages.

While this supposedly substantial order was being progressed news came in of the torpedoing of the LUSITANIA. This atrocity instigated a following order for no less than 500 ML's for delivery mid-November 1916 and the Elco yard had to tool-up for a prodigious feat of mass-production hitherto unknown in the shipbuilding industry! The opportunity was also taken to slightly increase the dimensions of the vessels.

The Quebec assembly yard was enlarged and a further assembly facility was leased at Montreal. Elco were contracted to make all deliveries at the launching slips in the St. Lawrence river and from that point the ML's were loaded aboard ocean transports for the trans-Atlantic passage. Usually four boats were loaded aboard each ocean transport. During the winter of 1915-16, when the St. Lawrence was iced-up, no less than eighty-four ML's were overlanded by rail to ice-free Halifax, Nova Scotia, in order to be shipped across the Atlantic.

A final 30 ML's were ordered during July 1917 and the last of these was delivered by February 1918. All the vessels were numbered consecutively from 1 to 580 as they were produced. Forty-one ML's were delivered to the French Navy and became part of their V.1-73 series craft. The Davie shipyard at Quebec, which was leased for assembly,

is still in operation as of July 1985. In 1952 Elco became a division of the General Dynamics Corporation and the Elco Navy Yard at Bayonne eventually ceased operation and is now the site of what is known as the Elco Marina.

At least 82 ML patrol units were formed (Units 500-581) each consisting of six vessels. In the Auxiliary Patrol the boats were manned by R.N.V.R. personnel including many who had served in the earlier MB's. Nineteen ML's were lost while on active service, most of these losses occurring in the coastal waters of the British Isles. Another five were lost while being transported on ocean vessels that were attacked and sunk. The ML's featured with distinction in the attack on Zeebrugge on April 23rd 1918.

The Auxiliary Patrol around the British Isles was organised into designated areas. Area XXII was based on Holyhead and the parent ship was AMETHYST III. This patrol area comprised the eastern Irish Sea including Cardigan Bay. The Area's western limit was a meridian drawn from the Mull of Galloway, touching on the Calf of Man and Bardsey Island and intersecting the Cardigan coast in the region of Newport Bay. The eastern limit was a line drawn from the southern tip of Walney Island to the Great Orme's Head. Inshore of this line was patrolled by the Liverpool local patrol. These were the limits as defined by mid-1915 to the 1919 de-mobilisation. When Robert Jones arrived on the Queenstown station he learned that the ML's there had initially made passage from Falmouth to Queenstown unarmed and unescorted!

Robert E. Jones joined the Cheshire Lines Railway as a railway telegraphist and shortly after his eighteenth birthday he enlisted in the RNVr in April 1917 for three years or the duration of the war. He trained as a Wireless-Telegraphist at HMS VICTORY VI W/T School, a Naval shore station located in the grounds of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham in south London. After completing training he was initially posted to the Dover Patrol (HMS ATTENTIVE III - Dover & The Downs - Patrol Area XI) as of October 20th 1917 on duty as Ordinary Telegraphist in the armed trawler SEAWARD HO.

SEAWARD HO, built at Hull in 1915 for S.T.White & Co.Ltd., was presumably requisitioned by the Admiralty for the duration of the war. Her particulars were: GRT 331. NRT 298, dimensions 137.4' x 23.7' x 12.7', triple expansion engines 13" x 22-3/4" x 37" x 26" stroke, boiler operating pressure 200 lb/sq.in., Nominal HP 90. Radio call sign JKVQ (civilian), Lloyds classification +100A1. This vessel was assigned to escorting cross-channel transports from Dover to Calais and hospital transports from Boulogne to Folkestone. Mr Jones recalls that on one patrol SEAWARD HO sighted a flight of enemy bombers making for Dover and a signal from the vessel, sent uncoded because of the extreme urgency, resulted in fighter cover being quickly put up over the intended target. Because of this, the crew of the SEAWARD HO were able to see the bomber force turn about short of Dover and head back

to base without causing any damage.

On January 17th 1918 he was transferred to Queenstown, County Cork (HMS COLLEEN - Patrol Area XXI) where he was deployed to the Motor Launch Patrol operating from that station.

In April 1918, eight ML's (181, 187, 320, 325, 410, 487, 132 & 167) completed fitting out as a Hunting Flotilla at Queenstown and were detached to Holyhead under the immediate orders of Lt.Cmdr C.V.Norcock, R.N. This officer had been brought off the Retired List for the duration. Three ML's were fitted out with Wireless Telegraphy, ML181, ML187 and ML325. Lt.Cmdr.Norcock directed operations from ML325. The other ML's in the flotilla were kept in communication by flag and morse-lamp signals. The radio call sign assigned to ML325 was H J W.

The commander of ML325 at this time was Lt.Bidwell, R.N.V.R. and Sub.Lt.Harold I. Vince, a Canadian, was second-in-command. Their counterparts in ML187 were Sub.Lt.Colin C.Duncan and Sub.Lt.Leslie Woodman and Mr Jones' counterpart in wireless telegraphy was Archie Evans from South Wales.

During the time Robert Jones was a crew member ML325 was involved in late 1918, together with her consorts, in two U-boat actions; one with gunfire and the other with depth charges. Although detached to Holyhead, the Hunting Flotilla was not restricted to the Holyhead patrol area and was free to operate up to the Irish coast and frequently put into the Irish ports for restocking etc. He also recalls that ML325 ran aground off Caernarfon in 1918, damaging both her propellers, and had to be drydocked for repairs at Bangor, her crew being given some unexpected leave until the vessel was ready to return to service. ML325 also experienced considerable time out of action due to trouble with the engine exhaust manifolds.

One of the obvious functions of the Holyhead Patrol Area was the escorting of the mailboat service to Kingstown, but the ML's were not assigned to this duty. Indeed, on the occasion when the mail steamer LEINSTER was torpedoed in October 1918 with multiple loss of life, the ML flotilla was off-watch in Holyhead harbour!

The photographs were produced in the form of postcards.

The following photograph was taken on Armistice Day 1918 with the flotilla dressed overall moored in line abreast alongside Menai Bridge pier. It shows most of the crew of ML325 and Mr Jones identifies the crew members, reading from left to right as follows: himself - Wireless-Telegraphist, Mr Moore - Second Engineer, from Birmingham, Jack Potts - Cook, from Liverpool, Robert Baldry - Deck Hand, from Holyhead, G.Broomfield - Deck Hand and Caterer, from Finsbury Park, London, Percy Wild - Deck Hand, from Bradford and Alec Maclean - Chief Engineer, from Dumbarton. Apart from her officer complement, the

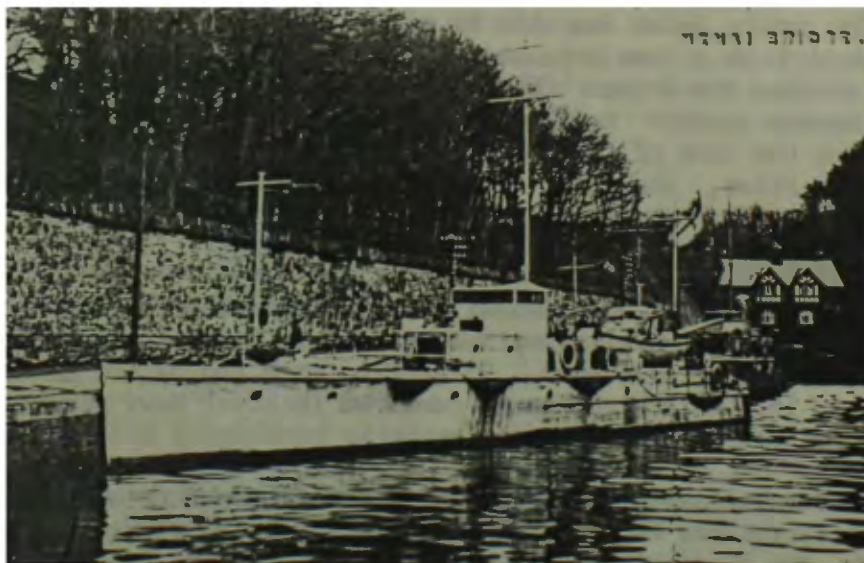


remaining personnel of ML325 not on this shot in 1918. From left to right - Leading Seaman and a Royal Navy Coxswain - St. John's Harbor, Britain.



#### Armistice Day 1918

The second photograph shows ML325 alongside at Port Dinorwic with two sister vessels positioned astern. The photograph dated to February 1919 was taken after the gun and depth charges had been removed from the vessel after the cessation of hostilities.



#### Port Dinorwic, February 1919



### Officers of the Motor Launch Patrol

The third photograph was taken at Menai Bridge early in 1919 and shows the officer complement of the Holyhead ML patrol. In the centre, with the Jack Russell terrier, can be seen Capt. Gordon Campbell VC, DSO, the famous Q-ship commander, based at Holyhead from May 14th 1918 to the end of the war. He gained promotion after a successful U-boat action in the Irish Sea when he was in Q-ships and during which he masqueraded as a female passenger complete with babe-in-arms in order to mislead the U-boat officers into thinking they were dealing with an unarmed vessel! On his right is another Campbell, his gold lace denoting the rank of Lt. Cmdr. R.N.R. Standing on the extreme right is the local Pilot, who used to charge a fee of #1.00 per passage of the Menai Strait! The officer seventh in from right, standing, is identified as Lt. Duncan of ML187.

The average cost of each vessel, excluding armament, was £8,609. From late 1919 the surviving boats were sold in large lots at bargain prices, i.e. 200 at £275 each, 95 at £263 each and 32 (to Malta) at £50 each! By 1924 only eight boats remained in Royal Navy service and all were gone by 1927.

After demobilisation in 1919, Mr Jones returned to the railway and eventually retired from British Rail in March 1959. He was subsequently on the staff of a local travel company. He is now fully retired and lives quietly with his wife at their home in Tattenhall near Chester.

The OCEAN MONARCH was a well-found, handsome, fast North Atlantic Packet of 1,300 tons, owned by the Train Line of Boston, Mass., and designed by William Webb, a well-known naval architect, contemporary with McKay, Griffiths.

She departed from Liverpool on Thursday, 24th May, 1848, on her fourth voyage to Boston, with a cargo of 700 tons of iron, dry goods, salt, light merchandise and earthenware packed in straw.

On board were 400 people, of whom 332 were emigrants - mostly Southern Irish - 32 cabin passengers and 42 crew, including the Captain, James Murdoch. A tug took her out at high water, about 5 a.m., and they passed Formby light vessel at 7 a.m. An hour later the pilot left as the tug let go to return to port.

OCEAN MONARCH was reported, by telegraph, to be in the channel, then on the first leg of her course as she tacked west she passed the ship NEW WORLD, at 1400 tons the largest packet in service. On board the NEW WORLD was the Rev. Remington who expected a race home to Boston between the two evenly-matched ships. Shortly after this, OCEAN MONARCH tacked to the north and just before noon turned southwest on her third tack.

At 1200 hours, soon after tobacco had been issued to the crew, the steward told the Captain that there was a fire on the third deck. The mate and a seaman were sent to investigate and found a fire by a ventilator in the aftermost cabin on the port side. After lifting a scuttle some water was poured down, but as the seat of the fire seemed further forward, with the Captain's permission, they took two axes below and made a hole further forward, attempting to put out the fire from there, having closed the scuttle.

Captain Murdoch then went below and found the after cabin full of smoke and the fire spreading rapidly. Returning to the deck his first thought was to run the ship on to the nearby shore but because of the distance and rapid spread of the fire, he decided to anchor and so bring the wind ahead, hoping to restrict the progress of the fire.

By this time the frightened passengers had been driven up by the heat and smoke, and the scene was one of great confusion and noise - some people trying to re-unite with family and friends, some standing in resignation, some praying and reading scriptures and some in frantic

despair, screaming and crying. Adding to the noise were sounds of distress from sheep and cows.

The stewardess died whilst attempting to remove 25 lbs. of gunpowder from the cabin - this later ignited, but the explosion was minor as the powder was fairly loosely packed. Within five minutes the whole after-part of the ship was ablaze.

Having decided that there was no hope for the ship, the Captain ordered the boats to be lowered. Because of the crowding and noise, orders could not be easily passed and it was only possible to get two boats into the water - the other two were burned before the lashings could be cut, as the necessary axes were below. Spare spars and a topgallant mast were thrown into the water to support people and the Captain himself was forced to jump overboard. About this time the mainmast was felled by the intense heat and the people still aboard were forced to crowd on to the foc'stle, bowsprit and jib-boom. Later the foremast fell, broke the jib-boom and precipitated some passengers into the sea. Some regained the ship, some were picked up and many drowned.

The first rescue vessel on the scene was the QUEEN OF THE OCEAN, owned by Thomas Littledale, Commodore of the Royal Mersey Yacht Club, who had been returning with a party of friends from the Beaumaris Regatta. They saw the OCEAN MONARCH at noon, 5-6 miles east of Great Orme's Head, on fire and flying a distress signal. They immediately steered for her and, despite strong head winds and a heavy swell, put out a boat and rescued 32 survivors. Eventually, they returned to Liverpool at 5.30 p.m., with the first news of the disaster and they landed the survivors.

The second rescue vessel to arrive was the Brazilian Naval Steam Frigate ALPHONSO, out on combined trials and pleasure trip with a party of notables who also distinguished themselves. ALPHONSO took about an hour to reach the scene, when she anchored ahead of the burning ship, then passing a cable over her own stern, made fast to the bows of the OCEAN MONARCH. This greatly assisted the boats and a 'paddle-box' boat to rescue 139 people. The exiled Prince de Joinville, the Marquis Lisboa, the Duke de Aumale and Admiral Grenfell, all aboard the ALPHONSO, gave great service and the first-named later made a sketch of the scene, which was auctioned by lottery to increase the fund subscribed to for the relief of the survivors.

The third rescue ship was the packet PRINCE OF WALES, bound for Bangor. She had sailed from Liverpool at 11 a.m., and soon saw the burning vessel with the ALPHONSO nearby. On approaching, boats were lowered and many swimmers were rescued.

The NEW WORLD was also there - one of her women was Frederick Jerome, an Englishman, born in Southampton, but then living in New York. He and the mate of the OCEAN MONARCH, who was in one of the boats, recognised one another, having sailed together in the past. The two of them managed to manoeuvre a boat under the bowsprit of the burning ship, which was crowded with people too frightened to jump into the sea where boats awaited them. Jerome stripped off his clothes, swam with a line to the OCEAN MONARCH, climbed up to the fore-deck and lowered the terrified passengers, one by one, into the boat saving all those in sight. He was the hero of the day and was recognised as such by all on the ALPHONSO and those ashore. Queen Victoria sent him fifty pounds for his bravery - she also subscribed one hundred pounds for the survivors. Jerome was later given a gold box by the City of New York.

Jonathon Bradson, the Mate, took charge of the waist-boat and cut the painter to avoid being swamped by terrified people, but, full of water and without oars, drifted four miles to leeward, until picked up by a schooner. He was then able to borrow four men and four oars and return to the OCEAN MONARCH under tow from the PRINCE OF WALES. Bradson and Jerome saved the last of the foc'sle group.

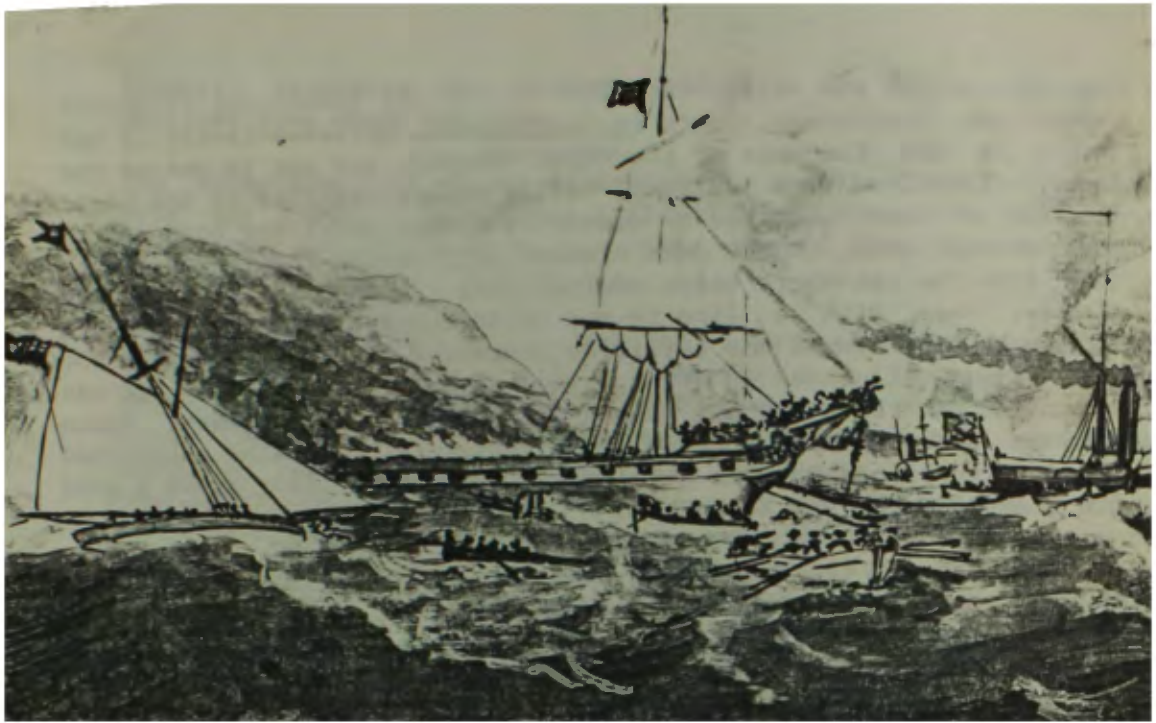
The Second Mate, William Perry Gibbs, was in the stern boat which was picked up by the Dee pilot boat PILOT QUEEN, then transferred to the smack QUEEN OF WICKLOW and landed at Seacombe. Captain Murdoch was picked up by the QUEEN OF THE OCEAN after he had spent thirty minutes clinging to wreckage, drifting in the Irish Sea.

The hull of the OCEAN MONARCH burned to the waterline and sank at 1.30 p.m. - except for the figure-head of Neptune, which later washed-up ashore and was, for many years, displayed at a local house but was then lost.

The following day there was criticism of Captain Murdoch, not only by some of the passengers, but also by members of the press, but it was soon realised that he had done everything possible and had been forced to leave the ship.

Also criticised were the Irish Sea steam packet ORION and the Cunard vessel CAMBRIA for not joining the rescue. This criticism was also found to be unjustified.

The bodies of the 178 people who died were found on beaches all along the coasts of Liverpool Bay and as far as the Fylde Coast. Most of the dead were from the steerage - no cabin passengers were lost - perhaps because of the fear of simple people, unused to the sea, in sudden terrifying circumstances, and with little or no provision for their safety in an emergency - which was typical of the times.



Altogether, 216 people were saved.

So ended a great maritime disaster in Liverpool Bay.

Four possible causes of the fire were advanced -

- 1) Smoking on the emigrant decks - the Captain's theory, despite the confiscation of pipes when passengers came aboard at Birkenhead Docks.
- 2) Cooking fire lit by an emigrant at the base of a ventilator.
- 3) Crew member with a candle in the spirit-room.
- 4) The use of candles whilst searching the vessel for Chartists.

Sources -

Liverpool 'Mercury' and 'Albion' newspapers,  
25th August - 11th September 1848.

'Atlantic Crossings' - Time-Life book.

'Search for Speed under Sail' - Howard Chappell.

'Shipwrecks in the Northwest' - Catherine Rothwell.

The painting of the scene is by Al Freni and is in the  
I.N.A. Corporation Museum.



se the Myrtle Yacht Club of Southport, would be interested in  
displayed a picture of this vessel at our March meeting in  
1970 please contact Ray Pugh, 12 Ashton Court, Sandon Road  
Southport, PR84QH ?

## MUSEUM MUSINGS

by Alan McLelland

As the band of H.M. Royal Marines performed on a pontoon in the Albert Dock one evening early last summer, I reflected on the changes which had overtaken the Albert, Salthouse, Canning complex in such a very short space of time. Back in October 1983, on a drizzly evening, I had looked across Canning to the Albert Warehouses during a special tour of the Museum site. The eerie glow from several fires spread across an expanse of mud; the great warehouses looked grim and forbidding. What a difference just a couple of years has made!

Thinking yet further back in time, I recollected I must have been four, in pre-war days, when my father first took me to Canning Half Tide dockside. I can still remember the excitement, the bustle and the colours as a ship, which years later I discovered was a pioneer motor vessel of the Portuguese Sociedade Geral de Comercio, Industria e Transportes - no less! - passed through to Canning or Salthouse.

As a teenager after World War 2 I spent much weekend and holiday time around Canning and Salthouse Docks because I was, and still am, fascinated by small merchant ships. I particularly recollect being asked to give "a pound on the bar" of one of the the capstans when a coaster - the war-built lighter ANN W - was about to be drydocked.

On another occasion I watched fascinated as Coe's BANNTRADER positively shot out of the Canning river entrance outward bound light for Porrush on the top of the tide.

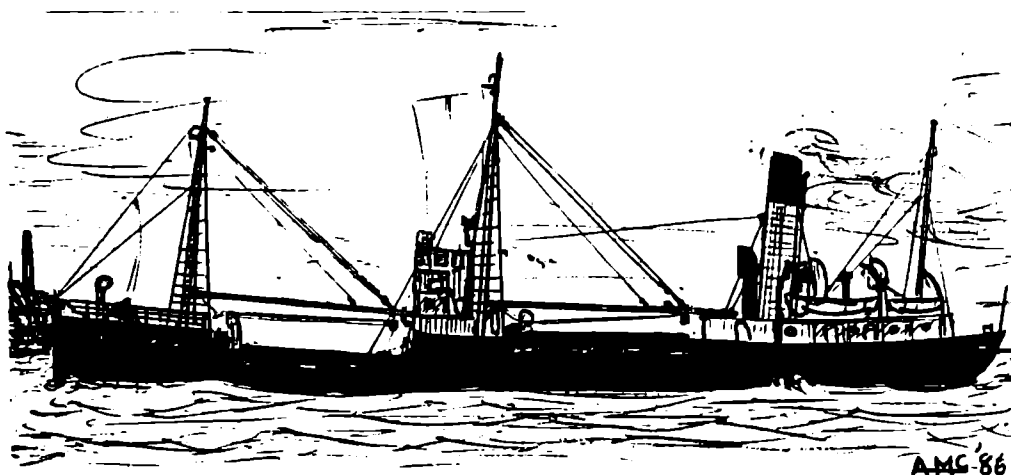
Some readers may recollect that Coes had a berth in the northeast corner of Salthouse Dock. Just occasionally they worked ships other than their own at it and I can still see in my mind's eye Joseph Fisher & Sons' freshly painted EBONY there. She was built in 1947 by Scott & Sons of Bowling to the traditional two hatch, bridge amidships, engines aft design. Just ahead of her was the equally smart CLARECASTLE at the Guinness berth.

In the 1940s and '50s there was much interesting conversation to be had with dock gatemmen, and especially with one who had served aboard several of Ritson's unusual "Branch" boats - including a turret decker. And at high water what views there were up and down and across the river! One grey summer's afternoon I saw Monroe's KYLE-BROOK ex ALGOL outward bound in ballast "kicking up a fuss" of impressive proportions, looking really smart after a refit, as she swung

neatly round the weatherbeaten war-built Court Line tramp DORINGTON COURT ex EMPIRE METEOR as she was manoeuvred towards the Alfred entrance at Birkenhead deeply laden with grain. What a picture of purposeful activity!

Later in the 1960s I became involved with the Albert, Salthouse, Canning complex yet again. This time I was grateful for a breather on the Albert Parade. Together with Professor John Harris I had been left one Saturday afternoon to conduct two double-decker busloads of industrial archeologists on a tour of the Liverpool Dock Estate. There were supposed to be at least five guides in all but very soon just the two of us were left to do the job! We "did" the South End at a canter and in the mid-afternoon arrived on the Parade to witness what seemed a setpiece exhibition of Dutch coaster designs. Before us in procession to the sea passed three smart ships each of a different design. The visitors were most impressed: I may just add that by 6.30pm, when our party reached Gladstone, John Harris and I were hoarse, footsore and full of sympathy for bus conductors!

How I wish I had had a tape recorder on my early excursions, or indeed during the Museum visit of 1983. My companions then were stimulated to relate some intriguing tales of ocean travel in the inter-war years by the Cunard White Star exhibition. One eminent gentlemen gave a detailed account of a voyage to North America aboard the ALBERTIC ex OHIO, laid down as the MUNCHEN for the Norddeutscher Lloyd. He certainly had a fine time of it!



"CLIPPER CASTLE"



# LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

(FOUNDED 1938)



Vol 30 no.4

December 1986

## *BULLETIN*



FISHING BOATS AT THE END OF SOUTHSEA PIKE, LEE

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Annual Subscriptions:	Ordinary	£5.00
	Senior Citizens & Country	£4.00
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**Society Notes.**

Members are reminded that the AGM takes place 14th May. Important items are elections for new officers. The present Chairman has completed his three year term in office and makes way for a new Chairman. It is accepted that the Vice-Chairman is automatically proposed by the Council and that procedure is to be followed in May. The posts of Secretary and Editor are at present vacant and nominations are required before the AGM.

At the last AGM the Chairman offered to include the work of Secretary with that of Chairman in order to facilitate the changes the Society would have to make whilst the Museum was in a stage of transition and transferring from scattered accommodation into the Albert Dock buildings.

The work of Secretary is by no means onerous: being mainly to collect the post from the Records Centre, weekly or when convenient, distribute the letters to the Chairman, Treasurer and Membership Secretary, when necessary, liaise with the Museum staff re bookings for rooms, remind the various officers of their duties for specific meetings.

Len Lloyd opened this season's programme with a splendid talk on Lancashire Nobbies, a local fishing craft which seems never to have been researched before. He is preparing a monograph on the subject. We look forward to seeing a copy on the shelves of the Records Centre, in our own archives and hopefully on the shelves of the members.

It is more than 40 years since my wife and I spent a holiday in Southport. Our home was then in the Midlands. We did not expect to see much in the way of nautical interest, but to my surprise and joy, just off the pier end, in what is aptly known locally as the "Bog Hole", were lying six or seven beautiful little sailing craft, all alike as peas in a pod. So trim and neat it appeared they were a one-design sailing club, more commonly seen off the south and southeast coasts. "No", I was told, "they're fishing boats - Nobbies".

About five years later I moved to the North West and the first fine day I travelled to Southport from Manchester to see once more those Nobbies - but they had all gone! For the past 33 years I've been living in Birkdale among people the vast majority of whom are not aware that such vessels as Nobbies ever existed, much less that a sizeable fleet of them once sailed from their beaches. I was privileged to see the last remnant of that fleet, both beached and sailing out on the ebb, though I did not think it would so soon become extinct. Such is the transitory life of our working sailing craft. Most of those that have survived are incomplete or altered so much that their builders would not recognise them.

I've always been interested in ship-model making, but had to wait until near retirement to turn my full attention to the hobby. By then I had seen a very smart model of a Nobby in the Science Museum in London - catalogued as a 'Southport Fishing Boat', and I'd pored over another model, small and rather rough and with little regard for proportion, in the Southport Museum. The latter could by no means claim to be a scale model. Most likely a fisherman's model, carved out of the solid, but too small to reveal much beyond the superficial. So to do something useful I conceived the idea of building a fairly large-scale model of a Nobby on which everything worked - a model of an actual vessel if records could be found - and presenting it to Southport, thus recapturing an important aspect of the town's development.

Then the problems emerged with sudden sullen intractability. I wanted to build a model with every part, frame and timber exactly reproduced to scale, but where was the information? Not in Southport. The Reference Library was unable to help neither were the Museum people, nor the local historical societies. I managed to contact members of old fishing families but with very little result. The boatyard at Hesketh Bank seemed an obvious source of information: Nobbies had been repaired there in the past, perhaps there would be an old one there rotting away in the mud - but no, only ghostly, useless memories.

For hours I studied an example in the Liverpool Maritime Museum but I found that (1) when setting out on a project of this nature with nothing to show, no-one will take you seriously, (2) because of this

there are severe limits to the crawling about one can do on precious museum exhibits, (3) I was told that the museum examples were Prawners and at that time I had the impression that there were distinct differences between the Nobby and the Morecambe Bay Prawn, a misconception which even Edgar G. March does little to dispel. Everyone seemed to be under the same misconception, and I was solely interested in Nobbies. My understanding has since improved; there is no true dividing line. There are significant differences between one vessel and another, brought about by owners individual preferences and notions of improvement, all part of a wide band of variation influenced by the year and yard in which a vessel was built. The Prawn is even mis-named! I doubt if they ever caught a prawn - but they denuded the bay of pink shrimps.

Before the Nobby there was a type known as the 'Kicker', what hope of recalling those now?

I spent a frustrating year until quite out of the blue I was ~~given~~ a lead virtually on my own doorstep. A friend of mine was visiting Barrow, Millom, Workington, Maryport and other coastal towns upto the Solway Firth in the course of business. I became aware he had an interest in boats and that he came from a Scottish fishing family; also that, in reverse of the usual case, he had run away from sea. "Come with me up to Maryport" he said, "there are dozens of Nobbies there, still fishing"! I went; there were - at least thirty of them but none under sail. All were converted to power, with extensive modifications above (and below?) deck. There is one there, still fishing, reputed to have been built about 1865.

That day I met Fred Gates - Coastguard, fisherman, handyman, repairing and messing about in boats. His own boat, considered locally to be one of the best, was hauled up in the Maryport inner harbour, above what I thought to be high water mark. There she was, CHRISTINE, built by Crossfields of Arnside in 1917 but launched under a different name, now lost, though I have her registration number. She has had several owners in her career, sailing out of adopted home ports of Barrow, Morecambe, Fleetwood and her present home, Maryport. Fred had just laid a new deck. His dream was to restore the boat as near as practicable to original and to go fishing again under sail the following season. Meanwhile he was held up for this and that and the boat would remain in harbour. "Could I take off the lines?" I asked rather diffidently, "Yes" said Fred without the slightest hesitation, though we'd know each other for not more than five minutes. So I said I'd make arrangements to spend a day or two in Maryport, "at the next neap tides" insisted Fred for reasons which did not occur to me at the time, but when one is actually in touch with the sea, if only in harbour, one learns fast.

I met Fred again about ten days later. In the meantime I had given much thought to the taking off of lines and had made many preparations. When Fred saw the masses of gear crammed into the car

he said "what are you going to do with that lot?" and, before I could answer, "how many nails are you going to knock into my boat?". He had been thinking about it and was getting worried. When I said "none" our friendship was sealed.

I prepared and took up a large bundle of long  $\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " laths with which I proposed to construct a framework along one side of the ship parallel to the boat's plane of symmetry, the laths to be spaced to correspond with the stations at which I intended to take measurements. I might mention here that I took offsets at stations corresponding to every frame so as to be able to cut frames almost direct from the body plan lines drawing. I had made about thirty steel brackets which I explained to Fred I intended to clamp to the rail to support my upright laths. "Sorry, no rail" said Fred, "haven't fitted one yet!". So I had to use the fish-hold coaming instead, which meant cutting up some of my laths for extended reach. As the coaming did not run the length of the boat, numerous ingenious attachments had to be fashioned before and abaft it without the use of nails. Fortunately there was enough wood and to spare.

I had arrived just before noon. The harbour bottom looked a bit damp but I suspected nothing and after a chat with Fred, climbed aboard for an enjoyable sandwich lunch sitting on deck in the sunshine. Then I set about erecting my framework.

It took me about four or five hours to complete it and I was amazed with its precision and accuracy of alignment. A few trial measurements proved all was perfectly set up and, glowing with satisfaction, I drove to a little hotel to clean up before dinner. All seemed to be going well.

That is until I got down to the harbour the following morning. The tide had come up in the night, much higher than I expected. The boat had slewed round about 3 or 4° before settling down again, throwing all my previous day's work out of alignment. Most of the upright laths had been lifted out of the harbour bottom too. And what had happened on the night tide would also happen on the day tide, due in about three hours - insufficient time to realign my framework and take off lines before the boat floated again, and me up to my neck and beyond in water.

So I rearranged my programme and spent the morning making sketches and taking dimensions of every fitting and piece of timber inside and out. I had lunch aboard again - I had to; she was afloat again with a twenty yard stretch of water between me and the shore.

My watch told me I had no more than another  $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours before the light would fail. In that time I had to realign my framework and take off all the lines and I had to get it done all in one go because if I let another tide lift her I would have to start all over again between the next day's ebb and darkness.

I could not wait for the harbour bottom to dry out so over the side I went, and over my boot tops in tidewater and harbour sludge. I worked splashing around like a lunatic, needing three pair of hands because I had nowhere to put anything down. I couldn't keep the clipboard out of the mud. But I finished the job before the night closed in, not having time to reflect that I should have brought a helper along; taking off lines in these circumstances is not a single-handed job.

I arrived back at the hotel covered in mud, but after a bath and dinner I had a wonderful evening because word had now got around about that idiot taking the lines off Fred's boat and I became the object of jovial curiosity and the centre of the evening's entertainment. Mission complete you might think. But no, Fred you will remember had just laid down a new deck which was still innocent of all major deck fittings, neither was he entirely following tradition but was introducing modifications for reasons of economy and simplification. There was no point in proceeding beyond writing up my mud stained notes ~~until I could obtain all the fitting-out, masting and rigging information.~~ But where could I find it?

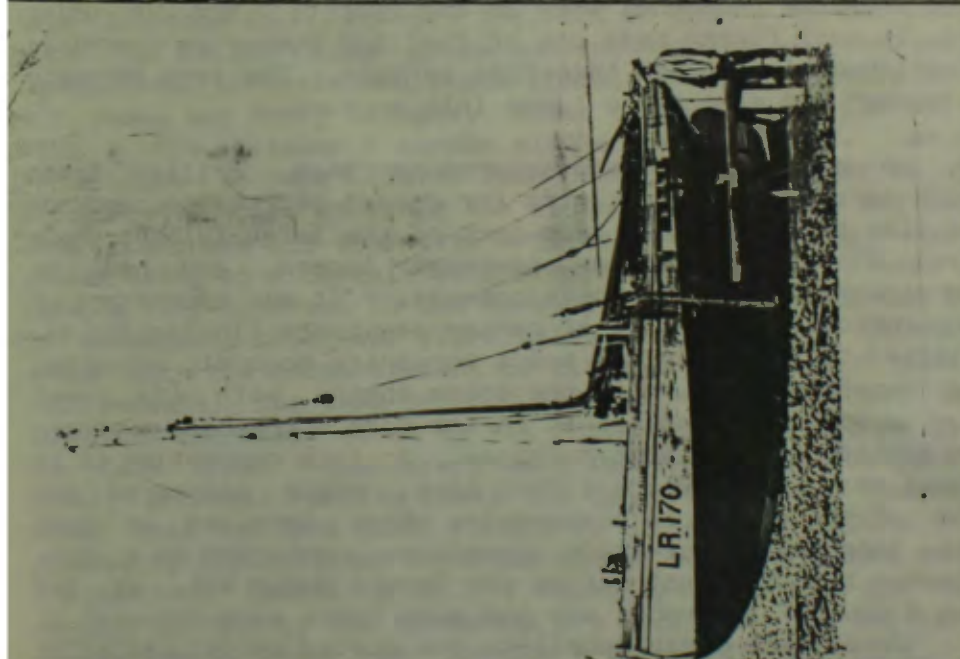
At the next opportunity I called at the Science Museum in London to take a concentrated look at the Nobby model I'd seen a number of times before. It wasn't there. I asked to see the Curator of Water Transport. He introduced himself as Joe Roome, a most obliging chap who nevertheless had to tell me that the model was on loan to another museum, miles away. He was able to produce photographs but these were not very helpful and I declined to order them. His archives held no information on the type. However, when he learned I had taken the lines off one and was intent on more research, the interview changed around. No longer was I seeking information from him, he began to seek it from me, urging me to greater endeavour and extracting a promise to donate my completed drawings to the Museum.

There followed a long interlude during which no progress was made until another breakthrough. At one of the annual Fleetwood ship model exhibitions a fine Morecambe Bay Prawner model was on display by Mr E.Littler, a member of the Fleetwood Model Club. He was able to loan me a small bundle of sketches made in 1975 by K.Willasey of Morecambe. These sketches were not dimensioned, nor were they to scale but it was evident that Mr Willasey could use a pencil and had a good eye for proportion. His sources were impeccable: his father and grandfather had owned and fished with Nobbies and he himself had personal experience of Nobbies under sail. He is now a Fisheries Board inspector.

Charged with renewed enthusiasm I went ahead with the lines and construction drawings, coming to the point where I would have to literally copy Mr Willasey's sketches, but drawn to scale. I wanted his permission to do this and, after months of waiting, managed to make contact with him. His response was immediate and generous. Within three days he had called at my house and approved of my use of

his sketches. I had questions to ask him which his sketches did not answer and he gave a convincing explanation for every matter raised. He even brought a pile of historic photographs and is now having copies taken of a selection of them for my personal unrestricted use.

I hope shortly to get in touch with another Nobby fisherman now rising eighty years old and who, I am told, has considerable artistic ability and may therefore be counted upon to have a photographic memory. It is quite remarkable how many seafaring men one has met who have painting and sketching skills. I feel there is still a long way to go before reaching the end of the trail, if there is an end. Meanwhile there is the satisfaction of having collated a reliable documentary record of a beautiful little ship of the past.



The years since the publication of Professor Sturme's "British Shipping and World Competition" in 1962 have seen much scathing criticism of the technical policies pursued by British shipowners this century, e.g. "Reflections on the Rochdale Inquiry into Shipping, A Review Article" by Derek H. Aldcraft, p199 of "Maritime History" Vol 1, No.2, September 1971. Amongst others an impression has been created that in the inter-war years tramp shipowners paid insufficient attention to the advantages of the diesel engine. Research into the activities of such firms as Souters (Sheaf S.S.Co.), Dalgleish (Watergate S.S.Co.) and the Lyle Shipping Co. amongst others reveals that much of the criticism needs very careful qualification.

Up to the Second World War tramp shipping in Britain was frequently carried on by smallish concerns which aimed as far as possible to pay for fleet replacements and additions out of their own financial reserves. Caution was a byword because by the very nature of their business in the open freight market they were the first to feel the effects of changes in the economic climate. In the early years of large scale marine diesel engine development after the First World War there were many economic problems for British owners to face, culminating in a major slump. Until the late 1930s these were compounded by government indifference to the policies of active support and encouragement of their own merchant shipping practised by other countries. Small shipowning companies in Britain were bound to react with caution to technical innovations, especially in the matter of power plants. Traditional reciprocating steam engines were reliable; could be serviced by the seagoing personnel then in employment; and in using steam raised by coal firing made use of fuel and bunkering services which were British-dominated and therefore certain. The very strength of the "coal lobby" had also to be taken into account.

However, no matter what the pressures on them, British tramp owners did look carefully at the claims for diesel propulsion, and not just concerns like the King Line, then part of the large Kysant group which employed diesels in cargo and passenger liners, and had the resources to explore and sustain developments. It was experience of troubles in operation, a shortage of marine engineers (in particular, of those qualified to run diesels), and a worsening economic situation which forced owners to return to the steam engine with its lower capital cost, or to refinements of it in the form of re-heat arrangements and the additions of exhaust turbines. In this connection it is worthy of note that Andrew Weirs's Bank Line, which pioneered the extensive use of the diesel in ocean-going ships involved in open market and the long haul cross-trade operations, embarked on a programme of steamer building just before the Second World War, as did James Chambers & Co. of Liverpool who had also taken much interest in the diesel. (Some readers may recollect the sister ships LANCASTER CASTLE and LOWTHER CASTLE featured in Harry Hunter's paper "The Re-



heated Reciprocating Steam Engine" read before the Institution of Naval Architects in 1938).

Reference has already been made to Souters and Dalgleish. The former took delivery of the m.v. SHEAFHOLME in 1929 and shortly afterwards she began a voyage of 811 days which took her around the world without mechanical trouble. Dalgleish's experiences with diesel propulsion were not so happy. In 1924 they accepted the ELMWORTH as part of a trial venture. With her sister ship the OAKWORTH she was to be compared in operation with the steamers FARNWORTH and WARKWORTH which had the same hull forms.

The ELMWORTH was accounted a good ship of her type, with a gross tonnage of 4,963 and a deadweight tonnage of 8,000. Her engine was Harland-Burmeister & Wain 4-stroke single acting unit with six cylinders developing 1,850 h.p. and a speed of about 10½ knots. It was reported that in her early days the machinery, both main and auxiliary, worked well. Unfortunately there were two significant blemishes on her record in the different days of the early 1930s. Late in 1932 the electrical plant failed completely during a voyage from London to Vancouver. In 1936 on a voyage from Australia to Dublin via the Cape, she had to put into Durban where her own engineers put new pistons in all six cylinders in four days without requisitioning any help from the shore. Dalgleish's sold the ELMWORTH the next year to a Norwegian owner. Their experiences with her and with the OAKWORTH left them unconvinced of the superiority of diesel over steam so far as their pre-war operations were concerned.

One tramp shipping concern which took very careful steps to minimise the risks attendant upon trying diesel propulsion was the Lyle Shipping Co. In 1925 the CAPE OF GOOD HOPE was placed in service. Of 4,963 tons gross and looking for all the world like a conventional three-island steam tramp, she was jointly owned by Lyles and James and Henry Lithgow, whose company had built and engined her with a six-cylinder 4-stroke single acting diesel. On page 74 of "From Cape to Cape" (1978) John Orbell records that in 1924 Lyle's directors' minutes included the statement: "James and Henry Lithgow have confirmed the tentative original understanding, namely that the vessel being to a certain extent experimental, they were agreeable to take a half-interest in the company to be formed to own the vessel". In subsequent inter-war years Lyles extended their interest in motor ships with the encouragement of Lithgows, owning or part-owning two such vessels, the CAPE OF GOOD HOPE and the CAPE YORK, and managing the LYCIA (formerly owned by T. & Jno. Brocklebank Ltd of Liverpool) and the CAPE HORN. Charterers were impressed with the motor vessels' speed, economic running costs and cargo capacity. However it must be noted that the CAPE YORK, built by Lithgows in 1926 with twin screws powered by six-cylinder 4-stroke single acting engines constructed by R.W. Hawthorn Leslie & Co., frequently broke down and had to be re-engined in 1936 by the Rotterdam Dry Dock Co. In the same era Lyles' steamers made larger than average profits in most years.

The examples I have discussed and a reading of the technical press, e.g. the articles written over a number of years in the Journal of Commerce by the late A.C.Hardy and his "History of Motor Shipping" (1955) demonstrate the need to treat with caution British tramp ship-owners' attitudes to diesel propulsion. It is surely significant that Doxfords of Sunderland, who for so many years enjoyed a high reputation as builders of efficient, economical steam tramps, were amongst the most successful motor tramp shipbuilders, selling many of their products to British owners. The Burntisland yard under the direction of the Ayre brothers, noted for its "Economy" steam tramps, also turned out virtually standard ships powered with the reliable three-cylinder opposed piston diesel engine developed by Doxfords. In the second Amos Ayre Lecture: "The Evolution of the Cargo Ship During the Last 35 Years" presented to the Institute of Naval Architects in 1958, Dr J. Ramsay Gebbie of Doxfords outlined the situation in the inter-war period facing the tramp shipowner considering new tonnage. Until the early 30s the motor ship often appeared prohibitively expensive: reciprocating steam engines had been improved and continued to be so, with the introduction of superheat systems, re-heat arrangements, poppet valves and exhaust turbines. "Economy" steam tramps, such as those designed by the Ayre brothers, carrying about 7,700 tons dead-weight, consumed only 16-17 tons of coal per day to achieve a service speed of 9 knots. Cheaper, reliable diesels only appeared as the 30s rolled by, and there were still problems, for instance in finding suitably qualified engineers. Given freedom from major mechanical problems, Ramsay Gebbie calculated in 1932 that a motor ship cost less than ten per cent more than a steamer of the same size. In some long-haul trades, e.g. U.K. to and from Australia, she could show twice the profit on most voyages. As he indicated in his lecture however, it is easy to be wise after the event and experience with motor ships was paid for dearly by some tramp owners. The nature and scale of their business operations meant that they simply could not afford any losses due to mechanical problems keeping vessels out of service during and between charters.

### Books Published

#### **MARINE ART & LIVERPOOL**

Painters, Places and Flag Codes; 1760 to 1960

by A.S. Davidson

Waine Publications Ltd

£15.85

#### **FAST PASSAGE to AUSTRALIA**

The Emigrant Trade from Liverpool

by D. Hollett

Fairplay Publications Ltd

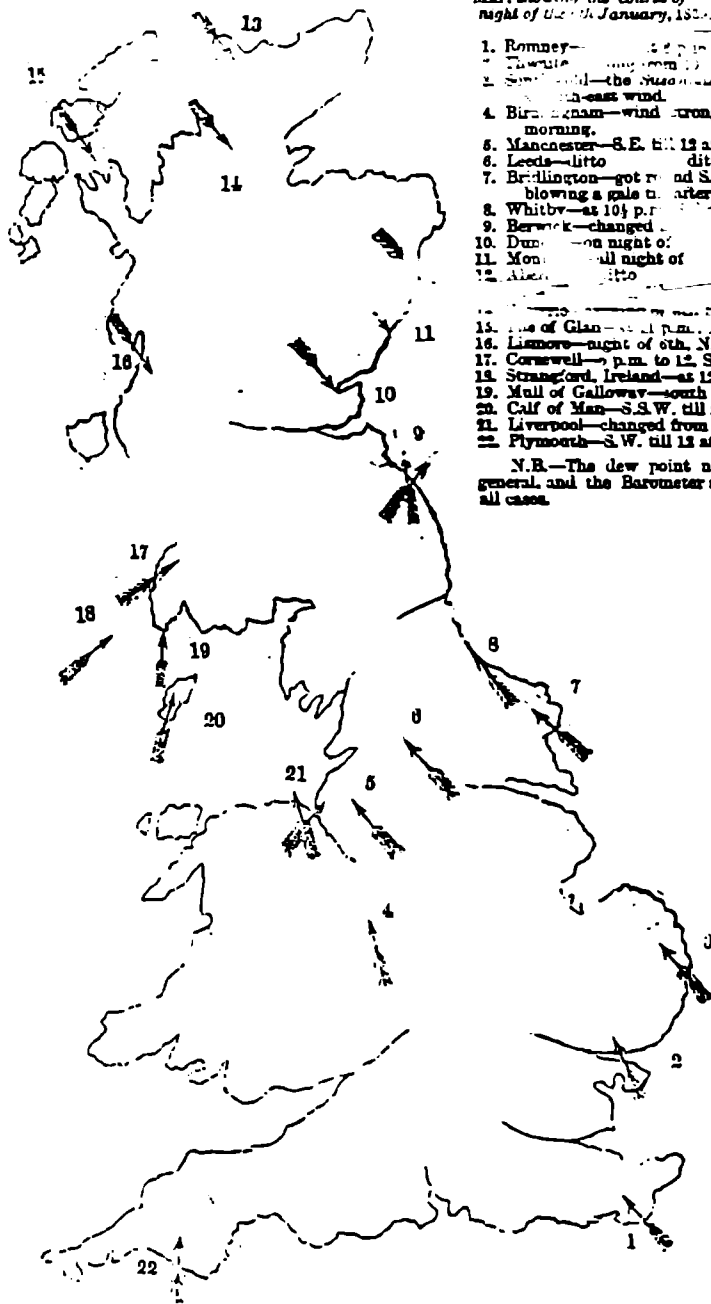
£15.00

# MR. ESPEY'S MAP

OF THE

## STORM AT LIVERPOOL, IN 1839,

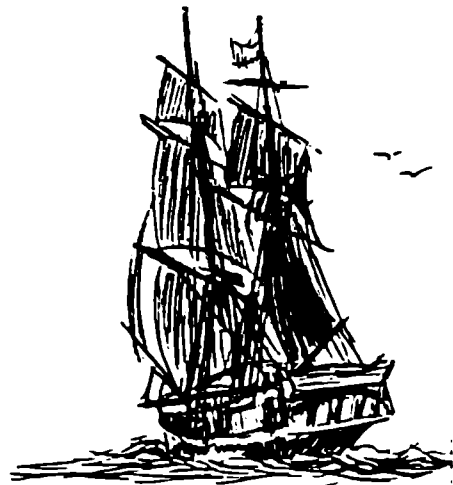
WITH NOTES THEREON, BY WILLIAM DANSON;  
 FOR THE EDUCATIONAL BENEFIT OF THE RISING GENERATION,  
 IN CONNECTION WITH THE COMMERCIAL CLASSES, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO CHOOSE THE  
 TRADES AND PROFESSIONS COLLATERAL WITH THE MERCANTILE MARINE  
 ASSOCIATION, SHIPOWNERS, CAPTAINS, AND MARINERS.  
 and stating its reference to GAWTHORP'S LIVERPOOL JOURNAL, 25th December, 1841, as taken from the *Athenaeum* for 1840.  
 IN ALL THE LIVERPOOL PUBLIC LIBRARIES.



Map, showing the course of the storm in Great Britain, on the night of the 25th January, 1839, taken from the *Athenaeum* for 1840.

1. Romney—wind from S.E. at 8 p.m.
2. Dover—wind from S.E. at 8 p.m.
3. Sandwich—the *Sturgeon* driven on shore at 8 p.m., by a S.E. wind.
4. Birkenhead—wind strong, E. of south, till one in the morning.
5. Manchester—S.E. till 12 at night.
6. Leeds—ditto ditto.
7. Bridlington—got round S.E. in night, and continued so, blowing a gale till after midnight.
8. Whitby—at 10½ p.m. S.E. high wind.
9. Berwick—changed from S.E. to S.W. at 11 p.m.
10. Dundee—on night of 26th day of 7th, N.W.
11. Monaghan—on night of 26th day of 7th, N.W.
12. Aberdeen—ditto ditto.
13. Glasgow—on night of 26th day of 7th, N.W.
14. Lismore—on night of 26th, N.W. to N.
15. Cornwall—on night of 26th, S.W.
16. Stranorlar, Ireland—at 12, night of 26th, S.W.
17. Mull of Galloway—south till 1h. 30m. a.m. of 7th.
18. Calf of Man—S.S.W. till midnight.
19. Liverpool—changed from S.S.E. after 10.
20. Plymouth—S.W. till 12 at night of 26th.

N.B.—The dew point never registered by captains in general, and the Barometer should be booked every hour in all cases.



The Study of Storms specially recommended to be taught in the Liverpool Corporation and all Public Schools in the United Kingdom, same as in the United States of America. By WILLIAM DANSON, of Shaw-street, Liverpool, (Life Member British Association, 1849).

## THE LIVERPOOL SCHOOL and MARITIME HISTORY

Several economic historians at the University of Liverpool are known collectively at the "Liverpool School". The initiative for their concentration on maritime history came from Professor F.E.Hyde in the early 1950s when he decided that in view of the pre-eminence of Liverpool in the development of shipping it was appropriate that Liverpool's economic historians should embark on the writing of a series of histories of Liverpool's most notable shipping companies. He launched this programme by investigating the history of Alfred Holt, one of the pioneers of steam shipping and one of the foremost shipowners in the Far Eastern trade. In 1956, together with J.R.Harris he published "Blue Funnel - a History of Alfred Holt & Co. of Liverpool 1865-1914". This was the first of a series of shipping histories. Another member of the department, Sheila Marriner, worked on the history of the Rathbone family. In addition to an extensive merchanting business, they were well known owners of ships operating in the Far East and around South America and these interests were chronicled in ~~"Rathbones of Liverpool 1845-1903"~~, published in 1961.

The 1960s saw the publication of two other books. In 1967, Professor Hyde published "Shipping Enterprise & Management 1830-1939, Harrisons of Liverpool". Harrisons were particularly concerned with shipping links with the Americas and Professor Hyde was assisted in this work by J.R.Harris and by an accountant, A.M.Bourn. Also in 1967 Professor Hyde and S.Marriner published "The Senior, John Samuel Swire 1825-1898". This was a history of John S.Swire who contributed a great deal to Holts success as their agent and who was also a shipowner in China waters and architect of the early China shipping conferences.

In 1975 came Professor Hyde's last book - "Cunard & the North Atlantic 1840-1973", a history of possibly the most famous of all liner companies. Professor Hyde's mantle as leader of the Group was then taken on by yet another economic historian, Dr P.N.Davies. After producing short accounts of the Guinea Gulf Line and the African Steam Ship Company his first major publication came in 1973 - "The Trade Makers: Elder Dempster in West Africa 1852-1972" - a definitive history of the Liverpool-based firm. This was followed by biographies of "Sir Alfred Jones (Shipping Entrepreneur par Excellence)" (1978) and of "Henry Tyrer (A Liverpool Shipping Agent & His Enterprise)" (1979) and by a number of articles on the rise and decline of Lord Kysant's Royal Mail Group. He is currently working on a business history of the Fyffes' (Banana) Company and is producing an economic history of the growth of the Japanese shipping industry with a distinguished academic based in Tokyo.

The University of Liverpool is virtually alone in providing courses in this country on the economic development of the shipping industry over time. Its cooperation with Merseyside Maritime Museums has further strengthened its position in this respect and this has

recently resulted in the creation of a new post which is jointly financed by the two institutions. Miss Val Burton was appointed in January 1986 as the first of the McGuire Mather Research Fellows and is now continuing the traditional research and teaching of the "Liverpool School".

### Unmanned Lighthouses on Bardsey & the Skerries

Trinity House have been undertaking a major re-organisation of lighthouses on the Irish Sea Coasts and in the approaches to Liverpool Bay. They sold the lighthouse and buildings on the Great Orme last year. In 1987 the Lighthouses on Bardsey Island and the Skerries are to be automated.

The Smalls, a cluster of rocks 21 miles off St. David's Head, began similar treatment in May 1986. The first lights were exhibited there in 1776 when two oil lights, one white, one green, were established. Two keepers were placed there in very inadequate accommodation and the lighthouse was continuously manned until last May when the keepers were withdrawn. A temporary buoy is in position until the original lighthouse has been modernised and fully automated with the latest optical equipment and drives. The fog signal will be unchanged but made by modern directional emitters controlled by an automatic fog detector.

The high-power racon remains in service (this is a device which responds to a ship's radar pulse with a series of pulses which show on the ship's radar screen identifying the lighthouse). All equipment will be monitored by VHF radio and servicing will normally be required every six months.

The lighthouses on Bardsey and the Skerries are now undergoing similar modernisation.

Bardsey Lighthouse, established 1821, will be fully automated by February 1987. In mid-19th century there was a thriving population on the Island. Produce, grain, wool and occasionally seafoods were taken by the men-folk in large open rowing boats to Liverpool and returned with coal and essential hardware. The Island is now a nature reserve.

The new automated Skerries equipment is expected to come into operation in March 1987, 273 years after the first light was established there.

The Trinity House Depot at Holyhead will monitor the Bardsey and Skerries equipment in addition to those of Point Lynas, St. Bees Head and South Stack Lighthouses.

[Continued from Vol.30 No.3 (September 1986) Bulletin]

The following extracts from deck log books and the Station Records of Queenstown and Holyhead will give some idea of the day-to-day operations of the Motor Launch Patrol.

# SELECTED EXTRACTS FROM THE LOG BOOKS OF ML325

7/12/17 At Queenstown. Lt.Vince to Dublin to record Canadian vote. Vessel collided with raft and sustained damage to stem

Thursday 27/12/17 At Queenstown. Lt.Bidwell in command

23/4/18 At sea. 1043 spoke airship SS250

24/4/18 0120 challenged by destroyer

25/4/18 1500 spoke US destroyer about gunfire heard. Destroyer informs she was engaging in target practice

3/5/18 At Holyhead. 1100 W/T ex'd by operator from (-?-) and found to have broken glass(?)  
1500 W/T gear put in order and tested

7/5/18 1755 explosion NNW

7/5/18 (Contd.) 1815 spoke US destroyer 62. Reported between 5 & 5.30 destroyer dropped depth charges

8/5/18 At sea off Holyhead. Wind NNE force 2. Haze. State of sea 1. Bar.29.40  
0730 proceeded to inner harbour for fresh provisions  
0945 left Holyhead. S.O.S.8 miles W of S.Stack  
0955 N.Stack abeam. course ordered W. Approx.course NNW  
1015 came up with torpedoed steamer, stood by with other ships  
1200 course NNW 10 knots  
1245 American destroyer passing astern  
1300 stop and hydrophone  
1310 spoke airship SS234 "have you anything to report" reply "no"  
1445 ahead suspicious movement of water  
1450 stop. Tide rip only  
1515 ahead, course SE x E  
1540 approx.course E x S

8/5/18 (Contd.)      1700 communicated with S.Stack  
                          1715 course W. 10 knots  
                          1745 stop & hydrophone  
                          1800 ML167 reports strange noises and oil.  
                                  Investigated, found nothing untoward  
                          1815 ahead, course ordered W  
                          2100 course SW x W  
                          2200 Church Bay

21/6/18                V/l at Dundrum Bay and Carlingford

2/7/18                1000 gunnery practice. 17 rounds fired

7/7/18                1435 steering gear carried away  
                          1500 GRETA took us in tow  
                          1615 repaired and cast off

8/7/18                0850 ML207 dropped two depth charges

16/7/18                On patrol. Wind ESE force 1-2. Fog. State of sea 1  
                          Bar.29.63 temp.56F  
                          Rain. Hydrophone watch  
                          0700 under weigh (sic)  
                          0715 spoke GOLDEN EFFORT  
                          0730 stop. Hydrophone watch  
                          0825 GOLDEN EFFORT directing steamer steering NNW  
                          1110 ahead, course ordered SSW  
                          1135 stop  
                          1150 ahead  
                          1155 approx.course S 40 E (?)  
                          1250 approx.course SSE. Chickens bearing NE 4 miles  
                          GRETA and ML407 came up  
                          Wind SW force 2. Rain. State of sea 1. Bar.29.62  
                          62F  
                          1723 Pt.Lynas bearing WSW 6 miles. Approx course  
                          NNE  
                          1800 approx.course SSW  
                          1835 stop. Lynas bearing SW x W. ML's drop depth  
                          charges on oil patch  
                          Hydrophone POS 41P  
                          1930 ahead  
                          1945 stop  
                          2030 dropped two depth charges POS 41P  
                          2100 ahead, course ordered S x W  
                          2135 Gt.Orme SSE Lynas WSW, POS 41W  
                          2205 ahead N  
                          2230 stop  
                          2235 ahead, course ordered SSE  
                          2350 stop. Gt.Orme W 1/3 E Lynas W 1/2 S. POS 41V  
                          Hydrophone watch

17/7/18                0305 M407(?) drop depth charges

AUXILIARY PATROL AREAS - WEEKLY REPORTS

Selected extracts from these records are recorded below:

QUEENSTOWN: Extract from Queenstown Letter No.1155 dated 15/4/18:  
"The fitting of ML's 181, 187, 320, 325, 410, 487, 132  
and 167 as a Hunting Flotilla being completed they  
were detached temporarily on 12/4/18 for special duty in  
the Irish Sea under the immediate orders of Lt.Cmdr.C.V.  
~~Norcock~~ RN."

HOLYHEAD: Extract from Holyhead ~~Letter~~ dated 22/4/18:  
"On Tuesday 16/4/18 ~~Sixteen ML's~~ under the command of  
Lt.Cdr. Norcock arrived to operate in ~~this area~~."

HOLYHEAD: Continued

Irish Sea Hunting Flotilla defined as HMS PATROL + 6  
TBD's + (variously) 12 and 16 ML's.

28/9/18 Six U.S.submarine chasers arrived on station

16/10/18 Six additional U.S.chasers attached

Week ending 15/12/18 Depth charges landed from ML's at  
Menai Bridge

Member Dave Hollett, whose second book has just been published (see  
under Reviews), is now preparing material for a third, this time re-  
lating to emigration, Liverpool shipping and the Irish emigration  
between 1845 and 1852.

New member B.M. (Mike) Leek is researching the capsizing and loss of  
the VESTRIS with heavy loss of life 400 miles SE of New York in 1927.  
The Vessel had left that port overloaded and had been doing so for  
several years and two years earlier had been investigated by the  
Board of Trade for doing so. Mike is anxious to find relatives of  
any officers or crew who may be able to provide a new aspect on the  
incident.

Capt C. Prescott, ex Moss Hutchinson and P & O Mediterranean  
Services.

George and Diana Hirst of Bebington. Diana has been asked to act as  
Membership Secretary.

David E. Smith has rejoined us after a break of some years. He has  
an excellent collection of schooner photographs, probably the best  
in the North West.



THE COLLEGE OF MARITIME STUDIES, WARSASH

SHIPPING AND MARITIME HISTORY STUDY GROUP

As a contribution to the growing interest in maritime history a number of the staff of this College have established a formal research and study group, the services of which are available to the public.

The specialised nature of the day to day work of this College concerns the operation of modern ships based upon the experience of a large number of Master Mariners and Senior Marine Engineers. Maritime history is not a concentration of specialist knowledge and experience is not, or, indeed in the case of the College, a direct function. A significant number of staff have an active interest in many fields of the subject. They now bring this activity on an organised basis by the formation of a study group, drawing upon the enthusiasm, and specialist knowledge of its members to provide a service to organisations and individuals having a relevant enquiry or topic in mind.

It is the intention of the group to involve itself, primarily, in historical matters relating to the Merchant Service, particularly in its readiness to deal with enquiries for a straight-forward comment or clarification. Comprehensive library and research facilities do exist, however, and members are available to undertake extensive research and analysis by special arrangement with the College. It is expected that this will provide an authoritative reference source and information service which will be valued by the media, by journalists, authors, maritime museums, universities, local schools and members of the public.

Within the group, interests are wide, and a co-ordinator will ensure that any enquiry is directed towards the member with the most appropriate specialist knowledge.

Research projects in hand include the design and operation of blockade running commercial submarines during the Great War, the stability aspects of passenger ship design prior to 1939, and an analysis of maritime statistics 1928-1978. Our concern, however, is far from narrow, and the following list is provided as a guide to the scope of our interest, knowledge and experience - Shipping Company History; Marine Artifacts; Specific Ships and Ship Design; Shipboard Practice; Seamanship; Marine Engineering; Salvage; Navigational Instruments; Maritime Signalling and Radio Communications; Naval and Maritime Medals, Uniforms and Ephemera.

For any further information contact:- The History Group Co-ordinator, B. M. Leek, Master Mariner, MRIN, The College of Maritime Studies, Warsash, Southampton. Telephone: Locks Heath 6161.

There was a good attendance at the November meeting to hear a talk on Elder Dempsters. The speaker who is a former Assistant Secretary of the U. K. West Africa Lines Joint Service, is co-author, with John Duffy, of ELDER DEMPSTER FLEET HISTORY.

## ELDER DEMPSTER'S

by James E. Cowden

The West Coast of Africa and Elder Dempsters are two names that are almost synonymous and which can be linked over a period of 130 years. ~~of which the~~ <sup>company</sup> is the result of collaboration between some six persons,

Prior to 1832, two brothers by the name of Lander made an expedition to West Africa and on their return spoke to MacGregor Laird, a former student of Edinburgh University. The latter felt that there was scope for a regular trade to the Niger Delta and with the backing of a Liverpool merchant, Thomas Stirling, formed his own expedition with Stirling and Richard Lander using a couple of steamers named QUORRA and ALBURKAH, together with a 200 ton brig. In July 1832 they set off full of hope and enthusiasm. However disaster came in many ways. Laird returned to Liverpool in 1834 a broken and sick man.

In 1837, Laird, somewhat recovered, became involved with other shipping ventures, mainly on the North Atlantic operating the SIRIUS, BRITISH QUEEN and the PRESIDENT. Six years later, Laird moved to Birkenhead where he remained for the ensuing four years engaged in ship development and ship-building. But he had been bitten by the bug of Africa and, moving in 1848 to London, devoted the remainder of his life assisting in the development of the West African trade. During this period Laird made contact with the Government of the day to examine the possibilities of operating monthly services to the West African Coast. Laird entered into contract with the British Government to set up the African Steamship Company, incorporated by Royal Charter in 1852, based at Mincing Lane, London. Initially the African Steamship Company fleet consisted of five vessels with sail and steam power, ranging in size from 250 to 1000 cwt and all built in his brother's yard at Birkenhead. And he simply turned to his other brothers, William and Hamilton Laird, to set up the Liverpool Agency.

The first ship of the new company was the FORERUNNER, which lasted a mere twelve months before she came to grief on the island of Madeira. Soon on the heels of the FORERUNNER came the FAITH, the HOPE and, predictably, the CHARITY.

The Liverpool agency, W. & H. Laird was later changed first to Laird & Fletcher, and when Hamilton Laird died, Fletcher & Parr. Within Fletcher & Parr were two young Scots, John Dempster and Alexander Elder. Apparently during a minor trading recession the African

Steamship Company transferred its home port to Liverpool and in 1866 Liverpool became the permanent home port. Alexander Elder was appointed Superintendent Engineer, a position he held until 1866, when he resigned to become a Board of Trade Surveyor.

At the end of 1868, a number of Glasgow businessmen announced their intention of setting up a new company, the British & African Steam Navigation Company, to compete with the African Steamship Company.

John Dempster agreed to act for them as their Liverpool agent. He realised he would require an active partner, contacted his old friend Alexander Elder, who agreed to join him. Elder then left the Board of Trade and returned to Merseyside to become partner in the new firm of Elder Dempster & Co. Elder copied MacGregor Laird by arranging for the new company to order the first three steam vessels from the Fairfield Yard, Glasgow, owned by his brother, John Elder. The new company proved a success and ordered three additional steam vessels. The first three were named BONNY, ROQUELLE and CONGO, each of about 1300 tons maintaining a monthly service to West Africa from Glasgow, Liverpool and London. The second three steamers were much larger and named LOANDA, LIBERIA and VOLTA. Shortly after setting up the new company ccentralised its business on Merseyside.

After twelve months fierce competition the two companies had to come to terms with regard to their futures and agreed that all sailings to West Africa would be divided between both parties.

About this time, Alfred Lewis Jones came to Liverpool with his parents. When 14, his education coming to an end, he wandered the Liverpool Docks in the hope of getting a job as cabin boy. He found one on one of the West African steamships. On his return, Jones obtained a position in the office of the ship's agents and worked there for 15 years. In 1875 when 30, Jones took up business on his own account and commenced chartering in the West Africa trade using small sailing vessels. Like MacGregor Laird, Jones had been bitten by the bug of Africa. Success was just around the corner and he chartered his first steamer, advertising it for West Africa. The now well established African Steamship Company and the British & African Steam Navigation Company, fearing competition from this efficient young man became quite alarmed. A meeting was convened wherein Jones was induced to give up his proposed plans to charter in a steamer, in exchange for his appointment as a junior partner in Elder Dempster Company.

Five years after Jones joined Elder Dempster, both Elder and Dempster retired from the Board; retaining only their Directorships of the British & African Steam Navigation Company. A result of their retirement was the appointment of Jones as the controlling partner in Elder Dempster. Alfred Jones thus set about obtaining virtual control of the whole of the West African shipping market. He purchased shares in the friendly rival company the African Steamship

Company and ultimately controlled that company too, which he immediately placed under the management of Elder, Dempster & Company. Shortly after he paid out £1 million to gain full control of the British & African Steam Navigation Company.

Although under Elder Dempster management, both companies retained their own identities regarding flag and livery:

A.S.C. Buff coloured funnel. Flag - white burgee with cross of St. George with gold crown in Centre. (The latter denotes Royal Charter granted).

B. & A. Black coloured funnel. Flag - white bargee, with cross of St. Andrew.

Not content with the West African market, Jones branched out to other ~~parts~~ of the World. First, he turned his attention to the North ~~Atlantic~~ where Elder Dempster took over the Dominion Lines extensive cargo and cattle trade which had been operating out of the Bristol Channel to Canada. A little while after this acquisition, the Canadian Beaver Line (Canada Shipping Ltd) fell on hard times which resulted in them being acquired by Elder Dempster in December 1898 as a growing concern to operate services from Merseyside to Canada.

In retrospect, it is obvious that Jones was an outstanding figure in the business world. For in 1900, he was approached by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to develop the West African scene only to say that Jones formed, as a subsidiary company, the Imperial Direct West India Mail Line. I deviated slightly to perhaps put the 'banana' on your plate, for it was Jones who introduced the banana into the U.K. Twelve months later Jones was created a K.C.M.G. for his services to the Colonial Empire.

Elder Dempster went from strength to strength - across the board transactions took place, acquiring and selling companies, e.g. the Beaver Line to the Canadian Pacific. Also they set up the Inter-Island Canary Island Services.

Regretably, however, at the early age of 65 years, Jones died of a heart attack. It is said that Jones did not truly recover from the Jamaica earthquake (he was aboard Port Kingston).

As an epitaph to this great man, a monument paid for by public subscription, stands today at the Pier Head, Liverpool. It is suitably inscribed:-

For Services to the Colonial Empire.

When one looks back, when it was announced that Jones had died, it must have left quite a vacuum in the business world.

As a result of his death, the Elder Dempster interests were purchased by Sir Owen Phillips (later Lord Kylsant) and Lord Pirrie. The company was immediately converted into a limited company. It can now be said that this was the cross-roads of Elder Dempster.

A couple of years back a book was published 'A Business of National Importance' which describes in detail the result of the Kylsant debacle. Insofar as Elder Dempster was concerned, they controlled at that time four major shipping companies plus many, many subsidiary units. These four companies controlled between them 600,000 tons gross totalling 316,000 tons gross. Viz:

African Steam Navigation Company,  
British & African Steam Navigation Company,  
Elder Line Ltd.  
Imperial Direct West India Mail Line.

Out of the Kylsant crash, Elder Dempster Lines Ltd., was incorporated in August 1936. In June 1936, Elder Dempster Lines Holdings was formed to acquire the share capital of Elder Dempster Lines. By mutual agreement, Alfred Holt & Co., were appointed managers of Elder Dempster. This agreement was given up in 1943.

A few significant dates in the Firm's history since then are as follows:-

1965 Liner Holdings acquired Guinea Gulf (John Holt) Line.

Liner Holdings acquired British & Burmese Steam Navigation Co. (Paddy Henderson).

1968 Liner Holdings and all their subsidiary operations were all absorbed into the Ocean Steamship Company - later re-titled Ocean Transport & Trading Ltd.

1985 Palm Line acquired by Ocean Transport & Trading Ltd.

#### Another Shipowner to the Breakers.

October 1986 saw the last of the vessels operated by Cayzer, Irvine Ltd., disposed of, thus ending over a century of shipowning. The Company began their Clan Line during 1878 in an office near the waterfront at Liverpool, growing to become one of the largest fleets in the World.

### A MODERN COAL FIRED SHIP

It is, to-day, rather surprising to hear of a modern coal fired large steamer. The following, by JOHN DUFFY, may interest our Members.

1. RIVER BOYNE O.N. 850245 Call sign: V R J B

Steel screw ore carrier, one deck. Lloyd's Identity No: 8018132

27013 tons net 51994 tons gross 80469 tonnes deadweight

~~257.00~~ length overall 35.41 m breadth extreme

248.01 m length between perpendiculars 35.36 m breadth moulded

12.82 draught maximum 18.29 m depth moulded

Registered Sydney Trials speed 16.2 knots

2. Delivered 1982 by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd., from Nagasaki shipyard and engine works, Yard No. 1882, to Australian National Line, for service between Weipa and Gladstone.
3. Incorporated in this vessel were many new ideas on optimum size, coal fired boilers, coal handling equipment, safety and engine automation.
4. The ship is of double hull construction with no projections such as frames inside the holds, (this makes for efficient unloading by grabs). There are three cargo holds served by eight hatches.
5. The main engines were designed to produce a ship speed required by the operating programme, but allowing for the reduced speeds which may be necessary when the vessel runs in shallow water, this occurs on most of the route. As a result, engine output is greater than that of specialised carriers of same deadweight. The two steam turbines, Mitsubishi MS-21-II type, with double reduction gearing to a single screw shaft, produce 19000 shaft horse power at 80 rpm of the highly skewed propeller.
6. The two water tube boilers, located forward in the engine space, are Mitsubishi CE-V 2M-9S type have a working pressure 61.5 kg/cm<sup>2</sup> at 480°C and are fitted with spreader stokers. Coal feed and combustion air quantities are automatically controlled and the thickness of coal layer regulated by the speed of the travelling grate.
7. A split type main condenser allows inspection and cleaning without full shut down of the main engines.

8. There are two turbo generators of 1850 KW also one Diesel generator of 700 KW for emergency.
9. Fuel bunkers are aft of the engine room and have a capacity to enable the ship to run 4,500 sea miles. A hopper for each boiler provides accumulation and continuous supply of fuel for six hours at maximum boiler load. Bunkers and hoppers are lined with stainless steel. Separate silos are installed for the collection of fly ash in the boiler flues and bottom ash, each has a capacity for a normal round voyage. For overboard discharge of ash, an hydraulic exhauster is used, it can empty the silos in twelve hours.
10. The fuel used is Callide coal with an ash content of 15%, calorific value 5369 kcal/kg, high carbon content and low percentage of volatile matter. It is readily available near the terminal.
11. This vessel was designed to carry bauxite between Weipa on the west coast of Cape York (12° 30' S - 142° 00' E) and Gladstone, Queensland (25° 30' S - 151° 20' E), thus it is mostly a coastal route behind the Great Barrier Reef.
12. RIVER BOYNE is claimed to be the first coal fired ship to be registered UMS (Unmanned machinery space) at Lloyd's.

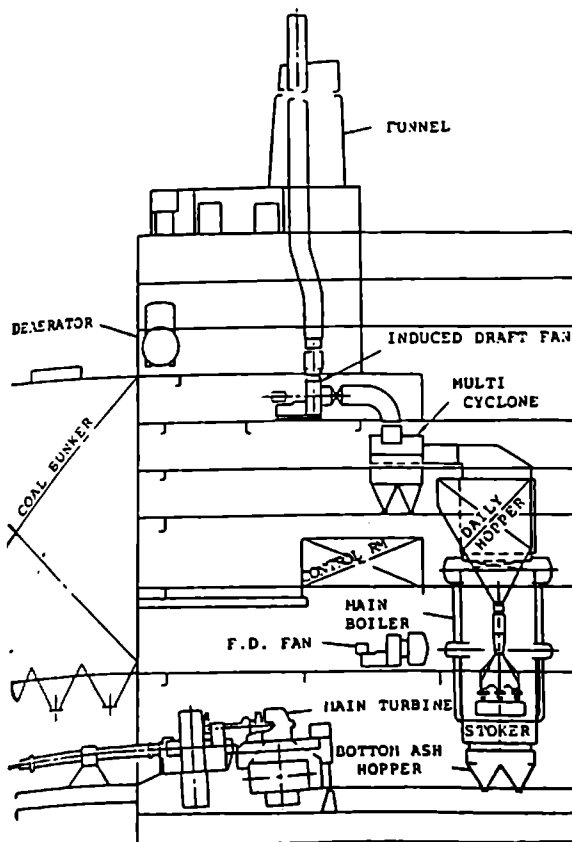


Fig 1 Machinery Arrangement (1) Elevation

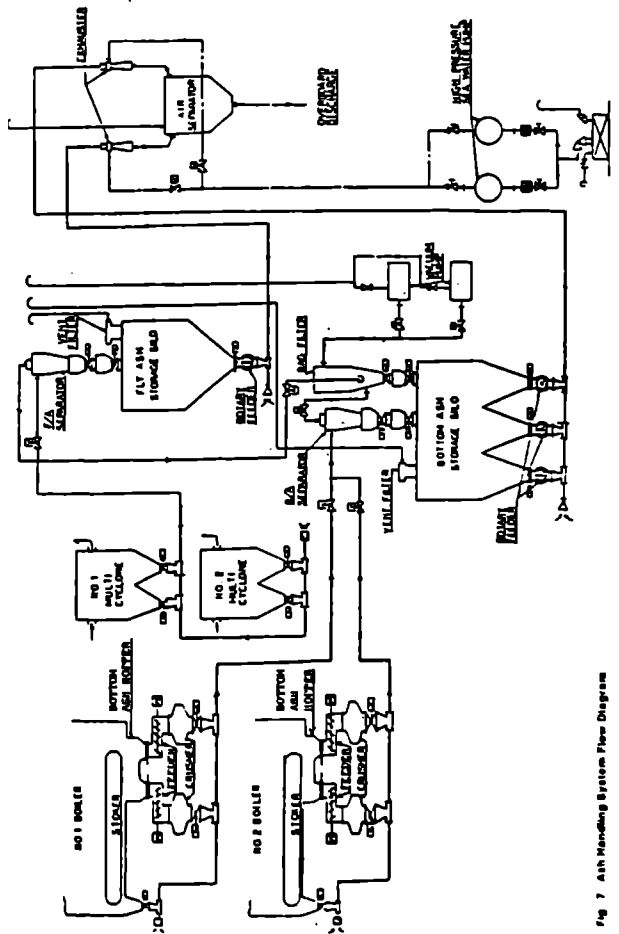


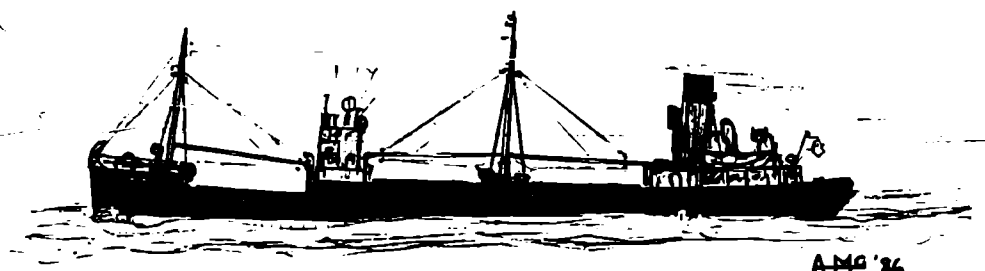
Fig 2 Ash Handling System Flow Diagram

Query 86/5

In November 1916 the passenger ship CONNEMARA left Greenore for Holyhead. During a fierce gale and in darkness she collided with the incoming s.s. RETRIEVER (from Garston) at the entrance to Carlingford Lough. From between 100 and 120 persons aboard the two vessels only one person survived. No formal Inquiry was held. There was some evidence that the RETRIEVER carried no navigation lights. Information about this collision would be welcome.

Query 86/6

During the 1920's White Star's OLYMPIC collided with the Nantucket Light-vessel cutting her in two. Eight persons were lost. Again no formal inquiry was held. Can anyone give further details.



Raised quarterdecker Circa 1930

The text of Volume 30 has been sub-edited and prepared for printing by Noel F. Jones. LNRS members are indebted to him for undertaking the task in spite of pressure of business recently.

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Any reader wishing to take up membership of our excellent Society please write to the Honorary Secretary, Maritime Records Centre, Merseyside Maritime Museum, Pier Head, Liverpool L3 1DW.