

# LIVERPOOL

## NAUTICAL RESEARCH

### SOCIETY

Vol. 37, No. 1

Summer 1993

#### BULLETIN

#### CONTENTS

Wreck of ps " <i>Pacific</i> " (1856)	report	3
Cammell Laird Archives	D. Thompson & J. Taylor	6
Diesel-electric vessels	A.H. McClelland	10
Olano, Larrinaga & Co	D.K.C. Eccles	12
Nigerian Shipping Lines	J.E. Cowden	18
AGM Report		25
Maritime Records Centre closes for four months		28
Ship-building at Barrow	Charles Dawson	29

# Liverpool Nautical Research Society

**President**

**M.K. Stammers**

### *Vice-Presidents*

**Mrs. E.M. Summerfield    N.R. Pugh**

**Chairman:** A.H.McClelland **Vice-Chairman:** Graeme Cubbin

## Council

**J.E. Lingwood   A.S. Davidson   Jas. E. Cowden**

**G.F. Wright** ..... Vacant

## Hon Officers

**Secretary: P.J. Tebay    Treasurer: J. Shepherd**

**Archivist: A.H. Rowson Editor: H.M. Hignett**

## Annual Subscriptions

**£7    Family    £10**

**Membership and all correspondence to:-**

Hon Secretary, L.N.R.S.

## Maritime Records Centre

## Merseyside Maritime Museum

**Pier Head    Liverpool    L3 4AA**

\*\_\*\*

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SUBS FOR THE YEAR 1993/4 ARE NOW DUE** If you have not paid in the last six months you are requested to send the same to the hon Treasurer a pay-slip is included with this **BULLETIN**

## COUNCIL

The sad loss of John Duffy means that there is a vacancy in the Council which will be discussed at a Council meeting to take place in the next couple of months.

## A New and Significant Find

### The Wreck of the "*Pacific*" 1856

DURING the decade from 1840 Cunard's Line had no real competition on the Atlantic. The ships were safe, reliable and for those days, comfortable. The weekly sailings ensured that news from across the Atlantic was never more than eleven or twelve days old and entirely due to the mail subsidy provided by the British Government. However the US Government was approached and agreed to a subsidised service supplied by the Collins Line.

So the two lines vied for trade; in particular a lucrative passenger traffic. Collins built ships for speed and was so successful that he lifted most of the passengers from Cunard. There is even evidence of a private agreement between Charles McIver and Collins: McIver was more interested in carrying cargo; his firm were cargo agents for the Cunard Line and collected a percentage of the freight. (An interesting aspect of this incident was that the agents for the Collins vessels were Brown, Shipley & Co, a firm which exists to this day. Brown was in fact the William Brown of the street of that name.) Nevertheless, the Cunard Line in 1855 ordered a new passenger vessel the "*Persia*", advertised to be larger and faster than anything yet built, and under Captain C.H.E. Judkins would sail the middle of January 1856. In the event her maiden voyage began 26th. Collins hoped that his vessel "*Pacific*" sailing a few days earlier might take some of the public interest from the "*Persia*".

The "*Pacific*" sailed for New York, 23rd January, followed three days later by the "*Persia*". The latter vessel made an unusually slow crossing as a result of encountering massive ice-fields and is said to have struck a small ice-berg on the way. On arrival Judkins was asked for information about the "*Pacific*". He had no news other than she had sailed three days earlier. She never arrived.

It was eventually assumed that the "*Pacific*" had foundered in mid-Atlantic probably due to the ice-fields.

Experienced mariners remarked on the severity of the weather conditions and also on the extent of the ice. Many stated they never had suffered a winter season on the Atlantic like this one. And there were frequent reports of vessels delayed, if not damaged, by ice, contrary winds (often of fearful velocity) and tremendous seas.

The "*Pacific*" had been built with scantlings which were really unsuitable for a large paddle-steamer running at maximum speed. The maintenance and running costs were tremendous; the crews were paid double the rate of the Cunard crews. On this voyage from Liverpool only 45 passengers sailed on the "*Pacific*" even when the vessel had room for over 200. The crew of 141 greatly outnumbered the small group of fare-paying passengers. As a designated mail

packet subsidized heavily by the US Government she was bound to sail on a fixed schedule irrespective of the number of passengers. These factors led many to assume that the vessel had been lost through a reckless effort to better the speed to the "*Persia*". A reasonable assumption since the latter had been built to counter the speed of the "*Pacific*". Reasonable also to assume that the loss was due to competitive recklessness.

This incident proved too much for the firm to handle, and within two years the firm ceased to exist.

There the matter rested for 135 years.

Last year, our member J.L. (Jack) Smart brought the attention of the Council to work he was doing on the Anglesey coast. A number of us went to see him and heard of a wreck he had been investigating. A fisherman had drawn his attention to a wreck about half way between the Isle of Man and Anglesey, complaining that it had snagged his nets. Jack carried out research and found that the wreck was worth further study.

During the 1992 Tall Ships visit an International Maritime History Congress was held in the Maritime Museum during which a speaker stated that the "*Pacific*" was believed to have foundered Mid-Atlantic in 1856. LNRS members gave some details of the discovery of the wreck to the speaker, Edward J Sloan. Much of this article has been extracted from a paper presented by Professor Sloan at a Congress of Maritime History in Bermuda 1st March last.

About two years ago Jack and two colleagues, all divers working off the Anglesey coast, found the wreck in about 40m (130ft) of water. It measured about 110ft in length and 40ft in breadth. An initial examination determined that it was the forward part of a very large wooden vessel and almost certainly a steamer. The wreck lies upright. A large winch, is discernable well forward collapsed into the wreckage and a transverse bulkhead is positioned about 80ft from the bow. The timbers that are easily seen are badly worm-eaten and otherwise rotted, although the timbers under the silt appear to be in better condition. Cargo is scattered about the wreck, some of it being higher off the sea-bed than the wreck itself. Subsequent investigation in the area resulted in finding, about three miles away and in deeper water, what the Jack and company firmly believe to be the larger, after portion of the same vessel. The two parts combined indicate a vessel well over 250ft in length and more than 40ft in breadth. The "*Pacific*" with a 3,000 ton carrying capacity, measured 265ft along the keel, 275ft on her main deck and a maximum breadth of 46ft.

Preliminary dives on the forward part of the vessel permitted a recovery of a number of items from her cargo. These included earthenware - especially plates, pitchers, tureens and platters of the standard "Blue Willow" china pattern - bearing manufacturers' marks which could be dated with reasonable precision to the early 1850's. There also, more significantly, was an unusual item: tele-

graph wire of the sort that commonly was was shipped to America by a Liverpool firm having a special interest in this material; Brown, Shipley & Co, Collins Line agents. Itemized cargo-lists for the last voyage of the "*Pacific*" include both earthenware and telegraph wire, which is listed as having been exported through the Liverpool dock used by the ship.

The local tidal range creates currents and effects which severely restrict diving operations, so that until now the exploratory efforts have taken place only within brief ten to fifteen minute periods of low water spring tides. More extensive underwater exploration and attempts at recovery have to be done during the optimal late-Summer period from mid-August into early September. Jack Smart with two partners, Peter Day (son-in-law) and Jeremy Tyrrell, plan to undertake more extensive exploratory work during this Summer and then, if feasible, will attempt major recovery work in 1994.

They have had to go to court in order to fight off rival claims to the wreck; their rights to the wreck are now recognised by the Dept of Trade and now the original insurers have transferred the title to the wreck to Jack and his colleagues. They have long experience of work on wrecks and with their recently acquired equipment they intend to approach the wreck of the "*Pacific*" as an historical artifact, rather than a source of commercial profit. They wish to disturb the wreck as little as possible in the course of the work. The initial efforts will involve the use of water jets to clear away the silt around the two related sites in order to precisely identify the vessel and hopefully to determine why she foundered.

HMH

\*\*\*\*\*

#### NOT SO LOCAL NOTES     SHELL Reverts to type

On Wednesday 9th June 1992 a special ceremony was held at the Boat Museum, Ellesmere Port by Shell UK Ltd to celebrate the re-naming of their coaster fleet.

The occupational names are being discontinued and replaced by the names of shells. The first vessel to be renamed was the "*Shell Seafarer*" which, passing the Boat Museum, had the name "*Asprella*". A champagne toast was held aloft by the many agents and commercial friends of the Company as the "*Asprella*" stopped and 'blew the whistle'.

The name is one of the familiar names of the old 18,000 ton "A" class which were so often seen on and around the Mersey during the '60's and 70's. The "*Shell Marketer*" is to be the "*Amoria*"; the "*Shell Technician*" the "*Achatina*". Another name to be used is "*Arianta*".

# THE CAMMELL LAIRD ARCHIVES

*by David Thompson and John Taylor*

THE YEAR 1824 marked a major turning point in the history of Birkenhead. At that time this "headland covered with birch trees" was the site of a tiny rural hamlet, its few houses grouped around the ruins of an ancient priory. There were some newly built hotels and villas along the river-front (which might have formed the nucleus of a seaside resort), two competing ferry services to Liverpool, and a population of about 200.

However, things were about to change. The recent introduction of paddle-steamers providing a safe and reliable passage across the river (at least in comparison with the sailing boats from which passengers needed to be carried at high tide) attracted an early generation of business commuters, among them people who realised that Birkenhead had a great deal of potential as a centre of industry and commerce.

Among them was a Scotsman, William Laird. He had pursued various business ventures in Liverpool for a number of years, mostly connected with shipping, while at the same time investing in land on the Cheshire side of the river. Now in 1824 he did two things of great significance: he established a boiler-making works on the shore of Wallasey Pool (which within a few years was building complete vessels), and he commissioned the Edinburgh architect James Gillespie Graham to design a plan for laying out a new town.

In 1828 William's eldest son, John, joined the business and promoted the idea, considered revolutionary at that time, of building ships of iron instead of timber. After the experimental construction of three iron "lighters", the 60 tons iron paddle steamer "*Lady Lansdowne*" was launched in 1833.

The rest, as they say is history. Laird's went from strength to strength. In 1857 they moved their ship-building activities from Wallasey Pool to a new, larger yard on the river front between Monks Ferry and Tranmere Pool. William died in 1841 and John retired twenty years later (from business but not from public life) to be succeeded by his three sons - William, John and Henry. For the remainder of the nineteenth century the company was known as "Laird Brothers" but in 1903 it was amalgamated with the Sheffield Steel manufacturers Charles Cammell and Co. Ltd. to form Cammell Laird and Co. (eventually to become part of a giant industrial group, The Laird Group, which included the Midlands tram, bus and railcar builder Metro-Cammell-Weymann).

By this time the population of Birkenhead had increased to 110,915; of whom a good proportion were employed in shipbuilding or in such allied industries as marine engineering, ship-repair, ships'-furnishings and boiler-

making. Although not a "company town" in the usual sense, Birkenhead was in fact dominated by shipbuilding and, until the turn of the century, by the influence of the Laird family. The elder John was a chairman the first board of Improvement Commissioners set up in 1833; he promoted the docks scheme in the 1840's, founded a borough hospital and school of art, and in 1861 became the town's first M.P. The younger John was Birkenhead's first Mayor after incorporation in 1877.

The ship-building archives of Cammell Laird are therefore part of the town's heritage (as essential to an understanding of its economic and social history as the records of, for example, local government) and with the industry in a state of decline it was considered important that action be taken to ensure their survival.

In May 1991, therefore, the directors of the Company agreed to deposit this very substantial business archive with the Wirral Libraries, Museums, and Archive Service; the intention being that it should form a central feature of the local history museum and borough record office now being developed at the Birkenhead Town Hall (to be called the Wirral Museum).

Many van-loads of records have since been transferred to temporary warehouse storage rented by the museum service within the Cammell Laird site, and from there selected batches have been moved to the Town Hall for detailed sorting and listing. This work has been carried out by a combination of Cammell Laird, archive and museum staff, together with volunteers from the Friends of the Williamson Art Gallery and Wirral Museums.

In 1977 Cammell Laird had been nationalised as part of British Shipbuilders, but it re-entered the private sector as a subsidiary of VSEL (Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Limited) in 1985. For a short period this proved a success, but as a response to an economic recession which has caused the virtual collapse of the British shipbuilding industry, VSEL have now announced that the yard will close in July 1993. As many of the archives still remain on Company premises, and as VSEL appear determined to sell the site for redevelopment, it has now become a matter of some urgency that the remaining archives be transferred as soon as possible.

Cammell Laird has accumulated a vast quantity of archives during nearly two centuries of ship-building, and although many records have regrettably been discarded in the past much still remains. The archives deposited so far include:

- Board minutes from 1903 onwards, together with earlier minutes inherited from Cammell and Co. Sheffield, plus index volumes.
- specification books, trial trip reports, dimensions and particulars of vessels, etc, from the 1850s onwards.
- plans, general arrangements, engine drawings, etc; a large but incomplete series dating back to the 1840s.

- ships estimates - details of almost every contract back to 1833 and including, for example, the building of David Livingstone's paddle-steamer the "*Ma Robert*" (1858) and the conversion of the submarine "*Thetis*" following its tragic sinking during trials in 1939- boiler report books, records of propeller design, hull design and testing etc.
- records of shipbuilding plant and machinery dating back to the 1860s. (We have been told that these are unique in that no similar series of records has been preserved in Britain.)
- newspaper cuttings books (1902 onwards).
- a large collection of photographs and drawings. This includes over 20,000 single photographs of various vessels (some derived from paintings or drawings) dating back to the 1830s. Also numerous albums devoted to particular ships, yard reconstructions, etc; mostly compiled since the turn of the century.
- publicity brochures, launching ceremony programmes, etc.

The total size of the Cammell Laird Archive is difficult to determine exactly because of the large quantity of material still awaiting transfer and because security clearance is needed before some records can be examined, but 7,000 linear feet of records can be regarded as a reasonable estimate.

Because of the difficulties of bringing everything together, it was decided to begin by compiling a basic catalogue/location list using a computer data-base program (in this case dBase III plus) which is capable of expansion and can be indexed and sorted in a variety of ways. Another essential task has been to compile a list of all the vessels built by Cammell Laird, based wherever possible on original contractual information, but also drawing on a number of incomplete printed sources. The Yard's Vessel Number is used as the main identifier.

Before transfer the records were stored in safes within the Company's offices; huge strong-rooms, some covering several floor-levels linked together by wrought-iron staircases, which had once been the sole reserve of filing clerks who carefully checked every item in and out at the door. They demonstrate both the value that Cammell Laird placed on their records and the need for good security arising from Ministry of Defence contracts. The fact that these safes, each packed to the ceiling with thousands of plans, are being emptied and dismantled is an unfortunate consequence of the project to preserve the records - they are a unique piece of history in themselves.

The existence and availability of the archive has become more widely known. As the shipyard supplied vessels to customers throughout the world, its history is of international as well as local interest, and we receive enquiries from people of many countries and walks of life - including students;



schoolchildren; maritime, business, labour and social historians; economists; both civil and naval architects and engineers; model-makers; teachers; geologists; creative writers; producers of television documentaries; and many others. The Archive is an invaluable source of material for research, displays, exhibitions, teaching-packs, educational videos and tape/slide presentations. It must be emphasised, however, that as a result of spending limits placed on the local authority, volunteers have carried out much of the detailed work. They include people recently made redundant by the Company and whose knowledge of shipbuilding archives is absolutely invaluable. Our main problem is lack of finance. To complete the sorting and cataloguing of the archive within a reasonable time limit we would like to employ project workers from among the volunteers on a salaried basis for at least one (preferably two) years, and are seeking funding from grant-making trusts for this purpose.

Anyone requiring further information about the Cammell Laird Archives should contact either David Thompson, the Archivist at the Birkenhead Central Library (051 652 6106); John Taylor of the Cammell Laird Archive Project at the Birkenhead Town Hall (051 666 4000); or David Hillhouse, the local authority's Principal Museums Officer, also at Birkenhead Town Hall (051 66 4010).

=====

### Local Notes

## BA93 Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of

### The Battle of the Atlantic

40 Ships from 12 nations took part. The Fleet review on Wednesday 26th May was carried out off northern Anglesey in appalling weather conditions and from a spectators view was a sad disappointment.

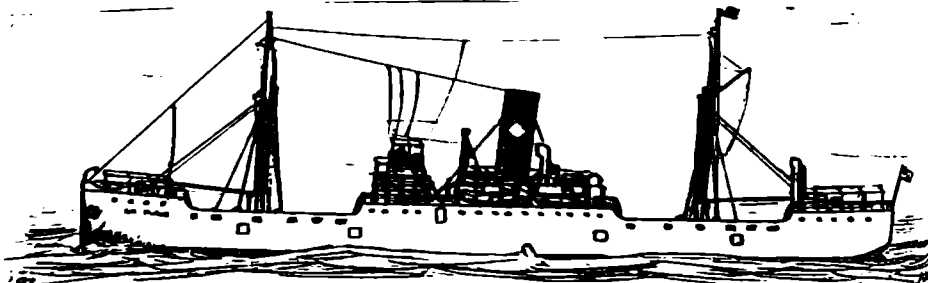
However the large number of naval vessels in the docks for the ensuing three days gave large crowds of sightseers a great amount of pleasure and those with memories of the Battle and particularly those who remained attached to the various organisations were able to take part in several ceremonies, the greatest of which was the service in Liverpool Cathedral attended by the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Prime Minister and other important national figures.

# Diesel-Electric Propulsion

Alan McClelland

Earlier this year it was announced by the Norwegian state oil company Statoil that it is to take two 124,000 tonne diesel-electric propelled tankers on charter for North Sea shuttle operations. To be completed in Spain with propulsion systems by A.B.B. Industri of Oslo, the notion is to provide flexible arrangements including bow and stern thrusters, almost every element of which has backup in the event of failure. The new ships will each have 4 diesel generators each with a separate fuel supply. It is reported that these arrangements are a direct consequence of the disaster arising from the contamination of the fuel of the unfortunate "*Braer*".

Over the years electric propulsion for vessels with large but varying auxiliary needs has exercised considerable attraction, since it allows economic, constant speed operation of the prime movers, be they diesel engines or turbines. The first purpose-built diesel-electric tanker, as opposed to conversion, was the "*Brunswick*" built in 1928 by Scotts of Greenock for the American Atlantic Refining Company. Her power was supplied by 4 BHP Ingersoll-Rand 4-stroke trunk-piston engines with airless injection, each directly coupled to a 600 kW 250v British Thomson-Houston DC generator and a 74 kW auxiliary generator supplying electricity at the same voltage. The brainchild of Atlantic Refining's Lester M. Goldsmith this tanker was the outcome of careful scientific tests and her performance during trials exceeded expectations. In any competition to find "the ship beautiful" the "*Brunswick*" would have won no prizes. Her machinery and bridge were situated with a cluster of diesel-engine exhausts instead of a funnel: Goldsmith was noted for disregarding convention in all matters maritime! She was sold, with her near sister "*Permian*" of 1931, to S/A Maritime et Commerciale of Geneva in 1950. Renamed "*Dryade*" and "*Nyade*", the former had the distinction of going aground off the Dingle Oil Jetty not long afterwards.



CARMEL LAIRD BUILT PIONEER DIESEL-ELECTRIC SHIP "LA PLANA" OF 1923 DIESEL GENERATORS  
AHEADSHIPS, ELECTRIC MOTOR ROOM AFT.

The first noteworthy diesel-electric ocean-going ship of any type to appear was the reefer "*La Playa*" launched by Cammell Lairds in 1923 for the American Fruit Company. She had four 4-cylinder Cammell Laird opposed-piston engines, each arranged athwartships and coupled to a British Thomson-Houston 500kW DC generator supplying current at 220v for propulsion purposes and to a 200kW auxiliary generator arranged in tandem with the main unit. She made a successful delivery voyage from the Mersey to Boston early in 1924, the first diesel-electrically propelled ship to cross the Atlantic. On passage her electrical installation gave no cause for concern whatsoever. Unfortunately problems soon did arise with her diesel engines, which though they contained simpler and cheaper elements than some of their competitors proved unreliable. The "*La Playa*" was re-engined with Fiat 2-stroke diesels to drive her generators and later with General Motors units. It should perhaps be noted that the English Electric Company took up the Fullagar principles and after careful development built numbers of engines based on them for use in power stations on land.

In more recent times British experiments with diesel-electric propulsion for tankers came to prominence with the appearance of the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company's "*Auris*". Launched in 1948 by R.&W. Hawthorne Leslie & Co of Hebburn-on-Tyne the "*Auris*" was initially fitted with four Hawthorne Leslie 4-stroke, 8-cylinder diesel engines, each capable of developing 1105 bhp and each coupled to an alternator to supply a single electric motor driving the propeller shaft. The machinery was chosen for two reasons, the first being to experiment with the burning of boiler fuel in one of the high speed engines, and the second to allow one prime mover to be replaced at some time in the future by a gas turbine. Under the direction of John Lamb, manager for research and development in the Shell fleet, a series of exhaustive trials were carried out, culminating in the installation of a British Thomson-Houston gas turbine by Hawthorne Leslie in 1951 - making the "*Auris*" the first merchant ship to be so equipped.

It is sad, to say the least, to reflect that our present maritime malaise and the massive erosion of our manufacturing base means that Britain now has little to do with the development of any systems of merchant ship propulsion.

# OLANO, LARRINAGA AND COMPANY

By David.K.C.Eccles.

OLANO & Company was founded in Liverpool in 1863, to operate a sailing ship to trade between Liverpool and Manila, in the Philippines, then a Spanish colony. The founders of the company were two Basque master mariner-merchants residing in Liverpool, and a shipmaster from Bilbao. Jose Antonio Olano arrived in Liverpool from Bilbao in 1860, and traded as a ships' store dealer and ship-chandler, living at 75, Crown street, with an office at 4, Goree Piazza, on the Liverpool dock road. In 1863 he was joined by Ramon Larrinaga also from Balbao, who had arrived in Liverpool in 1862, and had been in business as a ships' store dealer and sailmaker trading as Larrinaga & Bertram from an address in Plumbe Street.

By 1863, Jose Olano and Ramon Larrinaga were neighbours living in Stafford St. Liverpool, Olano at No.23, and Larrinaga at No.35. As business partners in the firm Olano & Larrinaga, commission merchants and shipchandlers, 4, Goree Piazzas they were concerned with trade between Liverpool and the Spanish West Indian colonies and the Philippines, and also with supplying stores to Spanish ships at Liverpool.

There was quite a considerable export trade to the Spanish colonies, the cargoes consisted of bagged rice, gunny bags, hardware, textiles, and iron work, and import cargoes of sugar, tobacco, rum, and timber.

At that time a fortnightly sailing packet service was operated from Liverpool to Havana, Cuba by the merchants and shipbrokers G.L.Fletcher & Co and Paris & Co. and a regular service to Manila was supplied by each of these companies and also Park & Co. using Spanish-flagged vessels under the Spanish colonial tax laws. Olano & Larrinaga decided to buy a sailing vessel to trade out to the Philippines, and took as a partner Captain Juan Bantista Longa, who ten years previously had married Miss Saturnina Larrinaga. Captain Longa would take command of the vessel, and seek return cargo for the homeward passage.

The order was placed with Edward Harland at Belfast, who had built up a good reputation amongst Liverpool shipowners (since beginning his ship-building business in 1858), for a 3-masted iron barque of 450 ton. Launched on September 29th 1863, she was named "*Olano*", (the 23rd vessel built by Harlands) and delivered the following day to Captain Longa for fitting out. With dimensions 145ft x 27ft and 16.7ft depth and 488 grt was ready to sail with ballast from Belfast by the end of October. On arrival at Liverpool she

was entered at the Liverpool Custom House to load for Manila: Paris & Company were loading brokers.

Loading cargo was a very slow business, and it was not until 22nd March 1864 that the "*Olano*" sailed from Liverpool on her maiden voyage under the command of Capt. Longa with 14 crew, bound for Manila in the Philippines. After a long voyage via the Cape of Good Hope, she discharged her outward cargo at Manila and with a return cargo, sailed 5th October 1864, arriving back in Liverpool 27th March 1865, the round voyage Liverpool to Liverpool taking 12 months 5 days. On arrival home Capt Longa handed over command of his ship to Capt F. Larrinaga, and settled in Liverpool with his family, living at 24 Stafford street, joined Jose Olano and Ramon Larrinaga in their office at Goree Piazzas.

By this time Olano & Company owned two ships. The 5-year old 403 gross ton wooden barque "*Romeo*" had been bought from Nicholson & Co. Liverpool in October 1864 when loading for Havana, She sailed from Liverpool on the 5th October 1864, under the British flag with Capt J.R.Murlia and 14 crew. At Havana she was renamed "*Feliz*" and registered at Bilbao, and on completion of discharge of cargo, sailed in ballast to Matamoros, Mexico, to load a full cargo of cotton for Liverpool, arriving in Liverpool on March 30th 1865, under the command of Capt Murlia, but flying the Spanish flag. During 1866 a third vessel joined the company: the 680-ton iron barque "*Trinidad*" built by Doxford & Co. Sunderland in August 1866, arriving in Liverpool the 8th November 1866 to load for her maiden voyage to Manila. She was followed by three sister built by Doxfords. In July 1867. the 670 ton "*Victoria*" was launched; her maiden voyage from Liverpool to Manila began Feb 13th 1868, The 729-ton "*Gloria*" launched October 1868, and the last sailing vessel to be built for Olano & Co. the 515-ton iron barque "*Cosmopolyta*" which arrived in the Mersey on her delivery voyage, from Corruna, Spain, with cargo on June 4th, to sail for Havana on July 11th 1870 on her maiden voyage.

The Suez Canal having taken over nine years to build, opened to traffic on November 17th 1869 and, reducing passage time to the far east, was proving steamships to be more economic to operate, than sailing vessels and able to maintain a regular service. By 1870 Olano & Company owned a fleet of six barques, four of them sailing between Liverpool and Manila with cargoes out- and homeward, and two on the Havana run with general cargo outward, and, with full return cargo of cotton from a Mexican Gulf port, homeward. but these services were irregular depending on the weather. To develop a regular service to Manila it was decided to build three steamships, and an order was placed with T. Oswald at Sunderland. The first steamship,

launched January 1871, was "*Buena Ventura*", at 1763 grt, she was 278.0ft long by 34.4 ft beam, driven by a compound steam engine of 160 nhp, had two masts and was rigged as a brig. She was followed by two sisters; ss "*Emiliano*", 2009grt and ss "*Yrurac Bat*" 2037grt. These steamers were registered at Bilbao, and were manned by a Spanish crew, except for the ships' engineers who were all British, and who obtained their employment through a Liverpool firm of consulting engineers engaged by the owners to superintend the upkeep of the steamers. These steamers established the company's cargo passenger service: Liverpool-Cadiz-Singapore-Manila and return. As these steamers were put into service, the sailing vessels were displaced onto the shorter run to the West Indies.

Profits from trading was invested in new ships, and in 1874 Olano & Co. transfered their fleet of four barques and five steamships to Olano, Larrinaga & Co, with their head office in Harvey Building, 24-26, James Street Liverpool. They did however, maintain a depot at Manila and in 1876, two iron steam barges were ordered by the company for service in Manila Bay from Smith & Co. Liverpool. These steam barges, No.1 and No.2. registered at Bilbao, sailed from the Mersey in September 1876 and arrived in Manila in February 1877 under their own 24hp twin-cylinder steam engines. By 1877 the company owned seven steamers, and that year the three oldest steamers were re-engined and lengthened by Jack Rollo & Co. Liverpool, and used to establish a new steamer service Liverpool-Santander-Havana-U.S.Gulf-Liverpool. In 1879 it was decided to start a passenger cargo service between the Philippine Islands, and between Manila-Hong Kong-Amoy-Singapore. Six small steamers were ordered for these services two of 600-tons gross from Leslie, Newcastle, two each of 200ton and 800ton from Chambers and McMillan respectively of Dumbarton. In 1881 the cargo and passenger service to Manila with three of the most modern steamers was sold to the Marquis de Campo, a Spanish aristocrat, who was forming a Spanish Royal Mail Lines. With the sale of this service, and the sale of two barques, Jose Olano and Juan Longa retired from shipping and, with their families, returned to live in Spain. Their money was invested in banking and the developing iron and steel industry of Spain. Olano, Larrinaga & Company was dissolved in 1882. Ramon Larrinaga, then aged 55, and whose three sons and three daughters were all born in Liverpool, stayed in Liverpool to found Larrinaga & Company with the remainder of the fleet.

## FLEET LIST.

- 1/ OLANO Reg. Bilbao Built 1863 (Service 1863 - Larrinaga)  
3-masted iron barque 445-ton gr. Builder, Harland, Belfast.
- 2/ FELIZ Reg. Bilbao Built 1859 (Service 1864 - wrecked 1876)  
3-masted wooden barque. 403-ton gr. Builder Cox, Bridport.
- 3/ TRINIDAD Reg. Bilbao Built 1866 (Service 1866 - sold 1881)  
3-masted iron barque, 680-ton gr builder Doxford.Sunderland.
- 4/ VICTORIA. Reg Bilbao. Built 1867. (Service 1867-sold 1873).  
3-masted iron barque. 670.ton gross.Builder. Doxford, Sunderland.
- 5/ GLORIA. Reg Bilbao. Built 1868. (Service 1868-sold 1873)  
3-masted iron barque. 756.ton gross.Builder. Doxford.Sunderland.
- 6/ COSMOPOLYTA Reg. Bilbao Built 1869. (Service 1869 - sold 1881)  
3-masted iron barque. 515.ton gross.Builder. Doxford.Sunderland.
- 7/ BUENA VENTURA Reg. Bilbao. Built 1871 (Service 1871 - Larrinaga)  
Iron screw ss 1763 ton gross. Builder. Oswald & Co Sunderland.
- 8/ EMILIANO Reg. Bilbao Built 1871 (Service 1871 - Larrinaga)  
Iron screw ss. 2009 ton gr. Builder. Oswald & Co. Sunderland.
- 9/ YRURAC BAT Reg. Bilbao Built 1871, (Service 1871 - Larrinaga). Iron screw ss  
2036tons gr Builder, T.Oswald, Sunderland.
- 10/ AURRERA Reg. Bilbao. Built 1873. (Service 1873 - sold 1881.). Iron screw ss 2526 ton  
gr. Builder. T.Oswald, Sunderland.
- 11/ LEON Reg.Bilbao. Built 1873. (Service 1873 - wrecked 1881.).  
Iron screw ss 2555 ton gr. Builder. Doxford, Sunderland.
- 12/ DONA TELESFORA Reg. Bilbao Built 1869 (Service 1874 wrecked 81)  
3-masted wooden barque. 505 ton net. Builder: Hardie, Sunderland.
- 13/GLORIA Reg. Bilbao Built 1875. (service 1875 - wrecked 1877)  
Iron screw ss 2848 ton gr. Builder. Doxford. Sunderland.
- 14/ No.1 Reg. Bilbao Built 1875 (Service 1875 - Larrinaga.)  
Iron screw barge, 103 ton gross Builder. Smith.Liverpool.
- 15/ No.2. Reg. Bilbao. Built 1876. (Service 1876 - Larrinaga).  
Iron screw barge. 112.ton gross.Builder. Smith.Liverpool.
- 16/ CADIZ. Reg Bilbao. Built 1873.(Service 1877 - Larrinaga.)  
Iron screw ss. 2294 ton gross.Builder, T.R.Oswald.Sunderland.
- 17/ REINA MERCEDES Reg.Bilbao.Built.1878.(Service 1878-sold 1881).  
Iron screw ss. 3060 ton gross. Builder, McMillan. Dumbarton.
- 18/ CHURRUCA. Reg Bilbao. Built 1878.(Service 1878 - Larrinaga).  
Iron screw ss. 616 ton gross. Builder, Leslie. Newcastle.
- 19/ GRAVINA. Reg Bilbao. Built 1878. (Service 1878 - Larrinaga.)  
Iron screw ss. 618 ton gross. Builder, Leslie.Newcastle.
- 20/ ALAVA. Reg Bilbao. Built 1879. (Service 1879 - Larrinaga.).  
Iron screw ss. 2240 ton gross. Builder W.Doxford.Sunderland.
- 21/ GORGE JUAN Reg Bilbao. Built 1880.(Service 1880 - Larrinaga.).  
Iron screw ss. 819 ton gross. Builder A.McMillan. Dumbarton.
- 22/ ELCANO Reg Bilbao. Built 1880. (Service 1880- Larrinaga).  
Iron screw ss. 819 ton gross. Builder A.McMillan. Dumbarton.
- 23/ FILIPINO. Reg Bilbao. Built 1880. (Service 1880 - Larrinaga.).  
Iron screw ss. 225 ton gross. Builder R.Chambers. Dumbarton.
- 23/ CASTELLANO Reg Bilbao. Built 1880 (Service 1880 - Larrinaga.) Iron screw ss. 225  
ton gross. Builder R.Chambers. Dumbarton.

# LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th APRIL 1993

## INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

1991/92	EXPENDITURE	1992/93	1991/92	INCOME	1992/3
57.00	"THE BULLETIN"	76.10	485.46	SUBSCRIPTIONS	791.72
37.95	SUNDRY PRINTING	38.19	15.00	DONATIONS	13.00
110.14	POSTAGES	144.72	26.52	COFFEE/REFRESHT's	26.31
				SALE OF	
2613.00	TRANSACTIONS	- -	454.85	TRANSACTIONS	229.90
69.18	SPEAKERS' EXPENSES	35.00			
38.47	MISCELLANEOUS	48.68	14.00	MISCELLANEOUS	10.00
1929.89	BALANCE	728.74		BALANCE	
<hr/>		<hr/>	<hr/>		<hr/>
2925.74		1071.43	2925.74		1071.43



BALANCE SHEET

1991/92	1992/93	1991/92	1992/93
£	£	£	£
147.73 CURRENT A/C BALANCE	136.47	127.62 CURRENT A/C BALANCE	147.73
30/4/93		31/3/92	
737.65 DEPOSIT A/C BALANCE	1483.46	2638.77 DEPOSIT A/C BALANCE	737.65
30/4/93		31/3/92	
		68.35 DEPOSIT A/C INTEREST	5.81
		940.43 BALANCE INCOME/EXPEND	728.74
1929.89 BALANCE Exp./Inc			- - -
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
2815.27	1619.93	2815.27	1619.93
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

K. W. Witter  
Hon Treasurer

30th April 1993

March 1993 Meeting: a talk by J.E Cowden

## BLACK STAR LINE AND THE NIGERIAN NATIONAL LINE.

THIS is a brief talk today on the Black Star Line of Ghana and the Nigerian National Line of Nigeria.

In historical terms both companies are fairly new in shipping circles: that is, compared to the likes of the African Steamship Company - (E.D's). Therefore, let me take you back to 1852 when E.D's opened up the United Kingdom/West Africa trade, when they despatched their first ship "Forerunner" to Sierra Leone and Nigeria. E.D.'s, more or less, had total monopoly of the U.K./West Africa trade until 1916 when the first true opposition to their dominance came by way of the Bromport Line which had been acquired by former Bolton grocer - William Lever - primarily to carry his own products to and from the West Coast of Africa. He would, of course, accept any other cargo if/when available. Unfortunately however, the purchase of the Bromport Line came at an inopportune time for hostilities were in being between Great Britain and Germany resulting in the Bromport Line losing half its' fleet. On cessation of hostilities the former West African Conference was re-established which consisted of Elder Dempster, Holland West Afrika Lijn and the German Woerman Linie. These three lines not only offered frequent and regular services to and from West Africa but they also offered very attractive freight rebates to loyal and regular shippers. Such attractive rebates could not be matched by the Bromport Line which brought about therefore the closure of that line in 1923 and thus ended Lever's first venture into the world of deep sea shipping.

Again therefore E.D's had the monopoly of the U.K./West Africa trade. Here I would like to point out that the likes of both the Holland West Afrika Lijn and Woerman Linie did not have 'trading rights' in the U.K./West Africa trade. However E.D's did have 'trading rights' in the Antwerp/Hamburg range of ports. This monopoly of the trade was to remain in the hands of E.D.'s until 1929 when the merger of the Niger Company and the African & Eastern Trading Corporation brought about the formation of the United Africa Company. The setting up of the UAC affected E.D's operation in part only. The UAC like John Holt & Company had over the years built up large land based trading houses up and down the West Coast of Africa.

Therefore both companies

- a. Owned their own ships and
- b. Carried their own cargoes for
- c. Their own trading houses.

The first major change to the UK/West Africa trade arose during 1947/1948. It was during those years great changes took place within our West African colonies which caused both the United Africa Company and John Holt & Co to re-think how best to operate their shipping interests. Not only was change taking place within our colonies but the British Government in power at that time had indicated that ship-owning could well be nationalised. The U.A.C. and Holt's being both traders as well as ship-owners feared that both their trading houses and ship owning operations could well come under Government control. Meetings took place and both companies took the decision to establish independent shipping companies and therefore became "common carriers". That is to say 'they would, hereon in, carry cargoes other than their own products'.

As a result this brought about the formation of the Guinea Gulf Line (J. Holt's) and the Palm Line (UAC).

As both companies had worked fairly closely with Elder Dempster over past years negotiations took place and it allowed the Guinea Gulf and Palm Lines to be admitted as full members of the West African Conference early 1949.

The approximate share of the cargoes being allocated as follows:

E.D.'s	64.00%
G.G.L.	7.50%
PALM	<u>28.50%</u>
	100.00%

This cosy conference arrangement remained in force until 1957. In that year the Nigerian Government in power held discussions with neighbouring states of Ghana, Sierra Leone and The Gambia with a view to setting up a joint national shipping enterprise. However, such a move never did get off the ground. Ghana wanted to set up their own national flag carrier, whilst Sierra Leone and The Gambia did not feel able to contribute such large capital investment at that time.

From the outset E.D's had been quite prepared to assist the Ghana Government (I would say E.D's had already accepted two Ghanaian's as apprentice deck officers - to whom I will refer to later) in setting up of their own national flag carrier. It would appear however that the State Shipping Corporation to be known as the Black Star Line either wished to break the dominance of E.D's and/or shake off the shackles of their former Colonial masters, that they turned to Israel's Zim Line, who took a 40% shareholding in the new venture and also undertook to put the new company on its feet by way of experienced deck/engineering officers together with shoreside managerial skills.

a one line they were immediately accepted as a member of the  
thea. per. The new company took the decision to name  
sorr. The new company took the decision to name  
for after well known rivers within Ghana.

The first ship to join the fleet was the "*Tano River*" which was formerly  
the Zim Line "*Hader*"; followed by the "*Densu River*", "*Volta River*" and  
the "*Ankobra River*". These ships ranged in tonnage terms of about 3000 to  
6000 tons gross.

It is interesting to note that the Chief Officer appointed to the "*Tano River*" was a Ghanaian national and one of the two above-mentioned apprentices that E.D's had trained. This man (James Tachie-Menson) had the distinction of being the first Ghanaian to obtain a Masters Certificate at Liverpool. Not only that, he was the first West African to be appointed Chief Officer within E.D's. On obtaining a Masters Certificate he was appointed Chief Officer of the "*Benin*" operated by E.D's on their Ghana/Nigeria inter-coastal trades. A little while later Tachie-Menson resigned from E.D's to become Harbour Pilot at Takoradi (Ghana Railways and Harbour Board). After a short spell there he was appointed to the "*Tano River*".

So as a result of the new entrant to the West African Conference the cargo-sharing percentages had to be re-calculated with the British Lines giving up a percentage of their share to accommodate the Black Star Line. Here I would explain that all cargoes carried by the conference members went into a central pool and at the year end the percentages due were evened out.

After two years operation the Black Star Line expanded greatly partly because they had become members of the American/West Africa Freight Conference and also the Mediterranean/West Africa Conference. In the meantime they ordered eight new cargo vessels from Netherlands shipyards (who in turn sub-contracted two of them to German yards) of some 7000 tons gross and capable of accommodating twelve passengers.

The Zim Line was not prepared to provide additional capital required for this expansion programme and sold their shareholding to the Ghana Government. It was arranged however that Zim Line continued to supply managerial and technical help for a period.

So the Black Star Line operated services as follows:

United Kingdom	- West Africa	- United Kingdom
North Europe	- West Africa	- North Europe
North America	- West Africa	- North America
Mediterranean	- West Africa	- Mediterranean

A further development was that James Tachie-Menson who formerly commanded one of the new building "*Nasia River*" now assumed the post of General Manager of the Black Star Line.

When Nigeria became an independent member of the Commonwealth and faced with the Ghanaian example was influenced by growing pressure from their Parliament the Nigerian Government decided also to establish its own national flag carrier. Negotiations began with a number of companies who had offered their assistance, but in February 1959 it became known that E.D's and the Palm Line were to take an active part in the proposed new company. It was agreed that the Nigerian National Line would be set-up with an authorised capital of £2,000,000 the Government shareholding being 51 % whilst E.D's and Palm Lines acquired 33% and 16% respectively. The two British lines arranged to manage the company and also it was agreed that they would assist in training Nigerians in all aspects of navigation, engineering and management.

Like the Black Star Line the Nigerian National Line was immediately admitted as a member of the West African Conference with a limit of six ships. It is interesting to note that the new line had decided to name their new fleet after Nigerian warriors of yesteryear:-

<i>"Dan Fodio"</i>	<i>"El Kanemi"</i>	<i>"Herbert Macauley"</i>
<i>"King Jaja"</i>	<i>"Oduduwa"</i>	<i>"Oroayan"</i>

All second hand tonnage of some five years old and about 7000/8000 tons gross. Apart from *"Dan Fodio"* which was manned by Palm Line officer personnel the remaining five units were manned by E.D's.

With their entry into the West African Conference system the cargo shareholding had again to be re-calculated with the British lines giving up a percentage of their cargo carry.

The approximate percentage share of the trade being as follows:-

E.D's	- 46.40%
G.C.L.	- 5.70%
PALM	- 25.40%
B.S.L.	- 9.50%
N.N.L.	- <u>12.40%</u>
	100.00%

E.D's and Palm management arrangement with the Nigerians came to an end in 1961, when satisfactory transfer of shares and a friendly hand-over of the management were both achieved. This did not, of course, mean an end to the co-operation between the firms for, as in the case of the Black Star Line, all continued as loyal members of the Conference.

The Nigerians set about not only in modernising but in building up their fleet; they also like Black Star Line commenced trading to North America,

Mediterranean and in addition opened up a service to the Far East. They took delivery of two new buildings from the shipbuilding yard of Swan Hunter on Tyneside which they named "*Ahmahdu Bello*" and "*Nnamdi Azikwe*". The latter named after the first President of Nigeria.

So here we are at the 'cross-roads' or the peak of two state owned corporations showing their flags to many parts of the world. But without state support could they sustain themselves in the 'market place'? Not too many years later both lines ran into financial difficulties and also managerial difficulties.

For instance:

- a. Ghana's President Kwame Nkrumah had been overthrown.
- b. The top B.S.L. management was shuffled around depending on which Government shipping minister came into power.
- c. B.S.L. had been operating to both North America and the Mediterranean at rates of freight totally uneconomical to their overall operating costs.
- d. However, Ghana's major export was Cocoa Beans which, of course, was state controlled - Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board, Accra. The West Africa Conference Lines could not agree an economical freight rate for the carriage of this commodity. Therefore Black Star Line, being state controlled, were ordered to carry all cocoa exports. You could say that the freight paid was simply going from one Government Department to another. However, whilst the Cocoa Board was making a profit in the selling of their commodity the Black Star Line was receiving less in freight than what they were paying out in ship operating costs.

I'm sure you will agree that such an arrangement is economic suicide.

Likewise the Nigerian National Line were going through trying times. The ships employed, particularly on the North America and Far Eastern trades were carrying such small tonnages they were operating at a loss. For example - one ship returned from the Far East to discharge at several ports along the West African coast carrying as little as 1000 freight tons. This meant that you could well discharge as little as 50 tons at a port which would not even pay light and buoyage dues. Shortly after that both lines withdrew from the Far East, North America and Mediterranean services.

Well that left the national lines running into difficulties. Similar troubles beset other West African Conference members but in slightly different ways.

1965 - The Guinea Gulf Line had felt the pressure of increased operating costs, with particular reference to fuel prices when operating a fleet of turbine driven steamers. They first of all placed their fleet under the manage-

ment of the T & J Brocklebank Line - an arrangement that did not last too long. Soon after, a piece appeared in the "Liverpool Echo" to the effect that the Guinea Gulf name and goodwill would be purchased by the Nigerian National Line.

Such a move never did materialise.

However, E.D's not wishing to allow the Guinea Gulf share of the trade to come under the control of an outsider made a successful bid for that company. E.D's immediately disposed of the four turbine steamers and subsequently transferred and re-named six of their more economical motorships to Guinea Gulf livery and ownership. Although management remained with E.D's.

The reason why ownership took place was to comply with the terms and conditions of the West African Conference Agreement; whereby vessels trading as Guinea Gulf had to be owned by that line. The agreement did contain a clause which allowed (any) member to 'charter in' for a particular sailing.

It was only a mere two years later that E.D's themselves had been absorbed into the Ocean Steamship Company; although for conference arrangements continued to trade under their own name.

Come 1985 the Palm Line had not been showing profits to an acceptable level and took a decision, first of all, to sell their ships for further trading but with E.D's purchasing their 'trading rights'. Again to comply with the conference agreement their "*Menestheus*" was re-named "*Apapa Palm*"; given Palm livery and ownership.

So here again after some 133 years E.D's held in excess of 50% of the UK/West Africa trade.

It was not too long, however, that the Ocean Group - who themselves over the years had withdrawn from many of their traditional trading routes: Blue Funnel Far East for example, took a long hard look at the return on capital employed in their West African trade.

Result:

March 1st, 1989 - Ocean informed the trade that the ships employed on their West African services would be sold for further trading. Insofar as their 'trading rights' within the West African Conference agreement, the names of Elder Dempster, Guinea Gulf and Palm Lines had been acquired by the Delmas Group of France.

In closing, you may well wonder who is carrying all the cargoes to/from West Africa. First, one had the severe encroachment of 'outsiders' into the trade who not only lifted cargoes at much reduced freight rates they would only voyage to 'picked ports'. Not only that a number of the West African

countries had opened up inter-alia their own car assembly plants, breweries and glass making plants to name but a few. Such items in the past had been traditional UK exports.

Insofar as the traditional homeward cargoes from West Africa: Ground-nuts; Palm Kernels; Palm Oil; Groundnut Oil; Timber etc. tonnages had dropped dramatically.

Nigeria had banned the export of timber because many of their forests had been over-felled without planned re-forestation. They had also discovered and were exporting crude oil; an industry taking many farm workers away from the land, bringing about the near collapse of the farming industry. Nigeria was one of the largest exporters of palm oil and yet it is not too long ago, on a visit to Port Harcourt, Nigeria, I witnessed Malaysian palm oil being imported.

Ghana like Nigeria had suffered greatly by allowing their valuable cocoa crops to fall behind world markets which brought about a lack of foreign exchange.

Not only had both National Lines been hit by cargo carrying and management changes they had allowed 'private trading' to get somewhat out of hand. This is when the Master (and crew) carried more than their fair share of bona fide personal effects. In addition, both companies had received extremely bad press reports whereby some vessels had been arrested by the Admiralty Marshall for non-payment of bills - fuel, stores, and more importantly, the payment of freight rebates due to loyal shippers.

So here we are in 1993 and the Lines to whom I have referred operate as follows:

E.D.'s	- 6 ships
N.N.S.L.	- 3 ships
B.S.L.	- 1 ship

Simply compare such numbers to a "Journal of Commerce" advertisement in 1977 whereby a 'Joint Service' operated a total combined fleet of 93 ships.



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

20th May 1993 1230 hrs at the Maritime Museum

Apologies for absence:

A.S. Davidson, E. Blackie, Mr. & Mrs. S. Williamson

Minutes of 1992 AGM:

proposed that they be accepted by J.E. Lingwood,  
seconded A.H. McClelland

Chairman's Report:

J. Cowden reported that his three-year term of office was now concluded and that, subject to the agreement of the meeting would be handing over to the Vice Chairman, Alan McClelland.

The level of membership of the Society was fairly static, with new members just exceeding resignations. It was pointed out that our subscription fees remained low and that much of this was due to a number of free-of-charge facilities provided by the Museum.

The Chairman then reported that sadly the hon Treasurer, K.W. Witter, would be retiring from office due to illness and when a replacement was found. Those present fully endorsed the expression of appreciation for all the excellent work carried out by Kan of the years and hopes that he would continue to attend our meetings.

Thanks went to Graeme Cubbin for his continuing provision of most interesting speakers. On this point and in relation to the BULLETIN members were urged to contribute to these two Society features, there being considerable in-house talent and experience.

Any constructive comments regarding the BULLETIN itself would be welcomed by the editor, Harry Hignett.

Secretary's Report:

J. Tebay confined his report to two aspects: the continuing success of having mid-day lecture meetings at the Maritime Museum, whereby numbers attending had increased dramatically and, on the other hand, the on-going uncertainties about which room would be available. However, as staff in the foyer were made aware of the arrangements on the day it had not yet presented any real problems. Major changes were being undertaken at the Museum so that some disruption was to be expected

## Financial Report:

This was circulated to those attending and, with the hon Treasurer present, any questions or comments were called for. None being forthcoming, J.O.C.Duffy and H.M. Hignett proposed and seconded that the accounts be accepted. This was carried and the hon Treasurer thanked.

## Election of Officers:

It was proposed and seconded individually and agreed :

- a) that A.H. McClelland would take over as Chairman from J.E. Cowden for three years.
- b) Graeme Cubbin be elected as Vice Chairman
- c) That the remaining Officers and Council be returned en-bloc.
- d) That Gordon Wright be elected to Council

It was noted that Ken Witter would stay on as hon. Treasurer for the immediate future but wished to stand down as soon as a replacement could be found.

## TRANSACTIONS and BULLETIN

The editor dealt with the figures relative to the publication of "Transactions" and pointed out that the initial costs had been partly offset with a grant of £500 from the Maritime Museum Educational Trust and from advertisements. Allowing for sales this had left a debt of £900, to date, but with the books still selling, the meeting agreed that as a quality advertisement for the Society it was a good on-going investment.

Mr. Hignett also referred to the help currently given by the Museum to the publication of the BULLETIN - a considerable saving to the Society. It has been suggested that the size of the format could change to A5 which would improve binding and presentation without loss of content.

## A.O.B.:

The closure of the Maritime Records Centre at the Museum for a period of four months from the end of May for alterations gave rise to concern amongst those attending to meeting, particularly in relation to those currently involved in on-going research, and to the detriment of visitors embarking on same. A resolution was proposed and seconded "That the AGM of the LNRS views with concern the length of time the Archives will be closed to the public". This was passed.

## LNRS Archives:

The Society Archivist Alan Rowson referred to the recent history of the storage of the LNRS Archives and problems arising therefrom. After some discussion it was resolved that they could be included into the Merseyside Maritime Museum Archives under the title of LNRS Collection, but that no further material could be accepted.

## Lecture Meetings:

It was raised from the floor that whilst mid-day meetings had proved successful it could be considered the timing excluded young and working persons from attending and thereby restricted membership. Contrary views to this were expressed, with a majority indicating support for the existing regime. Nevertheless the viewpoint was taken on board and it was agreed that a special meeting of Council would be arranged to see what suggestions could be made to meet this point.

## Vote of Thanks:

Alan McClelland proposed and was supported in a vote of thanks to the Chairman, Officers and Council for their work in the past year

The meeting closed at 1315 hrs.

XX

## OBITUARIES

K.W. Witter 24th May. hon Treasurer of the LNRS for a decade. After War service in the RAF, returned to work in the Accounts Dept of Furness Withy companies. Spent much of his time with the Johnson-Warren Line section

Had couple of short articles published.

J.O.C. Duffy 1st June. Council Member. Joint author of "Elder Dempster Fleet History" with great friend Jim Cowden. Began seafaring life as engineer with Elder Dempster. In the 1930's was appointed Engineer with the Civil Service. Moved to Nigeria (and East Africa) during the War; spent the remainder of his working life there. The story of an interesting episode in John's life will appear in the Autumn BULLETIN

## Maritime Records Centre: closed for at least four months

The Customs Bills of Entry is published in newspaper format and is the second oldest if not the oldest newspaper in Britain. An issue dated in the 1660's is held in the Customs Library in London. All but a very few copies of the "Bills" were, as usual, destroyed in one or two disastrous conflagrations over the past couple of hundred years. The Customs Library has held a full collection of bound copies of the "Bills" in duplicate until very recently. In several major ports there are bound copies of the Bills for the respective port. The information in the Bills is rich and varied and with correct use researchers find them invaluable.

However lack of space and other considerations caused the Customs Librarian to offer the duplicate copies to Merseyside Maritime Museum. Naturally the officers of the latter were pleased take such a worthy addition to their archives. There is a sting in the tale: the Customs wish to have space in the Museum for a Museum of Customs. The Maritime Records Centre has to give up the ground floor for the purpose. What this means is that the reception, reading and library areas will move up to the second floor. Although the space will be somewhat limited compared to the present set-up, the management think that a similar service can be maintained.

Normal opening is expected to resume some time after 1st October 1993

-XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOX-

### Research Notes

Those wishing to trace persons whose address may have been lost or not immediately evident have a fairly new tool for their files. British Telecom holds historical directories dating back to 1879 which can be accessed at the BT Archives and Historical Information Centre. They have a booklet available free of charge which gives details of the BT A&HI Centre. Ring 0800 800. 864 for a copy of the PHONE DETECTIVES GUIDE.

### INDEX for the BULLETIN

Olive Williamson has completed sorting, collating and indexing the list of articles, authors, subjects etc printed between 1961 and 1992.

These 37-page documents are available to the members for £3 each inclusive of postage

# SHIPBUILDING AT BARROW-IN-FURNESS

*by Charles Dawson*

Well into the 19th century, round the coasts of Britain, hundreds of small ports, many of which we now think of as once quaint old fishing villages - and that of course is what most of them were originally - were building the small vessels that were plying British trade all over the world. By the time of the big steamships, most of these places had ceased to build ships at all, and the activity came to be concentrated in the few areas we remember so well. Barrow was one of them, but its history was rather unique.

The most well-known of the early shipbuilders at Barrow were probably the Ashburners, who seem to have built the first steamer at Barrow, a paddle steamer for the Windermere Steam Packet Co., but went on to become famous for their sailing schooners. During their time in the middle of the nineteenth century, Barrow was still an out-of-the way Lancashire village with a population of less than 4000.

The honour of building up Barrow as an important shipbuilding port must largely go to the 7th Duke of Devonshire, of the illustrious Cavendish family. One of the many estates that they owned all over Britain included a good deal of property in the neighbourhood of the village, and one of the products of the surrounding region was iron ore. To exploit this material, the Duke created the Barrow Hæmatite Steel Company, which his Furness Railway Company and an elaborate system of docks was to serve. Exports of the ore expanded from 1000 tons in 1800 to 250,000 in 1862 and 450,000 in 1867. As part of his scheme to integrate his activities, he established in addition the Barrow Shipbuilding Company. One of the interesting survivors of his Furness Railway connection is the steam launch "*Gondola*", built in 1859 by Jones, Quiggin & Co of Liverpool, one of their early pioneering steel vessels, and now, after rebuilding and renovation by Vickers at Barrow in 1979, run by the National Trust on Coniston Water.

One of the products of the ironworks was railway line sections and one of the particular customers for these sections was the Pennsylvania Railroad Company in the USA; the upswing in trade after the depredations of the Civil War had increased the demand for these for their quickly expanding network. They saw a way of augmenting their own passenger and goods traffic by gaining control in the shipping of the material and integrating this with their own railroad system. In 1870 they therefore attempted to acquire the thriving Anchor Line of Glasgow, which had been formed in 1856 by Handysides & Henderson to run a service to New York. The Scots were however reluctant to let the direction of their affairs be transferred completely to the American side, and they rejected the approach. Pennsylvania Railroad riposted by forming the American Line the following year.

The Duke himself then entered into discussions with the Anchor Line, the outcome being the formation in 1872 of the Barrow Steamship Co. Ltd., with an authorised capital of £1,000,000 in shares of £25 each. Among the subscribers were the Duke, with £100,000, and two of the Henderson brothers together, with a similar sum. The latter were by this time the principals of the Anchor Line and made one stipulation in the agreement: their money was to be used for ships, not docks. The Barrow Shipbuilding Company fitted naturally into the scheme of things and the first vessel they launched for the Barrow S.S. Co, in 1874, was "*Anchoria*" (I), 4157 gross tons. The first in a proposed "alphabetical list" of steamers, she was eventually purchased by the Anchor Line in 1893.

Development of the port, which included necessary dredging to permit the movement of larger ships, took longer than expected; in the meantime, "*Anchoria*" (I) and her sisters sailed from Glasgow. To compensate for the delay in starting direct sailings from Barrow, the Anchor Line helped temporarily with the supply of coastal vessels for transhipment between Barrow and Glasgow.

Delays to the Barrow - New York service were also aggravated by the international financial situation. The short-lived boom which succeeded the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 had already passed its peak and by 1874, a serious recession had set in. This situation was not improved by the additional competition from a number of new American shipping lines which had been set up at the height of the boom thus creating surplus capacity: besides the American Line, mentioned above, there were the State Line and the Red Star Line. Even the prestigious Cunard Line was forced to withdraw some services.

It took until May 1880, some eight years after the inception of the idea, before the Barrow - New York service was inaugurated, by s.s. "*Castalia*" (I), 2201 gross tons, of the Anchor Line, built by Connells, Glasgow. There was however a poor response from the public. In an effort to stimulate more business, a call at Dublin was introduced in 1881, but this had to be abandoned in October of the same year.

Although the Anchor Line then abandoned Barrow, other lines did despatch materials from the port during the next year or two. s.s. "*Averill*" of the Furness Line was one of them; she loaded at Barrow for Montreal with rails for the extension of the Canadian Pacific Railway, but was wrecked on the way out in June 1883. The name Furness of this line had no connection with Barrow, but was the name of the West Hartlepool family which had founded it.

In the long run, the great hopes envisaged for Barrow as a port never did materialise. This was almost inevitable due to the somewhat odd position of Barrow relative to the well-established ports of Liverpool and Glasgow.

The Barrow Shipbuilding Company had better fortune, although somewhat fluctuating. They continued to build ships, some of which were used by Anchor in their transatlantic or India services. The last transatlantic liner they built for the Barrow Steamship company was "*Furnessia*", launched 19th October 1880. The first, and last, really large vessel they built was the Inman Line's "*City of*

*Rome*", 8,415 tons, launched 14th June 1881. She was then second only in size to the mammoth "*Great Eastern*" and is still considered by many to be one of the the most beautiful steamers ever built.

Her owners were aiming at capturing the transatlantic speed record with her, so she was ordered to be built of steel, which could produce a better power/weight ratio than iron. However, because of shortages of rolling mill capacity that had arisen for this up-and-coming constructional material, they agreed that she should be built largely of iron, in order to avoid a long delay. Surprisingly, her engine power was not increased to compensate for the extra weight of the iron. Due to this, a whole range of problems ensued: her performance turned out to be poor, her freight capacity was only about 2/3 of the figure contracted for, and in addition, she was found to require frequent overhaul.

The result was that Inman handed her back to her builders in less than a year. Litigation followed and the builders lost the case. Thanks to the Barrow - Anchor connection, the running of "*City of Rome*" was taken over by the Anchor Line in the capacity of agents, never actually owning her. They later renovated her and she became quite popular. Because at that time the still undredged Clyde was not navigable to such large vessels she sailed the Liverpool - New York route for a period of nearly nine years. She was transferred to the route from Glasgow in May 1891 after the depth of the Clyde had been sufficiently dredged. She was broken up in Germany in 1902, still of not a great age, for she had quickly become outmoded. Her passing enabled the Barrow Steamship Company to be wound up, as all other units of their fleet had by then been transferred to the Anchor Line or scrapped.

1886 was probably the busiest year for the Barrow Shipbuilding Company, but by 1889 they were building their last vessels, all steel screw steamships, for the P.S.N.Co: "*Santiago*"(IV), "*Arequipa*" (II), "*Orotava*" and "*Oruba*"(I).

After that, the company's activities were taken over in turn by: The Naval Construction and Armament Co. Ltd. (who were already marine-engine builders). This company was one of the Duke's interests, and it was sold during his lifetime to: Vickers, Sons & Maxim, who became Vickers, Ltd., then Vickers-Armstrong Ltd., and finally, British Shipbuilders.

### DISTURBING FINAL NOTE

That the whole of the share capital of the Anchor Line has now been taken over by Swedish interests should bring a lump to the throat of any Englishman let alone Scot who knows the history of this once illustrious line. No company better epitomised Scotland and the River Clyde. Its passenger carryings to the USA equalled such rivals as Cunard and Inman.

Further examples of the entrepreneurial spirit of the Duke were: his interest in the development of Eastbourne as a resort, with connected interests in the Eastbourne Waterworks. He owned also Lismore Castle in Co. Waterford, Ireland and had interests in the Waterford, Dungarvon & Lismore Railway.

## **PROGRAMME 1993/94**

### **1993**

- 16th September      "West African Seamen and Liverpool 1890-1960"  
by Diane Frost,.
- 21st October          "River Weaver Navigation"  
by Capt Richard Feriss
- 18th November      "The Maritime History of Lancaster and District"  
by N.R. Dalziel (member)
- 16th December      Xmas Social including Nautical Quiz  
Mike Stammers (member)

### **1994**

- 20th January          "A Dynasty of Maritime Lawyers in Liverpool  
during the 19th & 20th Centuries"  
by R.G. Hill
- 17th February        "Ocean Weather Routing"  
by Peter Watson  
Port Meteorological Officer, Liverpool
- 17th March           "A History of the Pacific Steam  
Navigation Company"  
by John Lingwood (member)
- 21st April             "The Assault Convoys: Operation Husky"  
by Lawrence Norbury-Williams
- 20th May              Annual General Meeting  
Followed by a Video Presentation  
Liners & Launches"  
by G. Wright (member)





## **LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY**

**Vol 37 no2**

**Autumn 1993**

### **CONTENTS**

<b>Cutting Out Expedition Fernando Po 1942</b>	<b>HMH 33</b>
<b>Kyle Transport Co</b>	<b>D.K.C. Eccles 35</b>
<b>Museum at South Georgia</b>	<b>MKS 39</b>
<b>Blockade Runner 1863</b>	<b>Ian Cook 40</b>
<b>Whistle blows on Great Lakes Steamers</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>The VC and Monterey</b>	<b>J. Cowden 44</b>
<b>A Unique Salvage Operation</b>	<b>Charles Dawson 47</b>
<b>The Mersey Bore</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>West African Seamen &amp; L'pool</b>	<b>Diane Frost 57</b>
<b>The Dee Today</b>	<b>HMH 58</b>
<b>Pilotage on the Manchester Ship Canal</b>	<b>59</b>

### **Maritime Records Centre**

**re-opens with a change of name  
and a tight squeeze**

### **MARITIME ARCHIVES & LIBRARY**

**There is now less than one third of the space formerly allocated to researchers. MAL open 12th October: we hope that research is not too seriously hindered.**

# Liverpool Nautical Research Society

## *President*

M.K. Stammers

## *Vice-Presidents*

Mrs. E.M. Summerfield N.R. Pugh

*Chairman:* A.H. McClelland *Vice-Chairman:* Graeme Cubbin

## *Council*

J.E. Lingwood A.S. Davidson Jas. E. Cowden  
G.F. Wright ..... Vacant

## *Hon Officers*

*Secretary:* P.J. Tebay *Treasurer:* J. Shepherd

*Archivist:* A.H. Rowson *Editor:* H.M. Hignett

## *Annual Subscriptions*

£7 Family £10

*Membership and all correspondence to:-*

Hon Secretary, L.N.R.S.  
Maritime Records Centre  
Merseyside Maritime Museum  
Pier Head Liverpool L3 4AA

\*\*\*\*\*

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SUBS FOR THE YEAR 1993/4  
ARE DUE If you have not paid in the last six months you are  
requested to send the same to the hon Treasurer**

## **Editorial Note**

This new format is intended to improve binding of the BULLETIN. In furtherance of this aim the outer pages of the last three issues of this volume will not be numbered thus avoiding duplication of contents and the above lists with every issue.

This is probably the first time this unusual story has been related in print as a fact.

## Economical With The Truth

WHEN ITALY entered the 2nd World War on the side of the Germans, one of their merchant ships, *Duchessa d'Aosta*, cleared the Congo and made for the safe haven of the nearest neutral port. In this instance it was Santa Isabel, capital and main port of the then Spanish colony Fernando Po (today Bioko). The town is situated on the partially sunken rim of an old volcano. A few miles away and a third of the way up the slopes of 3,000m-high Pico de Isabel is Basile, a small town where the port inhabitants like to cool off.

The *Duchessa d'Aosta*, 7,651 grt 4920 nrt 451ft x 57ft built at Trieste 1921, was unusual in that her mast raised trellis-like masts. Quite a distinctive vessel.

To lay at anchor for several months in such a climate was very boring and without air-conditioning, not always pleasant; the crew spending their enforced stay on ship maintenance, and off duty in local bars.

Early in January 1942 the British Naval authorities, looking for an opportunity to increase their merchant tonnage, set their eyes on the vessel in Fernando Po. Through a local contact they learned of a cocktail party to be held in Basile to which the masters and officers of ships in port were invited. The Navy even had a aerial-photograph of the port showing just where the target was. Thus on 12th January a tug and launch left Bonny, steaming east along the Nigerian coast at a speed to ensure arrival off Fernando Po well after dark. Among those aboard were a group of service personnel.

About 2300 on 12th the two small vessels edged quietly into Santa Isabel and alongside the *Duchessa*. A boarding party climbed an anchor cable and took the few men aboard by surprise. The tug was made fast and, when all was ready, explosive charges placed on the anchor cables were fired, cutting the cables and the ship was slowly

towed away. When well clear of the port the few Italian crewmembers were sent ashore by the launch and the tow continued. At dawn the following day a naval vessel 'encountered' the *Duchessa* adrift albeit under control of the tug and escorted the "prize" to Lagos.

The German propaganda machine launched into action accusing the Allies of breaking international law by sending a cutting out expedition against a ship in a neutral port. This was denied by the Admiralty which claimed that one of their units had found the *Duchessa* adrift at sea without engines.

The "prize" was taken to the UK for discharge during which later in the year she caught fire in dock on the Clyde, was flooded and sunk. After refloating she was repaired and handed to the CPR to manage under the name *Empire Yukon* for the Ministry of War Transport, spending most of the next three years running between Liverpool and Canada. In 1946 she was taken by the Canadian Government as war reparations. After a spell as *Petconnie* (reg. London) the vessel returned to Italian ownership and was at the breakers at Spezia in 1951.

This unusual story came to the editor from the late John Duffy who was one of the principal civilian officers in charge of the expedition. He always refused permission to print the details although he did say with a smile: "I know you'll print it after I've gone".

## KYLE TRANSPORT CO LTD

*by David Eccles*

THE COMPANY was founded by George Henry Edwards of 16 Lord Street, Liverpool in 1905 with the order of two new general cargo steamships from Tees-side shipbuilders. The first ship delivered was the 3290 ton cargo steamer *Ballochmyle* received in June from the shipbuilders Craig Taylor & Co. of Stockton-on-Tees, followed in July by a sister ship built by Richardson Duck & Co, also of Stockton-on-Tees, the 3285 ton ss *Kirkoswald*.

In July 1906 the company was sold to Mr. William Neilson Bicket, who had his office at No.8 India Building, 6 Fenwick St. Liverpool. The two ships were employed in general tramping, In March 1910 a new steamer ordered from A. McMillan & Sons, Dumbarton, *Trabbock* (4014 tons), came into service, joined the following year by the 4135 ton ss *Coila* from the same yard. The oldest vessel in the fleet, the 1905-built, ss *Ballochmyle* was sold to the Kyle.S.S. Company of Glasgow in December 1911; her sister *Kirkoswald* was sold in January 1912 to Brazilian owners, to be replaced four months later by a new 4021 ton ss *Kirkoswald*, built in Dumbarton by A.McMillan & Sons.

In May 1913 Alexander Bicket took over the management of the three steamers from his office in Colonial House, Water St, Liverpool. The company operated successfully until the outbreak of the WW1 in August 1914.

A month after the war was declared, the 1910 built ss *Trabbock* in ballast on passage from Negapatam to Calcutta, was captured by the 4" gun, 3000 ton light German cruiser *EMDEN*, and sunk by gunfire 70 miles S.W.x S. from the Pilot Light at the mouth of the River Hooghli. She was replaced by the 1905 built 3449 ton ss *Delmira*, purchased from the British Chilian S.S.Co. Liverpool. In 1915 two old steamships were bought, the 1904 built 4038 ton Canadian owned ss *Rio Pallareso*, and the 3850 ton Liverpool owned

ss *Bandkdale* built in 1907, were purchased in January and March respectively. Five ships may have been too much for the company to own during the war, because in 1916 the ss *Bankdale* was sold to London owners in March, and the *Kirkoswald* was sold in July. to the Australian government for use on the Australian coastal trade. However two new motor coasters, the 119 ton m/v *Barrett*, and the 135 ton m/v *Dorit* were put under management by the company when they were delivered by the shipbuilders. On the 14th December 1917 the ss *Coila* with a cargo of coal from Glasgow to Leghorn, Italy was torpedoed without warning by a German submarine, and sunk with the loss of 3 of her crew 3 miles SE of Ganet Point, Valencia. Spain, and on the 12th July 1918 the ss *Rio Pallareso* on passage from Alexandria to Hull, was sunk with the loss of 2 of her crew 62 miles E.N.E. of Malta by a torpedo from a German submarine. The company ended the war in November 1918 with only one owned ship, the 13 year old ss *Delmira*, and the management of the two small coasters.

In 1920 the 3040 ton London registered ss *Coya* built in 1895 was purchased from the New York & Pacific S.S. Company, and two coastal steamers, the 838 ton ss *Nieson* built in 1903 as a steam hopper for the Tees Conservancy Commissioners at Middlesbrough was purchased in June, and the 1919 built 613 ton ss *Kilmarnock* in November. In 1921 the company bought the two small motor coasters they had managed from new: m/v *Dorit* built in 1915 was purchased in January, and m/v *Barrett* built in 1916 purchased in October. During that year the ss *Delmira* was abandoned on fire off the Florida coast on the 16th February 1921, she was towed into port and sold by a U.S. Court on May 18th 1921. This left the company at the end of the year with one large tramp steamer, and four coasters.

In 1923 the company sold three coasters, *Barrett* in February, to John Summers Ltd, Chester, to service their iron works; the *Dorit* sold in July to Richard Abel Ballast & Lighterage Co of Liverpool, and *Kilmarnock* sold in September, to H.J. Brennan of Liverpool. A few years later, this steamer, renamed *Eleonor Boling* of New York,

was owned by the Byrd Antarctic Expedition between 1928 and 1931, and used as supply vessel for the expedition.

The *Nieson* was sold 21st January 1924, for trading on the south east African coast, and later in the year, with the sale of the last ship to be owned by the company, the 1895 built ss *Coya* to German owners, the Kyle Transport Co Ltd. (Alexander Bicket, Manager) Colonial House, Water Street, Liverpool, ceased trading.

## FLEET LIST

1905-11 ss BALLOCHMYLE. ON120863 3290grt built 1905 by Craig Taylor & Co. Stockton-on-Tees. for Kyle Trading Co Ltd Liverpool. 1911-19 Kyle Shipping Co Glasgow. 1919-24 renamed GYPE (Preston SN Co Ltd London). 1924-38 renamed DIMITRIS (S.A & P.A. Lemos, Chios, Greece). 1938-40 Antonis Lemos, Chios, Greece. 1940-44 renamed AGHIOS SPYRIDON (G.D. Halkias, Chios, Greece). Sunk as blockship at Arromanches Beach for the Normandy invasion. Removed and broken up at Briton Ferry Sept 1945.

1905-12 ss KIRKOSWALD (I) ON120871. 3284grt bt 1905 by Richardson Duck Co. Stockton-on-Tees. for Kyle Trading Co. Ltd. L'pool. 1912-13 renamed CONDE ASDRUBAL. (Cia Paulista de Madiras Santos Brazil). 1913-1920 renamed NAVIGATOR Bosc Sandstrom, Helsingfors, (Russia). 1920-35 Finska Angfartygs Aktiebolaget, Helsingfors, Finland. Sunk after collision with the British ss MERVYN. 100 miles N.E. of Cape Villano in the Bay of Biscay. 7/7/1935.

1910-14.ss TRABBOCK ON128025. 4014grt bt 1910 by A.McMillan & Sons.Dumbarton for Kyle Transport Co. Ltd. Liverpool. Sunk by gunfire from German light cruiser "EMDEN" in Bay of Bengal.14/9/14.

1911-18.ss COILA. ON131325 4134grt bt 1911 by A. McMillan & Son Ltd, Dumbarton. for Kyle Trading Co. Ltd. Liverpool. Sunk by torpedo from German Uboat off the coast of Spain.16/1/18.

1914-21.ss DELMIRA. ON120844 3459grt bt 1905 by Short Bros Ltd.Sunderland for Strathclyde Shipping Co Ltd Liverpool and sold to British Chilian SS Co Ltd Liverpool. 1914-21 Kyle Transport Co Ltd. Liverpool. Abandoned on fire at sea off Florida coast 16/2/21. Salvaged: sold by American court for scrap.

1912-16.ss KIRKOSWALD (II) ON131436. 4021grt built A.McMillan & Son Ltd, Dumbarton, for Kyle Transport Co Ltd L'pool. 1916-19 Australian Government Line of Steamers.Melbourne. 1919-26 renamed AUSTRALMEAD Australian Commonwealth Line of Steamers, Melbourne. 1926-47 renamed AGIA MARINA Pnevmaticos, Rathymnis & Yannaghas. Syra, Greece. (Kassos S.N.Co.Ltd.). 1947-53.

renamed NINA MARIA NURMINEN, (J. Nurminen. O/Y. Helsinki.). Mined & beached near Kiel on passage Pernoviken to London 19/7/53. Scrapped at Kiel Sept 1953.

1915-16.ss BANKDALE. ON124045 3850grt bt 1907 by Wm Hamilton & Co. Port Glasgow for Bank Shipping Co Ltd L'pool. 1915-16 Kyle Transport Co Ltd L'pool. 1916-31 Mondrich S.S. Co Ltd London. 1931-36 renamed COMPTESE DE FLANDRE ("Ocean" Soc Anon Belge d'Armement et de Nav.(L. Deng & Co). Antwerp). Broken up 1936.

1915-18.ss RIO PALLARESO. ON118096 4038grt built 1904 by W. Pickersgill & Sons Sunderland for Hamilton Frazer & Co. L'pool as INCHARRON. 1908-13 renamed HARCROFT (C.H. Harrison London) and renamed RIO PALLARESO in 1912. 1913-15 Taconic S.S.Co Ltd Toronto. 1915-18 Kyle Transport Co Ltd L'pool. Sunk by torpedo from German Uboat in the Mediterranean Sea. 29/7/1918.

1920-24.ss COYA. ON104866. 3040grt built 1895 by J.L. Thompson & Sons. for New York & Pacific S.S. Co Ltd, London. 1920-24 Kyle Transport Co Ltd L'pool. 1924-26 renamed KATHARINA BIESTERFELD (W.Biesterfeld Rhed-u-Schiffs GmbH. Hamburg). Scrapped 1925.

1920-23.ss KILMARNOCK. ON143666. 613grt. built 1919 by Smiths Dock Co Ltd South-bank-on Tees. 1920-23 Kyle Transport Co Ltd L'pool. 1923-24 H.J. Brennan, L'pool. 1924-25 James Kell, Sunderland. 1926-28 Kilmarnock Ltd. Halifax N.S. (Forfeited to US authorities 3/4/28) 1928-31 renamed ELEONOR BOLING Byrd Antarctic Expedition, New York. 1931-32 Bolling SS.Co Ltd St Johns N.F. 1932-33 W.F.Parker, Miami, Florida. 1933-41 renamed VAMAR. Vamar SS Co Ltd Norfolk, Va. 1941-42 Soc Navegacion dos Oceanos Sud America. Wrecked off Point St Joseph, Cuba, en route Tampa-Puerto Padre 21/3/1942.

1920-24.ss NEILSON. ON113906. 838grt bt 1903 by Ropner & Son Stockton as ss T.C.C.HOPPER No 1. 1903-20 Tees Conservancy Commissioners, Middlesborough. 1920-24 Kyle Transport Co Ltd L'pool 1924-50 renamed WATERBUCK Sena Sugar Estates, London (Restricted trading between Delagoa Bay and Chinde). Scrapped 1951.

1920-23.mv BARRETT. ON145890. 119grt bt 1916 by J.T. Eltringham & Co Ltd Newcastle managed by Kyle Transport Co Ltd. 1920-23 Kyle Transport Co Ltd L'pool. 1923-32 John Summers Ltd, Chester. 1932-35 renamed ARRIPAY John Carter (Poole)Ltd. 1935-48 J.J. Prior (Transport) Ltd Poole. Scrapped 1947.

1921-23.mv DORIT. ON143708. 135grt built 1915 by Northumberland S.B.Co Ltd Stockton.managed by Kyle Transport Co Ltd. 1921-23 Kyle Transport Co Ltd. L'pool. 1923-25 Abel Ballast & Lighterage Co Ltd L'pool. 1925-28 Robert Gardner, Lancaster. 1929-50 Sociedad Generale de Obrasy Construccions, Bilbao. Scrapped 1949.



## The Museum at the End of the World

### *The South Georgia Whaling Museum*

The number of museums continues to grow world-wide. The South Georgia Whaling Museum which opened in March 1992 is perhaps the most remote of any in the world. The island of South Georgia lies on the edge of the Antarctic, 600 miles to the east of the Falklands, and consists mainly of steep mountains and glaciers. Only the coastal margins are habitable; the climate is harsh and unpredictable. It has no permanent population, but there is a resident British garrison and it is a regular calling place for yachtsmen and cruise ships. In this centre for the catching and processing of Antarctic whales from 1904 to the early 1960's, it is estimated that 175,000 whales were processed. In 1982 it was occupied by Argentine 'scrap metal workers' as a prelude to the invasion of the Falklands.

Since the British re-occupation of the island, much work has gone to clear up the decaying whaling stations, the removal of oil fuel and chemicals from rusting storage tanks. The Museum project had been set up by the Commissioner of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, Mr. W.H. Fullerton, in 1991. A field expedition led by Nigel Bonner arrived on the island in January 1991, converting the former manager's house at the Grytviken whaling station into a museum. The Museum's four galleries cover the history of whaling stations, the ships and equipment used to catch and process the whales and the social life of the workers there. The latter includes an illegal still and the battered cine projector from the station's "Kino" building, now collapsed. A number of outside exhibits have been set up such as harpoon guns and the cast-iron try pots used to render down the whale blubber in the 18th and 19th centuries.

There is an informative trail around the surviving buildings. Future plans include the salvage of the *Petrel* of 1928, the best preserved of the three steam-powered sealers or whale catchers and the collection of material from the outlying stations, for example the library from the Leith Station.

When I called at the museum in April 1992 it had received some 500 visitors.

M.K.S.

## Legacy of the Blockade Runner *"Modern Greece"*

*by Ian Cook*

"LAST NIGHT the English steamer *Modern Greece*, in attempting to enter New Inlet, off Fort Fisher, got aground. She is laden with powder, rifles and rifle cannon. The enemy are shelling her. We have sunk her to wet the powder and prevent an explosion. Have sent down steamer to aid and push to save some of the cargo. She is three-quarters of a mile from shore, which prevents us keeping the enemy's vessels far enough off to prevent their shelling her."

So wrote Confederate Brigadier-General S.G. French at Wilmington following the vessel's grounding in the early hours of 27th June 1862.

The freighter, built in 1859 at Pearson's yard in Stockton, was originally designed for the Hull-Baltic timber trade, but had been purchased three years after construction by the one-time mayor of Hull, Zacharia C. Pearson. Pearson it was who had scented the potential profits to British business via successful blockade running ventures. He had set up the London registered company of Z.C. Pearson & Co and was actively engaged in the trade through the Bermuda-based "middle man", John T. Bourne.

The *Modern Greece* was only marginally suitable for blockade running. With a depth of 17ft 2inches allied to her length and breadth of 210ft and 29ft respectively, she was a large vessel for a pursuit which was requiring a transformation in that year which dictated the need for fast, low, "sprinter vessels" having shallow draft to continually evade the Northern blockaders. No doubt with profit as its prime motive, Pearson was attracted to the vessel's capacity of 753 tons though, and with speculative gains of over 100 percent from a successful round trip, Pearson and his cohorts presumably relished the anticipated good news. On 16th May 1862, the US Consul at

Falmouth reported "... the departure of the *Modern Greece* from that port on the 2nd ultimo with a cargo, it is suspected, for the rebels...". Bound ostensibly for the Mexican port of Tampico, the *Modern Greece*, camouflaged in slate-grey paint, undertook the most hazardous part of its mission as dawn broke off the North Carolina coastline amidst the hazy first hours of 27th June 1862.

Approaching New Inlet that murky morn, she was spotted by the patrolling ships *USS Stars and Stripes* and the *USS Cambridge*, which immediately opened fire with its parrott gun on the blockade runner. The *Modern Greece* responded in the only way she could, by hoisting the British flag and making full steam ahead for the protection of Fort Fisher's guns by running parallel to the shore. Initially, this plan succeeded but about half a mile from the Fort and under heavy Yankee fire, the steamer ran hard aground.

Orders were given to abandon ship and this the British crew did. The *USS Cambridge* continued firing upon the stricken vessel for several hours afterwards, even ceasing to enable her jubilant crew to breakfast, until a total of 106 rounds had been fired. This shelling effectively sank the *Modern Greece*, and by 17th August her spar deck was level with the waterline, with only funnels and masts still standing. Her hull it was noted, had already settled into the sandy seabed.

The resourceful Confederates, however, were eager to salvage everything possible from the cargo and had soon began extensive operations to recover munitions and supplies from the vessel's holds. Official reports from both sides survive today detailing the types of cargo saved, the non-military part of which was auctioned, as the "*The Wilmington Journal*" of 31st June 1862 records, ... "We understand a large proportion of the cargo of the *Modern Greece* advertised for sale at auction 8th inst. is in a damaged condition, and we are requested to say catalogues of that saved in good order will be prepared as soon as the ship is discharged and the quantity ascertained...."

Following the sale of all salvaged non-military goods from the wreck, her usable military artifacts, including engines, rifled cannon, Enfield muskets and some powder, the *Modern Greece* passed into history, or so it seemed.

The vessel's location, covered in sand around thirty feet down, had been passed down the generation until, in early Spring one hundred years later, a fierce storm ravaged the North Carolina coast. The high winds and water managed to uncover the sand from the wreck of the former blockade runner and shortly after divers from the Naval Ordnance School in Maryland inspected the ship's remains. Their prognosis was encouraging, stating that the hull had been cleared of sand to below the main deck and the *Modern Greece's* cargo was virtually intact within.

Several US Government Departments soon became involved and navy divers began to salvage this cargo from the wreck. Commencing in March, off a rented shrimp-boat *Wayne R. Seventeen* Enfield rifles, 3 Whitworth shells, a triangular bayonet, several sabre bayonets and a ship's anchor were recovered in the first three days of diving, just a taster of what lay ahead.

Now, thanks to the intervention of the US Coast Guard, artifacts were being retrieved daily including lead for shot, hardware of all descriptions, housewares, surgical goods and instruments, tin, sheet steel, wire and military goods.

Preservation of these now historically important artifacts was entrusted to the Fort Fisher Preservation Laboratory, ironically enough located on the Fort Fisher Historical Site. To date fiftyfive different methods of preservation have been used and the large number of duplicate artifacts allows for the testing of the best preservation method. Cleaning, impregnation, freeze-drying, electrochemical reduction, electrolytic reduction, sandblasting, plastic embedding and sonic cleaning will all have to be carried out before an artifact is ready for display at the state of North Carolina's official museum site. During this work several Liverpool firms' marks have come to light including the Cooper's Row and King Street copper

and lead manufacturer, Newton, Keates & Co and Newton, Lyon & Co.

Over 130 years since her assumed end, the Modern Greece is once again playing a part in history, this time in a far more peaceful role.

#### Acknowledgements

"The Blockade Runner Modern Greece and her Cargo": Leslie Bright  
Frank Hughes, Alsager, Staffordshire

.....

*From member Dan McCormick, of Massena NY*

## Whistle blows on Great Lakes Steamers

In March 1993 there was only one last coal burning steamer working commercially on the Great Lakes, the *T.S. CRAPO*. However there are plans to re-power this vessel very soon thus bringing to an end an era of commercial steam power on the Lakes. According to James W. Gaskell, President of Inland Lakes Management Inc., a more efficient diesel-electric system is planned for the vessel. He stated that the capacity of the fleet is sufficient to allow the *CRAPO* to be taken out of service during the Lakes navigation season. In fact re-powering during the shipping season would be to ILM's advantage as opposed to the winter lay-up period.

The re-powering continues a fleet expansion programme costing to date over \$30 million

The vessel was launched at River Rouge in December 1927 and still retains her original fire-tube Scotch boilers and triple expansion engine !

Almost a unique, perhaps classic, vessel in respect of her age, construction and engines.

## THE CONNECTION

*J.E.Cowden*

When the S.S. *Monterey* joined the Elder Dempster fleet in 1897 few would have thought that this ship would carry the first Colonial and the first member of the Canadian Forces under British command to win a Victoria Cross.

*Monterey* was a product of Palmers Shipbuilding & Iron Company Ltd, Jarrow. Built for Elder Dempster & Company, registered at Liverpool, she was launched on the 25th of November 1897 and ran her sea trials on the 25th May the following year when she achieved 13.25 knots. During 1899 *Monterey* was transferred to Elder Line Ltd and the following year on the 11th March *Monterey* commenced Boer War transport duties making one voyage Halifax to Capetown and seven from New Orleans to Capetown, on one of which she carried Lord Strathcona's Horse, consisting 500 officers and other ranks, when horse and equipment were transported to Capetown.

During 1987 two Merseysiders commenced researching information on Victoria Cross holdres having links with the Merseyside area. As a result, by 1989, some 62 local holders of the coveted award had been traced.

In their research one Arthur Herbert Lindesay Richardson (born 23rd September 1872 at Southport) came to light and had won his Victoria Cross but the bizarre events that came to light after the death of Sergeant-major Richardson that makes interesting reading.

Richardson was to emigrate to Canada when he was about nineteen, and after a couple of years in which he had lived in Stony Mountain, Manitoba, he went on to Regina, Saskatchewan, and on 7th May 1894, he joined the North West Mounted Police. After his training he was posted to Battleford, at the junction of the Battle River and the Saskatchewan River, and settled as one of the law enforcement officers.

On 14th February 1900, he was passed as a suitable subject and recommended for service in South Africa, as he enlisted in Lord Strathcona's Horse at Chapean, he was 27 years old. He was soon promoted to Corporal and then Acting Sergeant as the Canadian Force arrived in South Africa. It was not long before he was in action, and on 5th July 1900 at Wolfespruit, a party of Lord Strathcona's Horse, only thirty eight in number was engaged with a force of eighty of the enemy. When the order to

withdraw had been given Sergeant Richardson rode back under a very heavy cross-fire and picked up a trooper whose horse had been shot from under him and who was wounded in two places, and rose with him out of fire. At the time when this act of gallantry was performed Sergeant Richardson was within 300 yards of the enemy, and was himself riding a wounded horse. His award of the Victoria Cross was gazetted on 14th September 1900 and thus becoming the first Colonial and the first member of the Canadian Forces under British command to win the coveted award.

He returned to Canada in 1901, and rejoined the North West Mounted Police at Battleford, he was to be promoted to Sergeant Major and served at Battleford until 1906 when he was transferred to Prince Albert. He had served as Chief of Police at Indian Head, Saskatchewan for a short time after he bought his discharge from the N.W.M.P. on the 12th November 1907.

It was however in March 1924, that a most amazing and bizarre picture unfolded. It came in a newspaper item from Aberdeen where an ex Gordon Highlander had died, he was well known in the city as Corporal A. Richardson, and had been feted and acknowledged as the gallant holder of the Victoria Cross which he had won while serving with Lord Strathcona's Horse in South Africa in 1900. For nine years since he arrived in Aberdeen he had given the impression that he was the rightful holder of the V.C., so much so that when he first arrived there he made it known that he had been forced to walk the streets to find work. In spite of the difficult times he was found a job on the railway at Cruden Bay, but was later paid off and then he took a job as doorman at the Picture House where he became a well known figure and wore his crimson ribbon on his uniform. He was introduced to Earl Haig on the occasion of his visit to the city, and was given prominence at the Armistice and other parades. He even attended the Garden Party to the V.C. heroes at Buckingham Palace, and was presented to the King.

When he died suddenly on 16th February 1924, he was buried with full military honours in Springbank Cemetery. Pall-bearers were supplied from the Depot of the Gordon Highlanders, and the cortege was headed by the pipe band of the British Legion with the drummers of the Gordons, and Last Post was sounded at the graveside. Representatives of the British Legion, United Services Club, Gordon Highlanders Club, Freemasons and a number of prominent citizens attended, the remains were conveyed on a gun carriage supplied by the 75th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery.

It appears he came to this country from South Africa in 1915, and went to Tower Hill recruiting office in London and joined the Gordon

Highlanders giving his name as Arthur Henry Leonard Richardson, and stated he had been a private in the 2nd Durban Light Infantry S.A.F., he later produced a typewritten document saying that he Arthur Henry Leonard Richardson had won the V.C. with Strathcona's Horse in the Boer War. He was promoted at once to his old rank of Corporal - and it seems no person checked his story. In France he was offered a commission, but he refused, he was later invalided out of the service with a disability pension for a severely wounded leg. From the time he returned from his ar service until his arrival in Aberdeen he would give no straight-forward answers to his life and occupations, or information about his family. He did claim to have been born in Methlick, Aberdeenshire, but no trace of his birth could be found in the records. His date of birth of 29th February 1876, makes him four years younger than the real hero.

Enquiries by journalists from the Aberdeen brought out answers that did not coincide with his previously told tales, and there were many instances that suggested fantasy such as a fortune in South Africa, that he had been born in India as the son of an Army Captain and so it went on. Further enquiries to the Gordon Highlanders brought the kind of response that fits in with this man's story - "We are sorry to say that we are unable to find any information whatsoever in our records of the Regiment, reference Cpl. Arthur Henry Leonard Richardson".

The real Richardson died in Mill Road Hospital, Liverpool, on the 15th December 1932, aged 59 years, and was buried in St. James's Cemetery (AE2X), the burial service conducted by the Rev. Canon Henry Walker Campbell Baugh, Vicar of St Brides Church, Catherine Street, Liverpool.

To conclude:

A) ss *Monterey* was sold to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company with the sale of the Elder Dempster & Company's Beaver Line. It was on 15th July 1903 she was wrecked on Plata Point, Miquelon Islands off the south coast of Newfoundland whilst on passage Montreal to Bristol with general and cattle.

(B) The Victoria Cross won by Sergeant Major Richardson is now held by The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Museum of the Regiments, Calgary, Alberta.

Sources:

Sidney Lindsay Esq., Maurice Rigby Esq.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (Archives Sec Saskatchewan)

Elder Dempster Fleet History 1852/1985



## A Unique Salvage Operation

*by Charles Dawson*

One of the most remarkable examples of marine salvage, probably unique at the time it was carried out, was that of the British naval paddle steamer sloop HMS Gorgon, 1142 tons, 290 HP, Captain Charles Hotham, which stranded in the Bay of Montevideo on 10 May 1844.

The detailed account of the salvage<sup>1</sup> by one of the officers on board, Lieutenant Astley Cooper Key<sup>2</sup>, on which this article is based, is not just a technical treatise but presents some interesting comments on the psychology of leadership, includes some historical detail about the political situation in the area and even manages to allow a little humour to creep in from time to time. HMS Gorgon had been sent in June 1843 to the unruly area of the River Plate to join the squadron under Commander Purvis, then CiC in those waters, in order to "protect the interests of British residents" in Montevideo, then under siege from the still independent State of Buenos Aires. She had been anchored as near the town as safety permitted, and apart from a few exercises to sea, had been there for about a year. She had ridden out many heavy southerly gales with the utmost security.

On 9 May a breeze set in from the SW and the quick fall of the barometer indicated an approaching gale. Storm procedures were carried out, including sending down the yards and top-masts, but Gorgon was gradually driven shorewards. To avoid her grounding, steam was raised in all boilers and she was re-anchored further out in the bay. She was however unable to hold her own against the gale, even with anchors out and with full power on her engines. She was inexorably driven back until finally, when the tide fell next day, she was well and truly stranded on the NE side of the bay, broadside on and buried some 12 feet or more in the sand on her starboard side and nearly 10 feet on her port side.

In all, nine merchant vessels were wrecked in that gale, but Gorgon was the only warship of all the nations there represented that was driven from her anchors. This was a somewhat embarrassing situation for the redoubtable British Navy, since here was a class of vessel equipped with the revolutionary steam and with a power at that time considered sufficient to make her free from the dangers that a sailing ship could be subject to: of being driven on a lee shore. What was the reason for the calamity, apparently one of the earliest that had happened to the Royal Navy? This experience apparently led to new requirements for stronger anchors and cables to meet such extraordinary conditions. Because of these, the action of the wind on paddles and paddle-boxes had been underestimated, as also the value of the mizzen sail in counteracting this.

Gorgon's situation appeared hopeless, but Captain Hotham set about speedily to organise the recovery of his anchors before they disappeared into the soft sandy mud of the bay. HMS Ardent recovered the two bower anchors, but the sheet anchor could not be located. The chiefs of the foreign squadrons in the bay offered unfailing assistance. Captain Vorhers of the US frigate Congress even left himself short, dangerous if another storm had blown up, when he valiantly offered Captain Hotham all his hemp cables. Even General Manuel Oribe, CiC of the Buenos Aires army, showed goodwill, forgetting the grievance he considered himself to have suffered at the hands of the British beforehand.

Sounding was carried out and five anchors laid down, two intended to be used for heaving-off and the others to hold Gorgon from being driven further up the beach. Everything moveable, and much fixed, was sent ashore including perishable stores, most of her 280 tons of coal fuel and even her paddle-boxes. On shore, the fixing of capstans, not a simple job in the sand, was going ahead. Captain Hotham had carefully considered the pros and cons of removing Gorgon's engines, which at 300 tons, weighed a quarter of her total. He opted to retain them and employ them as his main mechanical power in the recovery operation.

A "dock" was built on her starboard side, requiring the manual removal of enormous quantities of sand. One hundred men were put to the task, a heartbreaking one, for often the banks gave way and a week's labour could be destroyed in an hour when surf was driven in by a freshening breeze. Excavation was naturally restricted to the time of low tides. At other intervals, final lightening of the ship was carried out, last being the guns, bowsprit and lower masts. Derricks were rigged and the two guns, weighing over four tons each, were first struck directly into the boats of HMS Alfred and then rowed ashore. The lower masts, weighing about 28 tons each, were transported ashore by gravity hauling line fixed to one of the derricks on board.

Besides the excavations on shore, work was started in clearing a channel running southwards from Gorgon's stem. This was to be her line of escape. The work was carried out from a 30 ton launch, the sand being dragged out in large canvas bags, punctured for water drainage, and deposited in lighters on either side of the launch. Twenty men could clear 4 tons of sand and mud in an hour. We cannot help imagining that the seamen must have christened the bags butterfly nets, for that is exactly what they looked like.

Every possible means of increasing Gorgon's buoyancy was adopted. Sixty butts were procured from the town, made watertight and lashed to the ship's bottom. One of the captain's ingenious ideas was no doubt called the sausage, or the seaman's equivalent. Sailcloth was to be tarred, rolled into a tube with three thicknesses, and the ends capped with circles of sailcloth sewn on and sealed. Reinforcing rings of heavy rope were to be provided on the outside of the canvas tube at intervals, sufficiently close together to reinforce the tube when blown up. The idea was to use the cylinders of the ship's engines as air pumps, with transfer of air by hose.

This idea was not adopted, but the ship's engines were used as motive power. Her paddle-wheels had by this time been removed, so the shafts were available for direct take-off. Compared with the manual power of the hundreds of men at the captain's disposal, the

mechanical power available was enormous: a quick calculation shows that her 290hp engine could theoretically lift well over 1000 tons through about three feet per minute. Not that there was any idea of lifting the ship "by her own bootstraps"; the heaving-off process was to be carried out horizontally. Additional easing-up was not excluded however. Every veteran car owner knows the old technique of moving his vehicle with the starting-handle, likewise the use of the screw-jack. This is the sort of "lateral thinking" that must have occupied the mind of the captain when he ordered screw-jacks, each with a capacity of 100 tons, which he knew were used locally for compressing bales of wool.

In other ways too, Captain Hotham seems to have been a "modern" man. In an age when a captain in the British Navy was virtually God, it is refreshing to know that he took his men into his confidence, and by explaining his aims, gained and maintained their support and willing co-operation during the operation.

The screw-jacks were to be used in a combined effort to both lift and push the ship from her position, or at least to initially break the grip that the sand had on her. One of the most elegant of the drawings based on Lieutenant Kay's own sketches shows how these two arrangements were rigged at the bow of the ship. Not shown in the drawing is one of the refinements that give a modern touch to the engineering of this detail: in a groove round the shaft of the vertical jack, round shot was used in a rudimentary ball-bearing.

Luckily, the weather held out for the first three weeks of the operation and the officers managed a short spell of relaxation by paying a courtesy visit to General Oribe. In the course of conversation, the General offered to send Captain Hotham two "gatos". The captain thanked the general, confirming that he did have a rat problem on board. No cats arrived and it was eventually realised that what was meant was jacks of some sort. Even these did not arrive, perhaps because the captain had declared his intention of keeping them as a souvenir.

At the beginning of June, the arrival of a "pampero" wind blowing across from the Andes became a distinct possibility, so the captain obtained permission from the CiC to engage more men from HMS Alfred, Curaçao, Philomel and Ardent in order to build a coffer-dam. The voluntary services of a local civil engineer, a Mr. Milburn, were accepted, but unfortunately for him, his efforts came to no avail when a defiant gale blew up, this time unexpectedly out of the south east and forced most of the piles out of the ground. The captain, deciding to construct a breakwater to avoid a repetition of this calamity, salvaged some disused barges which had been dispersed in an earlier storm. This work led to an incident that could have had serious consequences. Kay reported: "The execution of this task was somewhat impeded on the first day by the unexpected arrival of an eighteen pounder shot in the midst of the working-party, followed by three more passing over their heads; these messengers had been sent from Rat Island by the Montevideo garrison, mistaking the party for a detachment of Oribe's army erecting a battery, and the Union Jack for a Buenos Airean ensign. A boat was sent to the fort, the mistake explained and an apology offered and accepted".

A week's work saw three of the four lighters fixed as a line of breakwater some 120ft long on Gorgon's port side, with a line of piles, tanks and casks to supplement these. The fourth was lashed to her after-end and proved to be most effective.

Everybody's confidence rose on 14th July when water piled up in the bay by a souwester was well contained by the cofferdam. The captain, "more to please than from any great expectation of immediate success" gave the order to raise steam in two boilers and to man all capstans and screws. With everything being "heaved all taught together", Gorgon's bow was seen to lift by the vertical screw, only inches to be true, but she had moved.

With the engines stopped and the fires extinguished, the captain took stock. Leaving no room for chance snags he was still arranging for further contingencies. His plans contained elements of both attack and defence as surely as if he was in the middle of a naval

engagement. He continued with the driving and consolidating of the piles on shore, together with deeper dredging round Gorgon's hull. He devised and had built a dredging machine which could be lashed to the ship's side and, driven by her engines, could remove more sand close in to her hull. This device was not used, because a new spell of fine weather allowed the mud-lighters to continue work.

August was passing by rapidly and further changes of weather were being predicted. A new incident occurred to give the crew thoughts in another direction. At about 8 o'clock one morning, a whale-boat containing ten men and flying Buenos Aires colours was observed pulling frantically towards Gorgon from the shipping roads, hotly pursued by two Montevidean rowing boats. Apparently, the whaler had ventured too far up the bay and an attempt was being made to intercept her.

The whale-boat crew, realising their desperate situation, intended as a last resort to land on the part of the shore occupied by Gorgon's gangs, hoping thereby to be able to claim protection from the British Navy. This was duly given them when they landed, and to make the position quite clear to the Montevidean boats, the British marine corps was ordered to arms. The Montevideans approached to within a cable of the shore and then lay on their oars. Captain Hotham went to them in his gig, told them of his determination to protect the whalers and requested that no act of hostility should be shown towards them. In the meantime, a colonel of General Oribe's army, with a detachment of soldiers, had arrived on the beach and showed extreme anxiety to start firing. Captain Hotham, now back ashore, and addressing the colonel, made his intentions crystal clear. The colonel, losing his temper, rode into the water thinking it shallow enough for him to reach the whale-boat. Fortunately for him he realised in time how deep the water was and hastily retired.

On 17 August the tide commenced gradually to rise and the order "action stations" was once again given. The caisson applied to Gorgon's stern was seen to be lifting her well, but the captain was still not completely satisfied.

The Dutch were probably the first to use "camels" to transport vessels across shallow waters, an idea that was also taken up by the Russians to convey their warships from the building yards at St. Petersburg to the naval base at Kronstadt. Captain Hotham had just such a camel constructed from heavy timbers, reinforced with bolts at all corners, some 40 feet long by about 6 feet square. It was to be lashed to Gorgon's starboard side, so its inner face was shaped to fit the ship's hull. To make the joint as tight as possible, read-lead caulking and gaskets of "fearnought" were used. The latter was a stout woollen cloth used then at sea for both cold-weather clothing and for such maintenance jobs.

Another chance for a test arose on the morning of 22 August, when a SE breeze sprang up. Again steam was raised, the capstans manned and the screws turned while the engine was started. Movement astern of about three feet was obtained, but Gorgon heeled over 7° to port. The vertical screw had now reached the end of its travel, so it was re-positioned to help the horizontal screws. This enabled piles to be added ahead of Gorgon, thus joining the port and starboard docks, which up till then had been separate entities. At this stage, the captain abandoned the use of the engines in heaving, because the sudden strain that came on to the ropes every time the engine was started was leading to excessive wear on the ropes. Deadweight too would be reduced when the boilers were emptied.

In the first week of September, yet another camel was constructed for use on the port side as well. At midday on 16 September, a southerly squall brought water into the bay and the camels were seen to bring Gorgon upright. This crushed the starboard camel and in removing this for repair, an accident happened with a capstan and this tragically resulted in the death of two men, the only fatal occurrence during the whole period of the salvage operation. The men were buried the next day in the English cemetery in Montevideo.

On the morning of 26 September a steady but gradually increasing swell was encountered in the bay and efforts were

renewed. At 8pm Gorgon started to move quite freely. Captain Hotham, full of confidence now, returned all the screws he had borrowed. One wonders if any of their owners kept them as souvenirs. Lieutenant Kay seems to have been echoing the captain's thoughts when he wrote at the end of his report: "no situation in which a ship can possibly be placed ought to justify despair: hope and exertion should only be relinquished with the breaking-up of a ship's frame". It sounds like the ideal Navy Regulation.

With the screws and purchases on shore now well beyond the end of their useful travel, the men working them could be transferred to the capstans to give a steady even pull. A fourth capstan was obtained from HMS Satellite and two more camels were constructed in record time. The latter were the last to be made, for there was now simply no more space round the ship where any more could be placed.

At the beginning of October, excavation of the dock and channel were still being continued and any leak in the camels was caulked and necessary pumping attended to. Would everything work at the next and hopefully final attempt? Lieutenant Key philosophises: "Our long looked-for release was on the eve of taking place - and yet, the thought struck us, could it be? Reason and reflection told us all that, unless some unforeseen and undreamt-of circumstance occurred, the restoration of the Gorgon must speedily be the reward granted to our five months toil and care. Yet, there is an innate feeling existing in human nature, a something within us which makes us continually anticipate a failure in obtaining it; a something indescribable, that no reason can account for, whispers that some unthought-of difficulty will appear at the last moment and destroy our endeavours."

The results of a few days more work effectually changed the current of such dark thoughts. Throughout the day of 13 October, continuous changes in the weather were experienced and everybody was alerted for immediate action as soon as conditions were right. They had moved Gorgon half her length when a runner block



carried away, but this was quickly replaced. She had moved her whole length when one of the camels slipped its lashings and was crushed. Soon the remaining camels followed its example, but four were found to be usable by cannabalising the remains of the rest. There was now no stopping the movement of the ship. She had already left the sand behind, had reached the mud and was continuing on her way. In all that day she moved over 350 feet.

On 19 October, work continued into the night until at 3 am in the dark of the following morning, as men were falling asleep at the capstans, Captain Hotham gave the order to secure cables, and the hands were piped down until daylight. Their final stint had lasted ten hours non-stop. Gorgon had been hove astern for some 70 fathoms, but was still wallowing in mud.

The following days were taken up in normal kedging operations. Just before noon on 30 October, nearly six months after her grounding, the signal was made: Gorgon IS MOORED. HMS Curaçao immediately fired a gun and all the vessels in the bay, by signal from that ship, manned the rigging and gave three hearty cheers, which the seamen of Gorgon at once returned with equal spirit.

1. Gorgon was the earliest of the Navy's vessels with direct-acting engines, which were manufactured by Seaward & Capel of Limehouse, and modified by them in 1839. The engineer/inventor William Beardmore (1824-1877) also gave much attention to the construction of these engines "in lieu of the cumbrous and antiquated forms of geared and side-lever engines then in vogue" [as it was stated in the Memoir to Beardmore in Minutes of Proceedings of the Institute of Civil Engineers LI, Part 1 (1878)]

## THE MERSEY BORE

Over thirty years ago when sailing along the Manchester Ship Canal, on what is known as Frodsham Score, I saw a tidal wave about a quarter of a mile away in the Upper Mersey. Not a large wave but certainly noticeable. Enquiries among other pilots much older than myself indicated that it was not too unusual, but seldom seen due to the vagaries of the wind weather and the pilotage rota.

I asked the Liverpool Daily post about the phenomena and learned that there was an aerial photograph which had been printed in the 1930's.

During the Spring, members Sandy and Olive Williamson were walking along the banks of the Upper Mersey just east of Hale Point opposite Runcorn when they noticed a tidal bore, this time close to the Lancashire shore.

Intrigued, they returned the following day equipped with camera and took a couple of pictures. Unfortunately although the bore appeared the height was somewhat lower than that of the previous day.

But at least they had seen it and they produced photographs to prove it.

The height of tidal bores varies with the time of tide, width and configuration of the channels, the change in height of tide and the amount of water in the river (ie the outflow).

A well-known tidal bore occurred in the Seine until the 1970's. The water rose as much as two metre in 15 seconds. People crowded the banks of the river to see it. This took its toll with an average of the loss of one life per year. Eventually the authorities ordered engineering works which eliminated the bore.

## West African Seamen in Liverpool 1880's - 1960's

Resume of a talk by Diane Frost to the LNRS 16th September at the Merseyside Maritime Museum. A full paper is to be published elsewhere in the near future. Diane is presently Macquie-Mather Research Fellow: a joint MMM/L'pool University appointment.

The focus of this paper was on the experience of one particular West African ethnic group called the "Kru" who worked as seamen and ship's labourers between Freetown and Liverpool on board Elder Dempster vessels in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Seafaring amongst West African "Kru" began as far back as the 18th century when they were taken on to replace white crews who had fallen sick or had died from fever and malaria. West Africans were also used to save white seamen from performing the more arduous tasks whilst on the African coast. The contribution of West Africans to British Maritime trade and their experience of this work had largely been ignored in accounts of British trade with West Africa. To understand both Britain's role in Africa and the experience of West African seamen it is necessary to focus on the ideological consequences of Britain's quest for empire, in particular the re-shaping of racist attitudes and practice that operated at various levels. These developments were directly linked to the historical economic needs of British capitalism, particularly shipping, where the rise and fall in the fortunes of British shipping are reflected in the employment of colonial labour. The precarious socio-economic status of West African seamen in Liverpool is examined as well as the various responses their increased use of British ships provoked.

The paper began by giving a brief examination of the historical tradition of seafaring among West African Kru on European and American vessels generally. It then went on to look at their work on Elder Dempster vessels and assessed their contribution to British mercantile trade with West Africa. The employment experience of West Africans was examined and the response of organised white labour was considered in the light of their increased use. Finally, the paper showed how migrant labour such as the Kru were marginalised in terms of employment opportunities during the inter-war years economic conditions changed for the worse.

## River Dee

The small ports of Mostyn and Shotton (Connah's Quay) are the only berths for shipping in the Dee these days. But both places are quite busy. Mostyn, an open dock with three stone quays (only two in use) broad trade from Europe and the Mediterranean. The other trade is the export of steel plate from the British Steel Corp (the former John Summers).

The shipping operation on the estuary was split between the two ports Mostyn being an independent port having links with Cumbrian harbour authorities. British Steel maintained cargo operations at the two-berth wharf (530ft long) alongside the works on the right bank of the river. Recently Mostyn became the subject of a successful management buy-out and British Steel gave up operating the two berth wharf at Shotton; the cargo loaded by the stevedores of Mostyn Docks

The editor had the opportunity to travel from sea to Shotton accompanying a pilot on German cargo vessel recently. After being loaned a coat with in-built buoyancy and safety harness (for heaving out of the water in the event of mishap when boarding) we travelled out on the launch to where the vessel had been anchored for a couple of days awaiting spring tides. Two vessels travelled up on the same flood tide swinging above the berth and berthing head-to the incoming current. The whole process took about two hours.

The outward passage is more interesting, for as the vessels are then some 8ft deeper, the channel must be surveyed at low water and the positions of the buoys adjusted where necessary. The Dee has been quite busy for years, in spite of the proximity to the Mersey. A lull a few years ago was topped by a queue of vessels waiting to use Mostyn Docks when the Mersey dockers were in dispute with the port authority. Then during the last couple of years the estuary has been affected by the general lack of trade. However in the last six months there has been quite an improvement in traffic to both Mostyn and Shotton.

## PILOTAGE ON THE MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL

PILOTS on the Manchester Ship Canal are appointed from the ranks of Helmsmen, a body separate from the Pilots for legal and remuneration purposes. The work of a helmsman was to use the helm (not always a wheel) to keep the stern of the vessel in the deeper water to achieve best steering. If a ship did not steer well the helmsman needed more helm and a good helmsman was said to be a 'lazy' helmsman in that he used only the correct amount of helm to keep the vessel in the correct position along the centre-line of the waterway. If the ship was off-centre it would tend to sheer away toward the opposite bank and/or require helm hard over and the use of increased engine revolutions. Increased speed could make things worse and become dangerous and with of the vessels carrying low-flash cargoes. Whenever other vessels were under way in the proximity, interaction impaired the handling of the vessel and with two large, 60ft+ wide vessels passing, the distance between them was seldom more than 6ft. In these conditions helmsmen were always in demand. Today's lack of traffic and immensely improved rudders, engines and bow thrusters, helmsmen's work is not so demanding.

Before 1988 their earnings were 'pooled' and the income shared equally enabling those on leave or off sick to receive income from the pool. This system smoothed what originally were large variations in earnings, variations not only seasonal but sometimes caused by government restrictions on trade - there were several minor government-induced recessions in the 50's and 60's. The following was a standard letter of 1953/4.

*I thank you for your letter applying for a position as Helmsman on the Manchester Ship Canal, and have to inform you that the necessary qualifications are that a candidate must hold at least a Second Mate's Certificate of Competency. Certificates of sobriety and good conduct, and of good health, as well as a Ministry of Transport Certificate for Form and Colour Vision are required, and one month's probationary service to the satisfaction of the*

*Authority (the Manchester Ship Canal Company) has to be completed before appointment, and at the candidate's own expense.*

*During the month's probation the candidate is required to proceed up and down the Canal with other Helmsmen, and with as many different pilots as possible, attending a minimum of twenty vessels of varying tonnages. It is not necessary to cover the whole length of the Canal on every occasion, but a reasonable number of the total passages should cover the whole length. He keeps a list of dates, vessels, tonnages, pilots and duration of passages and at the end of the month produces the list here and providing it is satisfactory he is then appointed to the Helmsmen's Service.*

*For the first six months he is limited to steering vessels not exceeding 1,500 tons gross register, unless otherwise ordered by the Authority, and for the second six months he steers vessels up to 4,500 tons gross register, subject to satisfactory service. On the satisfactory completion of twelve months as already mentioned he is then authorised to steer vessels of all tonnages navigating within the Port & Harbour of Manchester.*

*On appointment a Helmsman receives his own earnings by way of remuneration, and although I cannot, of course, say what the position may be if and when he enters the Service, the present earnings in the initial stage are about £40 per month - £50 in the intermediate class and £60 in the upper class. He is not earning when absent from duty owing to holidays or sickness and does not therefore receive any pay in such cases.*

*Generally speaking, the holder of a Ministry of Transport Certificate as Second or First Mate is, in effect, commencing a second apprenticeship, which may extend as long as ten years. The hours of duty may be long, the steering of a large vessel through the Canal frequently occupying ten or more hours, and one service on the rota may extend for several days, due to weather and other circumstances. Promotion to the Pilot Service is usually by seniority in the Helmsmen's Service. Promotion to the Pilot Service is governed solely by the needs of that service, and in consequence vacancies may not be filled immediately if the necessity does not arise.*

*When the trade of the Port is good and the Helmsmen's services are in demand they may earn good money by reason of the amount of work they perform, but conversely when trade falls off and economies are practised the Helmsmen's earnings automatically fall.*

*If with this information you are still interested in the possibility of entering the Manchester Pilotage Service, will you please complete and return the accompanying application form as soon as possible.*

**SPECIAL  
INVITATION**

# ANYTHING TO DECLARE?

**HM CUSTOMS & EXCISE NATIONAL MUSEUM**

An exciting new visitor attraction will be opening this 'Autumn on the ground floor of the Merseyside Maritime Museum - the opening phase of 'Anything to Declare?' - the National Museum of HM Customs & Excise.

The museum will tell the story of the modern era of the UK Customs and Excise service. It will be very much an interactive visitor experience with hands-on displays encouraging the participation of visitors, young and old alike. For example it is expected there will be

- a videowall giving a visual indication of the scale and scope of the work of the department
- hands-on videos/computer games explaining how taxes such as VAT are collected
- a mock aircraft fuselage with seats which will double as a cinema and rummaging experience
- a mini-simulator of a Customs Cutter (boat) in which visitors can pursue drugs runners
- a hot news corner where bulletins on the latest drugs busts etc will be given out over special phones

Other topics covered will include the Channel Tunnel, 'endangered species', excise duties, confiscated weapons and the art and tricks of smugglers and concealment.



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF CUSTOMS & EXCISE  
at Merseyside Maritime Museum



The museum will be informative and lively and is expected to appeal to a broad range of visitors ranging from young schoolchildren to those old enough to remember the days of the 'Great Ocean Liners' many of which sailed into and out of the port of Liverpool.

## An offer you can't refuse

As a valued visitor to the Maritime Museum complex you are cordially invited to be amongst the first to discover the delights of 'Anything to Declare?'.

Complete the coupon below and send it to us

and we will send you a preferential Customs Pass for the opening week of the museum (please note you will need to bring your MMM passport ticket with you as this will guarantee free entry to 'Anything to Declare?').

In any event bring this leaflet with you when you visit the museum and provided you are amongst the first 1,000 visitors you will be given a free gift by HM Customs & Excise as a thank-you for coming.



To: Dept CEM, NMOM, Marketing Department,  
PO Box JJ 127 Dale Street, Liverpool L69 8EN

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: (if under 18) \_\_\_\_\_

*NB Details subject to provisions of data protection act*

**Museum opening  
date - or call  
051 207 0001**

## **Women At Sea**

Last year a book "Jella: a Woman at Sea" by Dea Birkett was published. We now learn that another book is being compiled, this time by Jo Stanley who is writing about seafaring women. Many served as stewardesses, nurses, hairdressers, shopkeepers and other occupations on West African passenger vessels as well as the Atlantic and Australasian liners. Many served both pre- and post-War. Post-War many women were engaged as pursers and on Scandinavian ships as radio officers. Any information re women at sea in a professional capacity would be welcome . Details to Jo Stanley, 29 Morecambe Place, Widmore St. London N19 4RD

### **Advance Notice**

## **Full Day Conference on Maritime Records**

**organised by Merseyside Records Users Group**

**planned for Saturday 5th March 1994  
in the Dept of Civic Design, Abercromby Square, beginning 1030.  
A wide spectrum of maritime records will be covered**

**for application forms or further information contact  
Hon. Sec.**

**Merseyside Records Users Group  
c/o Dept of History  
University of Liverpool  
Abercromby Square.  
Liverpool L69 3BX**



# LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY



Vol 37 no 3     Winter 1993/4

## CONTENTS

And then there was Christmas	Rev. Bob Evans 61
The Lancaster Slavers	Michael Blackmon 66
Nathaniel Bowditch (1773 - 1838)	Charles Dawson 72
Palm Line	J.E Cowden 79
A Family of Upper Mersey Mariners	P. Dunbavand 82
Liverpool Bay Gas Field	report 89
Voel Nant Telegraph Station	90
Maritime Records Conference	92

*Compliments*

*of the*

*Season*

# Liverpool Nautical Research Society

## *President*

M.K. Stammers

## *Vice-Presidents*

Mrs. E.M. Summerfield N.R. Pugh

*Chairman:* A.H.McClelland *Vice-Chairman:* Graeme Cubbin

## *Council*

J.E. Lingwood A.S. Davidson Jas. E. Cowden  
G.F. Wright .....R. Dennis (Meetings Sec)

## *Hon Officers*

*Secretary:* P.J. Tebay *Treasurer:* J. Shepherd

*Archivist:* A.H. Rowson *Editor:* H.M. Hignett

## *Annual Subscriptions*

£7 Family £10

Membership and all correspondence to:-

Hon Secretary, L.N.R.S.

Maritime Records Centre

Merseyside Maritime Museum

Pier Head Liverpool L3 4AA

---

## Society Notes

There have been remarks recently, on the lack of reduced subscriptions for those on pensions or unwaged. It should be borne in mind that most of our members fall into one or other of those two categories. The benefit to the LNRS of raising the subs for others who are earning would be minimal. On enquiry it is found that most organisations such as ours have a similar membership structure.

## *AND THEN THERE WAS CHRISTMAS*

*by Canon 'Bob' Evans (member)*

Most seafarers can tell you precisely the number of times in their careers that they were home for Christmas. The reason is too obvious.

When I came to Liverpool in 1961, I looked across the road from my office in Kingston House upon the front door of the Shipping Federation, which in the Second World War provided a 'pool' of seafarers in order to man the Merchant Fleet. There were always crowds of men hanging about around the building. Each morning I could observe scores of unestablished seamen waiting on the chance of getting a berth. They were virtually casual labour, attached to no shipping company and only on the fringe of possible employment. By eleven o'clock they had crossed the road and were sitting in our downstairs canteen, the Skelton Lounge, where the air was thick with blue smoke and talk. Bertha ran that canteen and controlled them all with not a moment of difficulty. By twelve, they were up the road and safely in the Queens. The few who ventured back to us by three, invariably failed to negotiate our revolving door at James Street entrance to Kingston House. A drunk is somewhat surprised to find himself propelled back onto the street having met no-one in the process.

As Christmas approached, the queue outside the Shipping Federation grew shorter as many of the men were off to sea. The majority of hard drinkers became teetotal at sea and were first class seamen. Christmas for us in the Mission spelt the Bar Light. At one time there were four lightships on the Mersey and our task was to visit the last remaining one, the *Planet*, out at the Liverpool Bar.

The first comprehensive chart of the Mersey, produced in 1738, showed two entrances to the port, the Rock and Formby Channels. Lighthouses first appeared at Hoylake and Leasowe in the year 1763. The Leasowe Tower still stands today, although it was last used in 1908. In 1771, a light was placed on Bidston Hill and remained there for a hundred years. Many decades were to pass before lights were established at the Point of Ayr, the Calf of Man and the Skerries. Navigation could not have been easy for the seafarer.

The first Liverpool light vessel in 1813 was called the *Good Intent*. Built of wood, she weighed just 78 tons and two Mersey pilots were the masters. Stationed near the sandbank at Hoylake and carrying a blue flag, she displayed three white lights in the form of a triangle on her three masts. Twenty years later in 1833, the *Good Intent* was driven to destruction on Formby sands during a great storm. The second lightship, in 1834, was the *Milo* stationed off Formby.

The third lightship was at Crosby in 1840, but this craft was replaced two years later by the *Prince*. The *Prince* was twice the size of the *Good Intent* and the *Milo* and was built at Lairds of Birkenhead. She was the first iron lightship.

Liverpool was quickly emerging as a port and in 1873 a light vessel was placed at the Bar, which was the entrance to the North-West channel, with its dog leg passage up the Mersey.

Before the First World War, the Mission Launch, the *Good Cheer III*, was used by the chaplains to visit the Bar lightship. The use of this launch was discontinued in 1935 and the Directors of Alexandra Towing Company placed a tender at our disposal. This was the *Flying Breeze* and was used to ferry passengers off the large ocean liners as they sat out in the river. She was old and comfortable and at the end of her life. That first trip in her failed because of fog and thereafter we travelled by tug.

The last Bar lightship was the *Planet*, firmly anchored some twenty miles out from the landing stage. She sat there, with the Pilot boat circling, as they both marked the arrival and departure of all the ships. In 1972 aboard the *Salvor*, we towed a Lanby Buoy with its Racon Beacon out to the Bar, unhooked the *Planet*, and left that automatic contraption to bleep away unaided. Unfortunately, when we stood off to survey our achievement, all was not well and, because the weather took a turn for the worse, a fortnight was to pass before they could come alongside and rewind the elastic. And how sad I felt as the seven men off the *Planet* walked ashore at the landing stage carrying their little bags and their memories. It was the end of almost one hundred and fifty years of manned light vessels: there were no photographers, not a hoot on the river, just our nostalgic sadness. For me, it was almost the end of Christmas.

Christmas in the Mission started with packing two large, black, oil-skinned hampers with turkey and pudding, crackers and mince pies, allsorts of vegetables and every conceivable goody. Each man in the *Planet* was to receive a personal present, neatly wrapped and topped with ribbon. In the years we had travelled in the *Flying Breeze*, *we were able to take a Church choir together with pop and crisps which make small boys sing like angels and be seasick. I felt a little sad that my first trip on the Flying Breeze was the last, yet the voyage by tug was to provide its modicum of drama.*

One year the weather was really bad and the little tug rammed her way out of the river into the channel to the Bar. Her nosc nuzzled into the waves with water over the bridge-house, to rear up again and then meet the next wave with a resounding smack. This was exhilarating. Unknown to us, the front hatch had been dislodged and the tug had about five feet of water in her. The lower cabin was completely awash with the crew's gear. Men moved quickly. It was dangerous. Crammed into the wheel-house

was the usual complement of Granada and BBC television camera crews. That evening we opened the national news at six o'clock with the headline, 'The Day Father Christmas Almost Sank.'

In the eleven years that I was to make that journey by tug, only three times could we actually get aboard the *Planet* because of the adverse weather. That was when I discovered the immense pride of the men as every surface was polished and shining. Over the side were a motley of fishing lines and I was pleased to return home with a chunk of skate or whatever was going.

We always took a Bishop with us and there was no better companion than Bishop Laurie Brown, later the Bishop of Birmingham, who smoked a foul pipe and made us laugh. The hampers were slung across the water on ropes in good nautical fashion and we all lined the side of the tug. Facing us was the *Planet* with her crew also assembled. When we were up, they were down. The master of the tug was dressed as Father Christmas and both ships' companies sounded off with 'O Come all ye faithful' into the face of a force five. The music came and went as we seasawed on the waves, the recorders recorded, the TV cameras televised and the stomachs rumbled in unison. And there, just once, was the Bishop seasick over the side with his teeth wisely out. One tugman quietly observed, 'We brought himself out to raise the tone'.

Then we all tooted our hooters and about-faced homewards. We left *Planet* swinging her farewell with a clang of her bell and a wave of oil-skinned arms. Coming up the channel with marker buoys, all named and numbered. on either side, every passing ship sounded a greeting as all aboard bade sad adieu to Liverpool, outward bound, leaving our little tug with its motley crew and a tree up top on the mast. For them it was to be another Christmas at sea.

So we came home. It was always calmer as the whisky bottle appeared by magic and by courtesy of Alexandra Towing. Then

we munched our tomato sandwiches and rejoiced at being alive and intrepid. Many times I pieced together an article for the youngest of the reporters, as they returned from the dead, to present their copies for the local papers. All of this activity is well behind us and today, I suppose, all that can be done for a Racon Beacon at Christmas is to give it a squirt of oil, but only if the weather is fine. As Mac of the "Liverpool Echo" once put it, 'Sick Transit Gloria'.

Christmas Eve was always special. When, for six years, I was the Honorary Chaplain at the Royal Southern Hospital, leaving the dance going like a bomb at the Mission, I would join the nursing staff and the doctors, with lanterns and cloaks and carols, as we toured the wards. A reading by a nurse, a carol, a prayer and God bless each one of you. Charles Dickens would have been proud of us all.

Then followed the Midnight Service in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd in the Mission. Obviously many men had not received the bread and the wine for many years. There were all religions and liquorice allsorts of Christians and all were equally welcome. In the prayers, I tried to remember the countries and families of each man present. If I missed one, he would speak up and the prayers became a real dialogue between God and man. I suspect that was right. We said the Lord's Prayer together, but each person in his own language. Here was visible proof that God loves us all as though there were but one of us to love.

And, of course, there were mince pies and sherry and much greeting of each other. So we took the men back to their ships, where many, in the tradition of their countries, then had their Christmas dinners and dreamed of home. There is no more magical word than home.

It even beats Christmas.

# The Pursuit of Riches

or

## Lesser known Lancashire Merchants of the Slave Trade

*by Michael Blackmon (member)*

At the beginning of the 18th century, Thomas Hinde, second son of an impoverished yeoman with an estate in North Lancashire, went to sea. Why ? For reasons not certain. Younger sons of yeomen were often apprenticed in this way, but Thomas, born and raised on a farm miles from any seaport, may have heard that fortunes could be made (and lost) at sea. He was a minor, under the parental care of his mother and guardianship of his uncle, Richard Hinde, when his brother inherited their father's estate at Littledale. Yeoman Richard Hinde, an old man of over eighty held lands near Lancaster, managed his nephew's estate and presumably, with business connections at Lancaster was able to arrange an apprenticeship for Thomas.

Whatever the arrangements, Thomas found himself learning the business of a mariner in the African Slave Trade and by 1746 had acquired sufficient expertise to become the master of the brigantine *Jolly Bachelor* and during the next six years had made four voyages to Africa and was master, and part-owner of, other vessels.

In 1756 he married Ann Bryer, daughter of a wealthy and influential man, and set up on his own as a merchant operating from Lancaster, principally in the slave trade as owner or part-owner with other merchants. Thomas and Ann had ten children, two girls and eight boys, but only four of the latter survived to manhood. His eldest son, also Thomas, was until the death of Thomas (I), known as 'Junior': his father was known in the business as 'The Elder'.



The first vessel owned and managed by Thomas (I) within his own firm was called unsurprisingly *Hinde*, a ship of 140 tons built and registered at Liverpool in 1769. In that year Thomas (I) was elected Mayor of Lancaster - he was to be Mayor of that city again in 1787. The partners in the Hinde firm were Samuel Simpson, merchant of Lancaster and William Jackson, master of the *Hinde*. The registration of the vessel, according to the Customs Register in 1768 gives the name of the master as Brown. This is not unusual, Brown may have been nominated master to save an unnecessary journey for Jackson.

One year after placing *Hinde* into service, Thomas (I) introduced a second vessel, the 140ton brig *Nancy*, Capt Davis, on a regular service between Lancaster and Jamaica with goods such as cottons, furniture and household wares, returning with sugar, rum and mahogany. This vessel is mentioned in the memoirs of the notorious Captain 'Mind yer Eye' Crow master of the last slaver *Kitty's Amelia* to sail from Liverpool in 1807. In the memoirs Crow recalls taking passage from Lancaster when, as a young man, he had urgent need to return to Kingston to recover some personal possessions he had left at that port.

*Nancy* (I) was replaced by *Nancy* (II), a brig of 227 tons on 1779. This vessel maintained the regular service to Jamaica, until 1794 when she was replaced by yet another brig, *Nancy* (III) of 283 tons which sailed under Hinde & Co until sold in 1810. The run to Jamaica was the only business (apart from the Slave Trade) in which Hinde and his sons ever took part.

In 1781 Thomas junior was taken into partnership by his father and issued with shares in *Hinde*, at which time the vessel was re-registered for this purpose at Liverpool. Henceforward Hinde senior seems to have made a firm commitment to operate the vessels from Liverpool. Thomas junior took up permanent residence in the town, purchasing his Freedom of Liverpool in 1795 and becoming a member of the Committee of Merchants

Trading to Africa. He also took an increasingly important role in the company's business. The second son, John, had been sent to Jamaica to act as factor for the firm's expanding concerns in Jamaica and remained there until the Abolition of slavery in 1807. He returned to Lancaster that year to resuscitate the family interest in a direct shipping connection with the island until he died in 1812: he had remained a bachelor all his life.

Thomas junior did not marry until 1798 when he was 41 and in the year that his father died. He married well; his wife was Jane Chambre, a Lancashire heiress and well connected. In gesture of considerable wisdom he endowed his considerable property in and around Lancaster to his wife Jane by way of a marriage settlement, he having been left the major proportion of his father's wealth. When the old man died, large fortunes were left to his sons and daughters; to each of his younger sons he left £10,000 in cash and to his daughters £5,000 each. Thomas received all the property and remaining wealth of the family fortune.

On the death of Thomas the Elder the family appears to have ceased slave trading to Africa from Lancaster concentrating all its business on Liverpool. The younger brothers, William and Samuel, joined Thomas the Younger in Liverpool where they owned and operated vessels both separately and jointly. Perhaps it is as well for them that they did since, in 1802, Thomas lost all his merchanting goods and all his business possessions in the conflagration which destroyed the Goree Piazzas, wherein he had his warehouse and counting house. He had been living the life of a wealthy merchant on a small estate he owned in Everton. At this time he was Town Bailiff and a member of several important committees. Because of his misfortune he was forced to come to an arrangement with his creditors: although he was able to hold on to all the properties in Lancashire which he had settled on his Wife he was finished as a merchant in the slave trade. William and Samuel continued slaving ventures from Liverpool until 1807

when their two vessels *Trafalgar* and *Thetis* made their final voyages to Africa.

After the Abolition of Slavery Act of 1807 the Hinde Brothers retreated to Lancashire. The family interests had, for some years centred on textile milling, particularly silk in and around Lancaster and it was there the brothers went, investing their remaining wealth in those enterprises. Thomas had retired to a modest villa near Dolphinhholme and it was near to him that Samuel built a house in which to retire. William lived in style first at Ellet Hall and then at Beamont Hall where he died. Thomas and William were both appointed Justices of the Peace for their localities and both became Deputy Lieutenants for Lancashire.

The merchanting and shipping interest of the family died like a damp squib; by 1815 nothing remained but the fortunes they had made, and those were short-lived. None of their families ever desired to enter shipping again, nor became merchants. Thomas' eldest son, educated at Cambridge, entered the church. His second son, Richard, sent to Jamaica to practise as a surgeon, soon became disenchanted and returned to Lancaster where he set up as a wine merchant and like his grandfather and great uncle elected Mayor of Lancaster.

The ships owned, controlled and operated by the family from 1746 to 1815 are listed below. During those years they despatched 36 vessels to Africa, each of which made at least one round voyage. For all their successful pursuit of wealth and political power, they are today forgotten.

#### Acknowledgements:

"The Slave Trade from Lancashire and Cheshire Ports outside Liverpool, 1750/1790" by M.M. Schofield.  
Liverpool Plantation Registers; Liverpool Customs Registers in the Maritime Archives & Library, Merseyside Maritime Museum.

Family Wills: Lancashire Record Office, Preston  
Caton Parish Records and Liverpool Record Office, William Brown Street.  
Dr. N.R. Dalziel, Keeper of Maritime History, Lancaster Maritime Museum

# FLEET LIST

## Owners

A	Barber	M	William Hinde
B	Moses Benson	N	T. Inman
C	W. Boats	O	Jackson
D	P. Brancker	P	Kirby
E	C. Burrow	Q	Laurence
F	Fletcher	R	W. Parke
G	T. Hinde senior	S	Simpson
H	T. Hinde junior	T	Stanniforth
I	Hinde & Co	U	Strickland
J	John Hinde	V	G. Temple
K	Joshua Hinde	W	Campbell
L	Samuel Hinde		

LR = vessels trading from Lancaster

LL = " " " "

A = " employed in Africa Trade

J = " " " Jamaica "

Year	Name	Rig	tons	Built	Master	Owner	Trade
1748	Jolly	Brig'ne	--		T. Hinde	part	LR-A
	Bachelor						
1748	Duke of	-	35		Sandys	part	LR-A
	Cumberland						
1748	Lancaster	-	80		Paley	part	LR-A
1748	Prince	-	35		Eccles	part	LR-A
	George						
1748	Africa (I)	-	--			G	LR-A
1764	Dove	-	--			G, A	LR-A
1769	Hinde (I)	ship	140	1769	Brown	G, S, O	LR-A
				L'pool			LL-A
1770	Nancy (I)	brig	120	-	Davis	G	LR-J
							sold 1778
1779	Nancy (II)	"	227	1773	Butcher	G	LR-J
				Lanc'r			sold 1794
1781	Hinde (II)	ship	100	New	Jackson	G, H, S, O	LL-A
				reg'y			
1782	Africa (II)	b'k	100		Brown	G	LR-A
1779	Cohen	-	212			G, H	LR-A
1795	Sam	Schooner	109			H	LR-A
	Alice *					G	LR-A
1782	Tamagan	Sloop	40		Noble	G, D, H, S	
							African coastal tender
1792	Nancy (III)	Brig	283	--	Skaife	G	LL-J
					Nicholson		sold 1810
1794	Hinde (III)	ship	284	--	Kirby	G	LL-A
1794	Will	schooner	81	--	Sutton	D, H, T, G, B	LL-A

1794	Minerva	Br'tine	152	--	-	G, H, M,	LL-J
1795	John (I)	ship	293	--	Marshall	G	LL-A
1796	Golden	ship	350	prize	Jackson	G, H, O	LL-A
	Age			of war			
1798	Nancy (IV)	ship	380	" "	Kirby	G, H, P	LL-A
					Marshall		sold 1808
1799	Young	boat	14		Roberts	B, C, H, M	African beach tender
	John						
1800	Bellona	ship	364	--	Skaife	I	LL-A
1800	Maria	brig	114	--	Douglas	I	LL-A
1800	Adriana	ship	280	--	Kirby	G, K, L	LL-A
1801	Jane (I)	ship	345	--	Christie	G, M	LL-A
1801	Beaver	ship	262	--	Campbell	L, M	LL-A
1801	Diligent	brig'ne	378	--	Marshall	L, M	LL-A
1802	Nancy (V)	ship	300	--	Nicholson	G, L, W	LL-J
1804	Triton	ship	340	--	Marshall	I	LL-A
1805	Nelly	ship	310	--	Seddon	L, M,	LL-A
1805	Eagle	brig'ine	186	--		N, L, M,	LL-A
1806	Hills-	sloop	86	--	Lundy	L, M	LL-A
	borough						
1807	Thetis	ship	290	--	Christie	I	LL-A
1807	Trafalgar	ship	267	--	Seddon	L. M	LL-A
					Keen		
1808	Thomas	ship	214	owned	Hughes	J, E, R, V	LL-J
				in			
				Jamaica			
1809	John (II)	ship	464	owned	Woodhouse	J, E, R, V	LL-J
				in			
				Jamaica			
1809	Jane (II)	ship	464	owned	Hughes	J, E, R, V	LL-J
				in			
				Jamaica			
1810	Lord	ship	397	--	Mortimer	L	LL to
	Rodney						W Indies
1810	Ainsley	snow	149	--	Marshall	L, V	LL to
							Trinidad
1811	Rose	ship	387	--	Thompson	M, Q, F	LL to
							Brazil
1812	Contest	brig	300	--	J. George	K	LL-J
					W. Keene		sold 1815

\* In 1789 Thomas Hinde is stated to hold 5/12 of a vessel named Alice (205 tons): Customs Register No 130 of 1787

## NATHANIEL BOWDITCH: Scientist and Captain (1773-1838)

*by Charles Dawson*

To many millions of seafarers, and not only fellow-Americans, the name Bowditch is synonymous with the great man's life-work in the form of what is one of the most comprehensive guides to navigation ever made available to mariners. That the guide originally based on his magnum opus in the navigational field can still be referred to by his name so many years after his death is proof enough of its standing.

Nathaniel Bowditch was descended from an English family which emigrated to Massachusetts in the 17th century, early in the history of the American colony, and Nathaniel was born on 26th March 1773 in Salem where the family had lived ever since those early days.

Nathaniel's father is reputed to have lost two ships at sea and in despair returned to the trade of cooper, to which he had been apprenticed in his youth. His business however went badly, and during one spell the family was in such dire straits that they were having to rely upon a grant at the rate of some 15 to 20 dollars per year from the Salem Marine Society. In order to help out with the family finances, young Nathaniel was therefore forced to leave school at only 10 years of age, but, not being keen on the coopering trade, he took the chance of entering the first of two shipschandlery firms in which he worked for a time.

During his spare hours this self-taught young genius became highly proficient in mathematics and a whole range of foreign languages. That he could also translate theory into practice he was able to show when he helped with an early survey of his home-town.

By his mid-teens he had become a recognised authority to whom learned men flocked in competition with one another to supply him with otherwise hard-to-obtain books. It is said that he even pointed out a slip in Newton's classic "*Principia*", and that, though lacking in the confidence to announce it then, he later published his findings and had them accepted.

The way in which some of the books he studied came to be where they were makes a fascinating story, which is related below.

During the War of Independence, marauding American privateers perhaps never made a more unusual capture than that by the 200 ton, 16 gun privateer *Pilgrim* of Beverly, a township across the inlet from Salem. She was probably built at Newburyport and was owned by Andrew and John Cabot of Beverley. Her captain was Hugh Hill who was renowned for the rate at which he took prizes, but he became most famous for this prize that he took while cruising the Irish coast in 1780.

He came upon the 34 gun English ship *Mars* and a bloody battle ensued before *Mars* surrendered. The English vessel had left Galway on 5th September bound for London with a precious cargo, the valuable library of the famed Irish scholar Dr. Richard Kirwan.

After *Pilgrim* brought her prize into Beverly on 9th February 1781, the books were sold at auction. The books thus brought to America were purchased by a group of educated Salem men who used them as their basic stock when they founded the Philosophical Library Company, which later became the Salem Athenæum. The books are still there and the naval action that led to their being there is depicted in a simple anonymous water-colour painting which is also in the Library's collection.

When Bowditch was 18, two Harvard-educated ministers of the church persuaded the company to present Bowditch with a member's ticket to the library. By the time he was 21 years of age, the knowledge that Bowditch had acquired from those books and others, both in his spare time and outside his long working hours, had probably made him the outstanding mathematician in the country.

It was inevitable that most sons in that New England seaport should eventually find themselves drawn to the seafaring life. Two of Nathaniel's brothers lost their lives at sea at a tragically young age and however much a scholar he was, Nathaniel's turn to go to sea also came in the winter of 1795, when he was signed on as clerk to Captain Henry Price of the ship *Henry*, on a voyage to the island which is now called Réunion. Because of his reputation as a scholar he was given the nominal rank of second mate.

Two months before sailing for Cadiz on his third voyage, in 1798, Bowditch married Elizabeth Boardman, the young daughter of a shipmaster, but tragedy struck while he was away; she died at the age of 18. Two years later, he married his cousin, May Ingersoll, she too the daughter of a shipmaster. They were blessed with eight children.

Although Harrison's chronometer was already available by the end of the eighteenth century, the average ship could not take advantage of it for establishing longitude because of its still prohibitive cost. The so-called "Lunar-distance" method required no accurate timepiece, but unfortunately it was too complicated for the average navigators of the day. Consequently, they generally fell back on a combination of dead reckoning and parallel sailing, - what might be called the "stepwise" process by which a ship sails north or south to its required latitude and then



east or west to its destination. It still took some time before great circle sailing became the established practice.

John Hamilton Moore's guide "The Practical Navigator" was the standard work of the day and when Bowditch came to consult this during his first voyage, he observed errors and diligently recorded them for further treatment. By the end of his second voyage, he had been able to list so many slips that news of this reached Edmund Blunt, a publisher at Newburyport, Mass., who commissioned Bowditch to write the revised version, "The New Practical Navigator", which came out in 1799.

Bowditch continued to find more errors or perhaps we might better call them deviations since he was moving towards new, simplified but nevertheless more accurate formulæ on which to base his tables. The curves that he developed are still denoted by his surname. The outcome of his endeavours was that it was finally considered hopeless to continue with this "patching-up" process, and in 1802 the first edition of his completely fresh work "The New American Practical Navigator" was published under his own name. In addition to his improved method of determining longitude, his book, by this time a comprehensive mariner's "vademeccum", gave the ship's officer a mass of new information on winds, currents, and tides to mention only a few subjects.

His vow regarding his new work was virtually a challenge; he claimed that nothing was there that the "intelligent and willing seaman" could not himself grasp and apply. His maxim was "example is better than precept", clearly shown by the way in which he carried it out in the form of a journal kept from Boston to Madeira "in which all the rules of navigation are introduced".

It is probably no exaggeration to say that together with Maury's work on winds and currents which Bowditch no doubt

later consulted, and the new American methods of fast ship design, his guide helped to pave the way for the American successes during the clipper era.

Bowditch marked the last nine or so years of his seafaring period with five long voyages, serving as supercargo and afterwards as master, his very last being as captain and part-owner of the ship *Putnam* on a year-long voyage to Sumatra and the Ile de France, now Mauritius.

On his final homecoming from sea, approaching Salem on Christmas Day 1803, he earned renown for himself in the most fitting way he could possibly have done in a demonstration of practical seamanship that, it is said, "left other masters gasping when they heard of it". At the time of his bravado, they were hove-to outside the harbour.

Bad weather, thick fog or a snow-storm, - reports differ - had prevented his making a celestial observation since noon on Christmas Eve, so, relying on his dead reckoning, he "conned his ship to the entrance of the rocky harbour". He was fortunate enough to get a momentary glimpse either of one of the local points or a light - reports differ once again - but sufficient to confirm his position. He went on in, past Great Misery Island and the hazard of "Bowditch's Ledge", named after his great-grandfather who had wrecked his ship on the rock more than a century previously, and anchored safely that evening.

After this, his double reputation as skilful master and man of science earned him a lucrative position ashore within a very short time, at still only 30 years of age. He was installed as President of a local fire and marine insurance company and steered it to great prosperity over the next twenty years. He then moved from there to a similar position, and equally successfully, with a Boston firm, and remained with them until his death.

Harvard College presented Bowditch with honorary degrees, and he played a large part, in various administrative posts, in its progress to its top position. He was offered various professorships by Harvard, West Point Military Academy and the University of Virginia, but declined them all. He seems to have preferred the printed to the spoken word, for no record exists of his ever having made a public speech or addressed any large audience. Following his recognition at home, Bowditch was showered with honours all over the world.

During many of the years he was employed, he still found time to continue to pursue his scientific interests. To the millions who have known or used his guide, the work he himself considered his greatest is probably largely unknown. It was the translation into English of the astronomical work of Laplace, to which he turned in 1814. Before he died he had completed four of the five volumes and even published them at his own expense. As with his guide, his version always has in mind the novice and is presented so that the steps to the most complicated conclusions can logically be traced with the least difficulty.

Bowditch revised his navigator's guide several times for subsequent issues. After his death, Jonathan Ingersoll Bowditch, a son who had also followed the family sea tradition, took up his father's work and his name appeared on the title page from the eleventh to the thirty-fifth edition, which appeared in 1867.

In the following year, the then newly-organised US Navy Hydrographic Office bought the copyright. From time to time, revisions have been made to keep the work in step with navigational improvements. In 1972, the Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic Center was assigned the responsibility for its publication and has had it ever since. Although the guide now has the official title "American Practical Navigator", it is still commonly - we might say lovingly - known as "Bowditch". A

total of some million copies has been printed in some 70 editions during the time since the original work was first published.

Nathaniel Bowditch outlived all his brothers and sisters by nearly 30 years. The eulogy given out by the Salem Marine Society at his death in 1838, with due deference to the high-flown poetical style of the period, indicates the high regard in which he was held by his contemporaries:

“In his death a public, a national, a human benefactor has departed. Not this community, nor our country only, but the whole world, has reason to do honour to his memory. When the voice of Eulogy shall be still, when the tear of Sorrow shall cease to flow, no monument will be needed to keep alive his memory among men; but as long as ships shall sail, the needle point to the north, and the stars go through their wonted courses in the heavens, the name of Dr. Bowditch will be revered as of one who helped his fellow-men in a time of need, who was and is a guide to them over the pathless ocean, and of one who forwarded the great interests of mankind”.

Sources:

“Bowditch”.

The National Cyclopædia of American Biography.

Personal communications from:

Mr. Henri Bourneneuf, Reference Librarian, Harvard College Library, Cambridge, Mass., USA.

Mrs. Cynthia Wiggin, Librarian, Salem Athenæum, Salem, Mass., USA.

## APPREHENDED AT DAKAR

by J.E. Cowden

Mid 1937 Elmina & Company (United Africa & Co Ltd - managers) took delivery of two fine looking cargo ships which were given the typical West African names of *Gambian* (derived from the former British colony of the Gambia) and the *Takoradian* (derived from the port of Takoradi in the former British colony of the Gold Coast).

These two ships were delivered from the German shipyard of Deutsche Sch-u-Msch, A.G. Seebeck, Wesermunde being steel screw motorships of some 5452 tons gross with a deadweight of 8055 tons. Principal dimensions being - 438.11 x 56.09 x 24.00, with propulsion provided by a Man 2 single acting, 6 cylinders (420 x 580 mm) oil engine, single reduction geared to a single shaft giving a service speed of 12 knots.

Comfortable accomodation was provided for the carriage of twelve pasengers. On completion they were immediately placed on the firms regular United Kingdom-North Europe - West Africa services.

With the outbreak of the Second World War both *Gambian* and *Takoradian* were placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of War Transport under the Liner Requisition Scheme. Still operating on the West Africa trade both ships departed from the United Kingdom within days of each other in ballast bound for Nigeria with orders to replenish their bunker supplies at the French colonial port of Dakar, Senegal. The *Takoradian* was first to arrive at Dakar on 30th June 1940 followed a few days later (2nd July) by *Gambian*.

Although the British and French were fighting the same cause some parts of the French colonial empire had turned "Vichy". It was therefore on the 5th July that both ships were boarded and seized by the Vichy French authorities. It was not until early August 1940 that the agreed loss date for both ships were posted by the Ministry of War Transport. Both ships lay at Dakar, during which time, the Vichy French authorities renamed the ships *St. Gabriel* (Gambian) and *St. Paul* (Takoradian). Neither ship voyaged, with only the *Gambian* being used as a cargo warehouse.

It was not until early 1943 that both ships were released and following a general overhaul were handed back to the Ministry of War Transport who immediately renamed them *Empire Tweed* (Gambian) and *Empire Swale* (Takoradian) and thus placed both ships under the management of the United Africa Co. They duly carried these names until April 1946 when they reverted back to their original names and again slotted into the firms normal pattern of trading.

Grief came close to the *Takoradian* during October 1948 whilst discharging in Copenhagen harbour. When discharging oilseeds at 10 am smoke was seen coming from the palm-kernel stow which developed into the worst shipboard fire the fleet had experienced.

The fire lasted 24 hours, the intense heat being generated by burning rubber. The engine room, however, escaped with little damage because the palm oil (which reached a temperature of 170°f) in the adjacent tanks protected it from the flames.

Come 1947/48 much change was seen to be taking place within our West African colonies which caused the United Africa Co. to re-think how best to operate their shipping interests. Not only was change taking place within our colonies

the British Government in power at that time had indicated that ship owning could well be nationalised. The United Africa Co. being both traders as well as shipowners feared that both their operations could well fall under Governmental control. As a result, the formation of the Palm Line Ltd took place during 1949 which took over the ship owning- operating portion of the United Africa Co. This change therefore brought about a further name change for both the *Gambian* and *Takoradian*.

The Palm Line wishing to retain a West African flavour to the names of their ships, and also incorporate the name "Palm" decided to rename as follows:

*Gambian* became *Gambia Palm*

*Takoradian* became *Takoradi Palm*

By 1959, both ships were getting a little long in the tooth and, furthermore, new tonnage had been added to the Palm Line fleet.

Therefore both *Gambia Palm* and *Takoradi Palm* were sold for further trading to Kyclades Cia Maritima S.A. Lebanon and renamed *Irini's Blessing* and *Irini's Luck* respectively with registry at Beirut.

May 1963 the former *Takoradi Palm* was sold to demolition at Vigo, Spain whilst July 1967 the former *Gambia Palm* was sold for demolition in Hong Kong.

## *Six Generations of Watermen*

*by Percy Dunbavand (member)*

In July 1977 my sister living in Johannesburg, wrote to me with problems tracing our family tree. The distance involved was large part of the trouble, so I agreed to help out from the Runcorn end. In long searches I have gone back as far as 1719 on the Dunbavand side and am intrigued by the number of watermen and mariners in the family and find I am the fifth generation in a direct line going back to the 1830's. I then decided to trace the vessels and firms sailed and worked with.

The first seafarer was great-great-grandfather Thomas Dunbavand, baptised at St. Mary's, Halton 11.2.1816. He married Sarah Howard at All Saints, Runcorn 6.11.1836 and over the nine years they had five sons. On each birth certificate Thomas's trade was declared to be 'flatman' (Bridgewater Navigation ? or Mersey & Irwell ?).

Sarah died 28.9.45 aged 28 and her twin sons Robert & William born 1842 both died young in 1842 & 1844. The oldest son John, my great-grandfather, born 1837 probably worked on the water from the earliest age. In the census of 1861 he is listed as sailor, and did sail in Runcorn schooners. The first vessel we know of was the *Julia* in which he served as mate between 1867 and 1868 - his younger brother was master of the vessel. In his later years he worked on the sailing barges of the United Alkali Co, trading on the Mersey and on occasion round the coasts of North Wales or to Fleetwood on the north Lancashire coast and once took a sailing flat which had no bulwarks to Ireland!



In 1893/4 he was master of William Cooper's (Widnes) mast flat *Julia* which was lost off Penmaenmawr on 19.2.1903.

John married Elizabeth Crank at All Saints 3.7.59: they had eight children; five sons and three daughters. Of these only my grandfather, Thomas William (I), followed in father's calling.

We thought Thomas William (I), born 1877, had always worked for U.A.Co, but on his marriage certificate he is entered as labourer. My Grandmother, Betsey Lydiate, was the daughter of a local waterman. They had twelve children (eight sons, four daughters) of which seven sons had connections with the waterside. Percy (1898) was a deckhand on the Old Weston Point tugs from 1912 until he joined the RN in 1915. He lost his life in 1917 when HMS *Tartar* was mined in the English Channel. Thomas William was mate a the mast flat *Supply* 1904-1909, master of the following mast flats *Cairo* 1919, *Eva* 1930's and *Olivet* 1930's to 1940's.

Thomas William (II) (1899) first worked for the Salt Union before joining the Manchester Ship Canal Dredging Dept. from there he joined the RN in 1917 serving in HMS *Colossus* before returning to the MSC in 1919 and remained there until his death in 1959. Fred started as third hand of a mast flat with U.A.Co. and then went deep-sea in the Cunarder *Ascania* but was paid off because of war damage, there being no stand-by pay for boys. He then took a berth with a U.A. Co's coaster *Le Blanc* until joining the RN in 1919. He served as a regular and in the reserve until his discharge in 1944 when he returned to U.A.Co (at that time amalgamated with I.C.I.). He was chief Engineer of the coaster *Cerium* until his death in 1950.

My father, George (1903), started work with the U.A. Co in 1916 when he was 13 years old, as third hand of the mast flat

*Cairo*. In 1922 he was mate of the jigger flat *Florence*, and the last vessel he was with was the steam barge *Gallium* in the 1930's. He then worked in I.C.I.'s Castner Kellner works at Weston Point from 1948 until his death in 1957.

John (1905) served his time as a barber but had a short spell at Sea with Elder Dempster's *Apapa*, making two trips before being bitten by a tropical bug which forced him to abandon sea life in 1922. Eric (1907) joined the U.A. Co's steam barge *Arthur* about 1921 and later made a trip in Furness Withy's *Italian Prince*. from there I understand he joined a U.A. Co's coaster and while working cargo near Colwyn Bay, fell down the ship's hold breaking his neck. He eventually recovered but I think he worked ashore after that and in 1940 managed to talk his way into the RN as a sick-bay attendant, serving in Flower-class corvette HMS *Thyme* until invalided out in 1942. Wilf (1920) served his time as a fitter and served in the RN from 1939 to 1961. His first ship was HMS *King George V* in which he served from Oct 1940 to Nov 1946 and remained in the RN until 1961.

Moving on to the next generation, I am the eldest male. I commenced working life with the MSC 9th Sept 1942 as telephone lad on Old Quay Lock. The next year I moved to Old Quay Bridge (traffic control used the bridge- and lock-crews to pass instructions etc) and thence as lad to the tide packet *Manchester* (Tom Hampson, master). This was 1944/5 and the next move was sick-berthing (relief crew) on the MSC tugs, the first being the *Partington* and lastly as deckhand on the *Stanlow*. In 1948 I left the MSC to join the Mersey, Weaver & Ship canal Carrying Co as mate of the barge *John & William*, which had belonged to the A.U.Co from about 1890 until 1937. She was built at Winsford and I understand that my Father, Grandfather

and great Grandfather had all sailed in her. After about a year she was withdrawn prior to breaking up and I returned to the MSC tugs. My regular berths were: lad on *Rixton* and *Onward*; deckhand on *Rixton*, *Mount Manisty*, *Onset*, *Quarry*; mate of *Onward*, *Neptune*, *Quarry*, *Quest*, *Sovereign*, and then master of *Merlin*, *Quarry*, *Quest*, *Talisman* and finally *Sceptre*.

I have five cousins who have also worked for the MSC. Two brothers had a spell with the Dredging Dept before joining the Fire Service and another pair of brothers had a spell with the tugs one was mate of the dredging tug *Dawn*.

This brings me to the sixth generation, and my son Peter started working with the MSC in 1972 in 1980 was on the *Scimitar*.

Returning to my great-Grandfather's brothers, I found that the youngest, William (1844) had sailed in a number of local schooners. He signed off *Margaret* (102 tons, built Runcorn 1841) 30th June 1869, rejoining *Redtail* in August 1868 as AB and signing off June the following year. He then sailed on the *Brackley* (88 tons, bt Runcorn 1854) and remained there until 12th May 1870, when he joined the *George & Sarah* (68 tons, bt Frodsham 1838) as mate 16th May 1870 until he signed off 5th May 1871. He was mate of the *Redtail* from 23rd Feb 1872 and signed off 30th June 1872. William died 7th April 1875; he had a son who died young.

The other brother Thomas, born 1839, was the best known. after his mother died in his early years he was brought up by a widowed charwoman, Mary Hignett. He went to sea when very young but the first evidence I have is with the Liverpool schooner *Alma* which he left 17th Feb 1863 when appointed master of the Runcorn vessel *John*. He left that vessel

to join the *Julia* on 19 May 1863 and stayed there until his cousin took over as master 4th July 1868.

Thomas then stood by a schooner on the stocks being built by Blundell & Mason of Runcorn. This was the *Redtail* <sup>1</sup>(91.32 tons, 88' oa x 20.5' beam x 9.25' depth of hold) launched by Thomas's wife Sarah (nee Hampson). Thomas stayed on the *Redtail* from July 1868 until he left 3rd march 1883 to take over the 3-masted schooner, *Fox* built by J. Brundritt at Runcorn, and launched, this time by one of Thomas's daughters on 7th April 1883 (127 tons, 96.33' oa x 22.45' beam 10.17' depth). After signing articles on 14th April 1883, Thomas sailed with the schooner for nearly twentyseven years.

He met an unseemly end. The *Fox* left Cowes IoW 18th December 1909 and arrived Southampton the following day. She had lain at anchor for nearly a month, when, on 16th January 1910 Thomas disappeared, presumably fallen overboard, although his body was never found. The *Fox* lasted merely another year, for she left Runcorn with coal for Pentewan, Cornwall, January 1911 and whilst at anchor in Fishguard Bay, her cables parted during a gale and she was driven ashore on Saddle Point. The crew were rescued by Coast Guard rocket apparatus. The master at the time was John Richard Janion, of another well-known Runcorn seafaring family. The *Fox* was broken up where she lay, but I found the figurehead preserved as the entrance to a bungalow "Fox Cottage" in the small village called Stop & Call just outside of Goodwick, Fishguard. the figurehead was a fox. Several years later the figure head was hidden away in a barn. It is a pity it could not be returned to Runcorn.

Thomas had shares in a number of local vessels including the *Redtail*, *Fox* and *Countess of Carrick*. He also had shares in

the *Marquis of Lorne* but as she was lost on Harry Furlong's Reef (west of Point Lynas) seven months after he bought the shares, his investment was worthless. Thomas had married Sarah Hampson at St. George's Church Everton in May 1863 and they had four sons and four daughters, but only the oldest, John, 1864 followed in the father's footsteps. He left school at 13 to join his father as boy on the *Redtail* July 1878. The following year he was promoted to cook at 14 shillings (70p) per month. When 16 he was an ordinary seaman at £1 per month and in January 1883 came a rise to £1.10 sh (£1.50) per month. When he and his Father joined the *Fox* he was still O S. but at £2 p.m. and when 19 he received £2.10sh p.m. Promoted to mate in Sept 1884 he was paid £4 p.m. He left the *Fox* in June 1888 after five years to join the Fleetwood schooner *John Wignall*, but not for long as he was mate of the Chester schooner *Pride of the Dee* from 7th July to 15th August 1888. He then returned to the *Fox* as mate until leaving 21st May 1890. This time to join the Runcorn schooner *Guiding Star*<sup>1</sup> as master, the previous master having died through the effects of drink. John sailed with this vessel until sometime in 1893 when he joined the MSC Dredging dept. He was paster of the *Loch Erne* for many years mostly at Arpley (near Warrington) and was instrumental in the recovery of the ancient dug-out "Howley Canoe" now preserved in Warrington Museum. John retired in 1924. He had married Mary Hancock in Runcorn 1891 and according to custom, his crew blockaded the church-yard until he gave them a guinea each. Mary had five sons and four daughters. Only one son, Tom, worked afloat,

Tom 1894 became mate on Crossfields (of Warrington) barges, but later on joined the MSC Dredging Dept. In 1920 he emigrated to Queensland, Australia, and worked ashore. All

the family moved out to Australia. John did not stay but lived near Preston for many years - he died in 1919 aged 94.

Another branch of the family was involved in maritime affairs. My great Gandfather's cousin John Dunbavand (1823) was a well-known schooner master sailing in Runcorn vessels. He sailed in local sailing flats in his later years and was master of the *Maria Lyon* in 1898, but in 1901 he was mate - in the *Julia* and the *Fanny*. He last vessel was the *Edith* in 1903 when he was 80 years old. He died on 1910 aged 86. They had three sons two of them went to sea. Thomas (1844) was a master mariner who died at Swansea in 1892. Thomas's brother John (1849) was also a mariner last heard of living in West Hartlepool.

The schooner fleets have disappeared and the firms operating flats were taken into larger concerns, many of which have themselves been taken over. We will not see such craft moving in the Upper Mersey again.

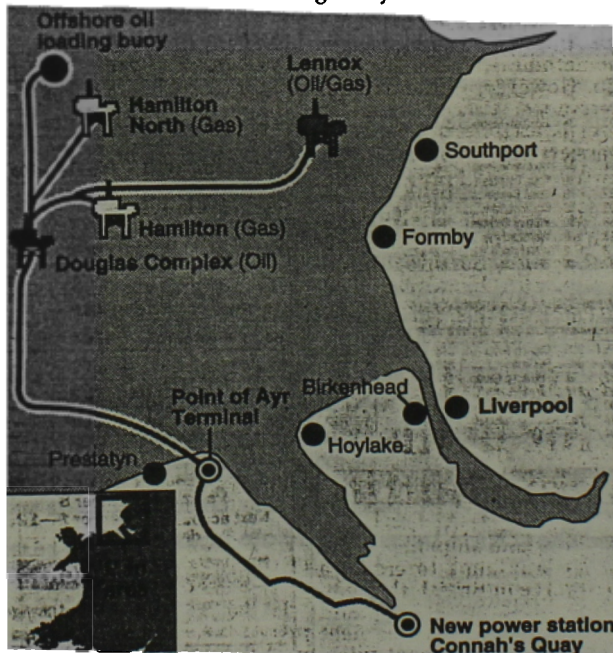
1: *Redtail* lost on passage from St. Valery. Left that port 13.6.1917

2: *Guiding Star* br Perth 1866, 103tons 82.1' x 22' x 9.78' Lost 16.4.1928 50m SE from Ballycotton Lighthouse.

## Hydro-carbon Production in Liverpool Bay

RESULTS of successful exploration to find, and develop, energy sources in the regions waters are now evident. Hamilton Oil drilled into a medium-sized gas-field, but they and their partners Lasmo and Monument Oil & Gas Co also found considerable quantities of oil in the same area. For a couple of years they have been going through the legal procedures which are necessary in our democracy to bring the gas ashore at the best possible site. The gas will go to an installation near the Point of Ayr on the west side of the entrance to the Dee estuary: the smelly (and poisonous) gas will be treated during processing at the installation. A new gas-fired power station has been under construction for the past year at Connah's Quay, designed to take a considerable portion of the gas produced in the off-shore field.

The cluster of fields, among the closest inshore, contain up to 1,200 billion cu.ft. of gas. The 150m/200m barrels of oil is to be distributed via an off-shore loading buoy to the north of the fields.



## VOEL NANT TELEGRAPH STATION

The Telegraph Station, also known locally as the Coastguard or the Lookout, was erected in 1841 by the Trustees of Liverpool Docks, as a stone tablet set in the building wall tells us. The Trustees established the signal system to give advance information of vessels bound for the port and passing Holyhead. This allowed the merchants time to prepare for an arriving cargo. There were twelve signal stations from the westernmost on Holyhead Mountain to the Liverpool terminus on the old Tower Building. The stations also reported the positions of the four Liverpool pilot cutters.

At each station houses were built to accommodate the signalmen, who maintained a constant watch during daylight hours. The windows of the lookout room, glazed with high quality glass, had small opening panes for using high-powered telescopes. Above the roof was a wind-vane connected to an indicator pointer on the boarded ceiling below, which was marked with the points of the compass. Logbooks kept with disciplined accuracy and, with the help of codebooks, messages could be transmitted with amazing speed from Holyhead to Liverpool. There were twin semaphore masts outside, each of which had two pairs of pivoting arms operated by a chain and lever mechanism. It was claimed that in this way the signallers would be able to transmit up to 40,000 different signals by varying the angles of the arms. However in reduced visibility the system was much impaired.

On a stone slab outside Voel Nant boundary wall there was a small warning cannon. Iron retaining rings embedded in the slab were used to prevent recoil when the gun fired rockets warning the lifeboat of vessels in distress. The last semaphore signal was sent 24th November 1860. The next day the electric telegraph began operation and the station became a private house.



18 Durrington Avenue, Wimbledon London SW20 8NT

31st October 1993

Dear Sir,

I wonder if a fellow member of the LNRS can tell me anything about three books which were published or at least planned, in the 1930's.

A couple of years ago I came across a copy of Nigel W. Kennedy's "Records of Early British Steamers" in the catalogue of a second hand maritime bookseller. I snapped it up, having only once before seen a copy of this remarkable book. Kennedy had been through every publication he could find, including many newspapers, and extracted all information he could about early steamships. According to Mr. Fred Hawks, who has researched the subject through registration documents in the PRO, there are a few errors in the book usually because newspapers quoted slightly different names for the same ship. However Fred acknowledges that it is a valuable source of information in an important and all-too-poorly documented area.

According to the book's introduction, it was to be the first part of a four-part work, and Capt Kennedy intended the three further books to be:

- 2) extension of steam navigation around the British Isles
- 3) Commentary on the records of the earliest British steamships
- 4) Mersey steamships

Harry Hignett tells me that Nigel Kennedy was a founder member of the LNRS and that the Merseyside Museum have a pamphlet entitled "Mersey Steamships", which may be Kennedy's fourth book.

"Records of Early British Steamers" was published at Liverpool in 1933 by Charles Birchall, who formerly owned *SEA BREEZES* and *JOURNAL OF COMMERCE*, and it has been suggested that Kennedy's father was editor of the latter.

Does anyone know of or, better still, possess a copy of any of these later books? It is I suspect, books 2 and 3 were never published, it is possible that Kennedy's manuscript or failing that his records survive: does anyone know of their whereabouts? With their historical value one would hope they found their way into a museum or library somewhere.

I would be pleased to hear from anyone who knows anything about N.W. Kennedy's records or his three later books.

Yours sincerely

Roy Fenton (member)

# MERSEYSIDE RECORDS USERS GROUP

FULL DAY

## CONFERENCE ON MARITIME RECORDS

Saturday 5th March 1994

The speakers will not only speak on their respective topics of research, but will outline their use of local, regional and national records. Presenters are :

Ken Senar with details of an immigrant voyage to Australia via South Africa in the 1920's during which there was a mutiny and other difficulties. Reports of Official Inquiries were used to research the voyage.

Babrara Yorke looking at material re the Formby Lifeboat, uncovered details showing the life-boat station to be the earliest in Britain. She will show film of the station in action and outline the records used in the research.

G.W. Place has researched Parkgate history. Local archive material was not easy of access and he will give details of the records used which are, for such a port, widely spread.

Adrian Jarvis will explain his use of the records of the Mersey Docks Board lighting the incompetence and corruption appearing in MD&HB records and even in contemporary newspaper reports.

Conference Fee inc. morning/afternoon coffee, lunch etc:  
(members & unwaged) £6 Non-members £12

details from Hon Sec M.R.U.G. c/o Dept of History  
Liverpool University, 8 Abercromby Square  
Liverpool L69 3BX

From Adrian Allan, Assistant Archivist, L'pool University

Over the past few years the University Archives has enjoyed the assistance of the loyal band of volunteers. Sadly this extended family has been depleted through the death of a long-standing Friend of the University.

One of the largest deposited archives which we hold is that of the Cunard Steamship Company and, as you can imagine they generate a large number of enquiries. Given our limited manpower resources, we have been fortunate to have the services of volunteers, one of whom has devoted most of his time to answering Cunard queries. However, it is likely that in the foreseeable future, through promotion, he will no longer be able to come in one day a week in his free time to continue this work. It is for this reason that I write to you.

Possibly members of the LNRS able to spare a few hours a week might be interested in undertaking voluntary work here. If so we would welcome a call from them to Michael Cook or myself on 051 794 5424.

## KYLE TRANSPORT - a postscript

Readers may be interested to know that the Kyle Transport Co's fleet (BULL vol 37, No 2) is represented in the ship model collection of the Merseyside Maritime Museum. The *Coila* of 1911 is a builder's model on a scale of 1:64 (3/16 ins = 1ft) and was presented to Liverpool Museum in 1931 by Alexander Bicket. She is an important model because she is a good representative of a Liverpool shipowner's interest in tramp shipping. the smaller Liverpool companies, many of which were in the tramping business rather than the cargo liner service, have not ben examined except in a few cases. For example Guy R. Sloman's 'Some Lesser-known Liverpool Shipping Companies' which dealt with R.P. Houston, The Bedouin Steam Navigation Company and Strong, Reid & Page. D.K.C. Eccles should be congratulated for adding the Kyle Transport Co. to the list.

M.K.S.

A Sri Lankan (Ceylon) vessel in 1954 had the following name: Venayasowpakialethemy. Readers may know a longer name. But at the turn of the century there was vessel with the name:

Thyrialetchemy (built 1892) by Valvettiturai.

Not quite as long but think of the owner's name:

Culantavaliiepillar Somasundarumpillay

Sittampalam Ponnusamy I think the last two words are the name of the master.

Think of trying to send those names by semaphore or morse.

# LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY



Vol 37 no 4

Spring 1994

## CONTENTS

The Wreck of the <i>Earl Moira</i> , packet boat 1821	93
Larrinaga and Company 1882 - 1918	DKC Eccles 102
Refinery to Ribble	P. Kenyon 108
UAC and the German Connection	J.E. Cowden 112
Maritime Information Association	114
Thomas Dover (1660-1742) Physician	Charles Dawson 116

### April Meeting

Unfortunately Mr. Norbury-Williams is unable to speak to us in April. In his place Ken Senar will relate an intriguing tale of an emigrant voyage to Australia undertaken by his grandparents in 1919. The vessel, "Bahia Castillo", an ex-German vessel had been taken as War reparations and which was returned to German ownership in 1922. The master and mate were making their first voyages as such. The ship also carried troops returning to Australia. Not the best mixture of passengers and with inexperienced officers there were incidents.

# Liverpool Nautical Research Society

## *President*

M.K. Stammers

## *Vice-Presidents*

Mrs. E.M. Summerfield   N.R. Pugh

*Chairman:* A.H.McClelland   *Vice-Chairman:* Graeme Cubbin

## *Council*

J.E. Lingwood   A.S. Davidson   Jas. E. Cowden

G.F. Wright   .....R. Dennis (Meetings Sec)

## *Hon Officers*

*Secretary:* P.J. Tebay   *Treasurer:* J. Shepherd

*Archivist:* A.H. Rowson   *Editor:* H.M. Hignett

## Annual Subscriptions

£7   Family   £10

Membership and all correspondence to:-

Hon Secretary, L.N.R.S.

Maritime Records Centre

Merseyside Maritime Museum

Pier Head   Liverpool   L3 4AA

---

## Society Notes

Please note the AGM takes place on Thursday 19th May and not 20th as in the programmes previously printed. The Officers and Council request your company at the meeting when you can suggest improvements and assist them in providing a better service to the Society as a whole.

This item was kindly provided by J.L. Currie, Liverpool Pilot

## Wreck of the Earl Moira Packet Boat 1821

*Extract from the "Liverpool Mercury" 10th August*

### DREADFUL SHIPWRECK NEAR LIVERPOOL

It becomes our painful duty to record one of the most distressing shipwrecks that ever occurred within the precincts of this port: the loss of the smack *Earl Moira*, packet, which sailed with passengers, bound to Dublin.

The actual number of those who perished we have not been able to ascertain; partly owing to the uncertainty as to the number who embarked, and their being chiefly strangers in the town; and partly from the extreme exhaustion of the survivors which rendered many of them unable to depict the dreadful scene of which they had formed a part, until wearied nature were recruited by sleep.

But as the bare contemplation of numbers of our fellow beings who left the port in health and spirits being, after unheard of sufferings, consigned to a watery grave must call forth the deepest sympathy, we lose no time in giving such particulars as the shortness of our time, with the utmost diligence, has enabled us to collect.

The *Earl Moira* left the Pier-head soon after six-o'clock on the evening of Wednesday the 8th instant. The greater number of our informants (all survivors) agree in the estimation of the number of 100 to 110 persons being on board, including about six of a crew.

When off the Magazines they set all sail, wind blowing fresh from the W.N.W. After passing the Gut Buoy, No. 1, in attempting to tack, the vessel missed stays and struck on Burbo Bank. The passengers, alarmed at the shock, flocked up from

below in multitudes; and some of those from the cabin remonstrated with the Captain, who was observed to be intoxicated, and consequently bewildered and undetermined.

The boat was ordered out, and a kedge-anchor was carried to leeward; and after considerable toil the vessel was again got into deep water, and bore away for the Cheshire shore. A great number of passengers here requested the Captain to bear away for Liverpool, as the weather looked very black and threatening ahead. He refused to comply, and after a few tacks, about ten o'clock, the vessel missed stays a second time, and grounded on the Wharf Bank off Mockbeggar. Finding it impossible to get her off, orders were given to strike the topmast and make everything snug. The Captain and crew assured passengers that the vessel was not in a dangerous situation, so that they determined to remain contented until the return of the tide: some now remained on deck, and others retired to their hammocks.

When the flood tide set in, the vessel, being occasionally lifted, struck the bank, and it is probable, from the manner in which she afterwards leaked, that her bows were injured by striking against the anchor, which was injudiciously dropped when she grounded, as she did not take cable.

The mainsail, kept on her for the purpose of running her on the bank as the tide rose, had only the effect of sinking her deeper in the sand, and rendered her situation more fatal. At half past two the vessel filled with water fore and aft; the pump having previously been plied, but with no effect. Two fine horses, that were in the hold, were now hoisted up, the groom wishing to ride one of them ashore, but was persuaded to desist. The horses were washed or thrown overboard. Previous to this, the passengers wished a signal to be made, to which the Captain would not agree, declaring there was no danger; but after some time, a flag was carried aloft by a passenger (a printer who wore a blue jacket) and made fast.



Between four and five o'clock, the water forced away the cabin deck windows, and the luggage, provisions etc., were floated up, the sea breaking over them. the waves increased along with the rising tide, and at last brought the vessel on her broadside. Soon after, the boat and deck lumber were washed overboard, and two passengers, who were snatched away, were with difficulty saved. All who were now able got upon the shrouds, and some held on by ropes fastened to the bulwarks, or whatever they could find to keep them out of the water, it being then breast-high on the deck and nothing but the weath-er-gunnel and mast to be seen. In this manner, men, women and children clung, until exhausted by the continuance of the waves that burst over them, they began to drop from their hold, and were overwhelmed.

One tremendous wave, which struck the weather bow, carried off from ten to fifteen poor souls at once. Men, women and children, who seemed in the greatest agonies, were now washed away, and every succeeding wave appeared to mark its victims; the survivors had scarcely time to breath between each. One man jumped overboard, and was for some time seen struggling towards the shore, supported by a trunk or box.

A boat lay to a short distance to windward of them all night (apparently one of the Kings Dock gigs). Several signals were contrived to lure her to their assistance. One of the passengers, a soldier, fired his musket three times, having but three cartridges, but the boat took no notice. When the water was making over the deck, a white handkerchief was waved from the rigging, when the boat came down, and went a short distance to leeward of them. On being requested to approach, they said the sea was running too high for them. The passengers in the *Earl Moira* then took a cork fender and fastening a rope to it, let it drop towards the boat. But the boatmen refused to take hold of the rope by means of which they might have got safely alongside.

About ten minutes after, several packages were washed away, when the wretches in the boat, having picked up three or four portmanteaus and a trunk, immediately set sail with their plunder, to Liverpool although at the time dead bodies were floating around the vessel.

The Captain, who was still in a state of intoxication, was among the first who perished. After the most incoherent conduct he was exclaiming, "We shall all be lost!" when he was struck on the breast by a wave, and falling backward, sunk alongside. We shall not pain our reader by a minute detail of the heart-rending scene of death that continued from this period until all were either saved or drowned. A few instances will suffice.

A female of about thirty years of age, was observed with her two children, one about eight months old, the other two years. For considerable time she buffeted the waves with her infants in her arms. a tremendous sea at length struck her, beneath which her exhausted children were buried for a minute and half. The wind then lulled for a moment, and the swelled abated: the agonized mother gazed at the children and found them both dead. She uttered a peircing shriek, lost her hold, and was overwhelmed by another wave with her babes locked in her arms. Three soldiers were on board having a deserter in charge. They remained by him as long as they could; a sea struck them as they stood together, and carried off the deserter who sunk immediately. One of the soldiers was carried under the boom, and clung to one of the stays. As the sea lifted the vessel he rose above the water several times, but at length, with an exclamation of mercy, yielded to his fate.

A vast number of men, women and children (says a survivor who was in the rigging), the occupants of the front part of the vessel were more exposed to the waves, and there was no possibility of affording the sufferers the least relief. We beheld them struggling with the most appalling difficulties. One female importuned our assistance; but, on our extending a rope, she was too

much exhausted to keep hold, and sunk. There were about ten men clinging to one rope, the wife of one having her husband in her arms. An irresistible wave swept all away but three. The survivors, seeing their exhausted comrades dropping one by one, from their hold, remained in continual apprehension of a similar fate.

The HOYLAKE LIFEBOAT, arrived to their assistance between seven and eight. So great was their eagerness for self preservation, that about thirty soon dropped into the boat, and the commander, whose exertions cannot be too much praised, was at length obliged to put off to prevent the boat being swamped. They were all much exhausted, and many of them in a dying state. Another boat, the first from Liverpool, belonging to Matthew Naill, arrived about eight o'clock and brought eight persons on shore. Before the third boat arrived (belonging we are told to Wm. Corrie) the deck was torn up by the sea, and the mast fell. Many of the women were swept away. There were twelve got into this boat, including a lady and fifteen sufferers remained clinging to the wreck; the greater number of whom were afterwards picked up by other boats. There were but two females saved.

There were five lady cabin passengers, of whom only one was saved. There were we learn thirtythree cabin passengers, in all, only of whom sixteen were saved. It is impossible for us to obtain the precise number of those perished. The number on board was not exactly known, nor the number saved; although the latter may be stated at about fifty, leaving the same supposed number who have perished.

The bodies of two females, one child, and a man have been brought here, and others we understand have been landed near the Rock. The boat belonging to the *Moir*a in a shattered condition, was brought here last night: when picked up, a fine shawl was found tied around one of the benches, to which probably some unfortunate lady had clung until overwhelmed.

Such are the distressing particulars which we have yet been able to collect; and they will be perused with painful interest. Many of those aboard, were, we believe, of most respectable families, on their way to meet His Majesty in Ireland, and carried with them considerable property.

If we are to credit report, some of the inhabitants of Wallasey have been engaged in stripping and plundering bodies cast up.

Many of the survivors are in humble life, and having lost everything they possessed (many of them having been landed almost in a state of nudity) we venture, relying on the liberty of the public, to suggest a public subscription; and will gladly unite our assistance for that purpose with any gentlemen who may be inclined to further so humane an undertaking. Several gentlemen exerted themselves in a particular manner to save their fellow sufferers by helping them to more secure parts of the wreck, but their names are unknown to us. However painful the duty we are bound to state, in order to afford an impressive warning to others, that all the survivors ascribe the disaster to the intoxication of the Captain, his mate and the greater part of the crew, the steward and one or two others only having done their duty. It is truly lamentable to reflect that the lives of so many individuals should be vested in such hands, and we trust effective measures will be taken to prevent, in future, so awful a catastrophe.

The Newry packet, which sailed in company with the *MOIRA*, put back, all well. We are desirous to state that Mr. O'Leary and John Carey, in the service of the Earl of Portarlington, are saved.

Our data are too vague to afford us a list of names.

LIVERPOOL MERCURY 17th August

*"LOSS OF THE MOIRA PACKET"*

We have little to add to the catalogue of suffering which we recorded last week. The subsequent account, taken as our own from gentlemen who survived, do not materially differ from that which we furnished.

One gentlemen says, "When the life-boat came, some manly voice cried 'Let no man get into her till the women are safe'. But, alas! the women were all at the bottom of the shrouds and under them, and, consequently, the whole length of the vessel's mast from the life-boat and exhausted as they were, unable to reach her; only one, I believe, was saved in her. While the life-boat was in view, several passengers, already weak and insensible, dropped from their hold and drifted off; among the number I perceived the unfortunate Captain, who, although the author of all our sufferings, I am persuaded every person forgave. Several women were washed off about the same time; the dying shrieks of these poor creatures were truly terrific. Another boat now appeared in view, and shortly after came up; these were regular traders in saving lives, and made their bargains accordingly; refusing an offer of twenty guineas to take only the women, who were all then safe".

Someone had taken the trouble to contradict our report that the captain was among the first who perished: but it, notwithstanding, appears he was lost before one of the women.

The second boat bargained in the like manner, refusing to take any but those who paid largely. A fourth boat behaved with becoming humanity, and saved many. The numbers lost are still estimated at about fifty.

We mentioned last week, "if we were to credit report, some of the inhabitants of Wallasey were engaged in stripping and plundering the dead bodies cast up". The Rev. Augustus Camp-

bell, rector of Wallasey, has in consequence published an elaborate exculpation of his parishioners; as if we had actually asserted the circumstance as fact. Our assertion rests on the reports of several of the survivors, who went to Wallasey on the same morning to recover their baggage; and we conceived it our duty to publish the report, as such, to give the parties an opportunity of contradiction. We grant, that our informants may have mistaken others for Wallasey men, whose "good faith and disinterest" we are happy to learn: for we have still some recollection of the wreck of the schooner *Mary & Betsy*, and the "humanity" of the wreckers in that neighbourhood on that occasion, at Mock-beggar, when they preferred plundering the wreck and carrying off bags of potatoes, to rescue the dying, and housing the dead.

This happened at Wallasey, to which afterwards several of the bodies were conveyed: and no one was bold enough to contradict the damning statement, when corroborating parties were present. On that occasion no humanity was shown to the drooping survivors by anyone, but by the benevolent Mrs Boddy and her servants, who to their eternal honour recruited and cherished them.

And shall we be blamed for merely publishing the above report? We have pleasure in learning the good conduct of the persons in question, from this gentleman's undisputed authority, and that no bodies were stripped: but there are points on which his "probabilities and beliefs" are not discreetly necessary for the contradiction of our report, and evince a spirit which our remarks did not call for.

We are happy to add the respectful testimony of Mr. D'Aguilar (who has published a letter on the subject) to others, that the unfortunate Captain of the *MOIRA* was a skilful commander and a favourite. His conduct on that day is confirmed, and we are somewhat astonished that the testimony of one of the crew (who were generally under a similar charge) should have been resorted

to when so many intelligent gentlemen were on board, who had their eyes about them. The Captain, we understand was an affectionate father, and in consequence of the birth of a first son, had indulged rather freely, in conviviality. The survivors we trust in the true spirit of Christianity, will abide by the precept "DE MORTIS NIL NISI BONUM"

The same paper on the same day printed the following:

"The EARL MOIRA PACKET"

We have just received a statement, signed by two individuals, whose name we suppress, as their insertion would subject us to advertisement duty. It may be seen, however at our office. In justice to the crew, we feel ourselves bound to give publicity to the certificate, without pledging our selves on the subject.

"Having been called upon to contradict the statement that appeared in the newspapers, saying that the crew of the EARL MOIRA were in a state of intoxication, we have no hesitation in stating that, to our knowledge there was not one of them had any sign of liquor, excepting the captain and mate; and to this we are ready, for the sake of justice to all parties, to give our testimony, either public or private".

-----

## H.M. CUSTOMS & EXCISE EXHIBITION

The new exhibition of modern day customs work opened recently on the ground floor of the Museum. Quite interesting and worth a visit.

The history section of the Customs & Excise exhibition opens in the Spring 1995. Among the items will be the oak money chest used by John Newton, as Chief of Liverpool Customs, in the 1750's. He was later to write the song "Amazing Grace".

## LARRINAGA & COMPANY

*by David Eccles*

FOUNDED in Liverpool by Ramon de Larrinaga in 1882, the successor of Olano, Larrinaga & Company, owned by Ramon, who, assisted by relatives, traded as merchants and shipowners from their office at 24/26 James Street Liverpool. The ships continued to be owned by Olano, Larrinaga & Company registered at Bilbao, but managed from the Liverpool office.

After the company had failed to obtain the Spanish Royal Mail contract to the Philipinnes in 1881, Olano, Larrinaga & Co suffered another set back with the loss of the ss '*Yrurac Bat*' with 36 of her 66 crew, when in collision on April 1st 1882 with the British ss '*Douro*' (Royal Mail S. P. Co of London), which also sank with the loss of 23 of the 152 passengers and crew on board.

In July 1882 Ramon de Larrinaga purchased, on behalf of Spanish ship-owner Antonio Lopez, the 4141 grt ss '*Lismore*', built in Barrow in 1881 for William Johnston, of Brunswick Street, Liverpool, and renamed her '*Isla de Mindinao*'. This 13-knot passenger vessel was used to establish a new service between Liverpool and the Philippines in opposition to the Spanish Royal Mail Lines, owned by the Marquis de Campo. Larrinaga & Co were appointed agents for the new company, which was named the 'Cie General de Tabacos de Filipinas'. In March 1883 a second steamer, renamed '*Isla de Cebu*', was purchased on behalf of this company. By 1884 the service was maintained by four modern passenger cargo steamers. The same year Antonio Lopez bought the Spanish Royal Mail Line from the Marquis de Campo; Larrinaga & Co then became agents for the Spanish Royal Mail Lines Philippine service.



The company owned six small passenger mail steamers in the Philippines. To manage these steamers, a subsidiary concern, Larrinaga & Echeita, was formed in Manila. The company also owned two sailing vessels, the iron barque '*Olano*' built in 1863, and the t'gallant schooner '*Abeja*' built in 1881 to trade from San Juan in Puerto Rico. These two vessels did not fit in with the first class steamship service the company was then offering between Liverpool, Puerto Rico and Cuba, returning via US Atlantic and Canadian ports with cargo to Liverpool. In May 1883 the '*Olano*' was sold to R.J.Swyny of Liverpool, and in April 1884 the schooner '*Abeja*' arrived at London with a cargo of sugar from Puerto Rico and was then sold to Brixham owners.

With the sale of the two sailing vessels two new cargo steamers built Sunderland by William Doxford entered service in 1884, and bringing the company's fleet out of Liverpool up to six steamers, all on the Atlantic trade. In May the ss '*Niceto*' and in July her sister the ss '*Saturnina*' both of 2808 ton gross, left Liverpool on their maiden voyages to Puerto Rico and Cuban ports, the '*Niceto*' returned with a cargo of grain and timber from St Johns, NB and the '*Saturnina*' with grain and cotton from Norfolk, Virginia.

The founder of the company, Don Ramon de Larrinaga, died at his home at no 9, Salisbury St, Liverpool, 22nd August 1888, aged 61 (he is buried in Anfield Cemetery, Liverpool). He had been awarded The Gran Cruz Isabel Le Catolica in 1883 by King Alfonso XII of Spain, for service to Spain by expanding its trade.

His eldest son Feliz, aged 26, who was living with his wife and family at no 7, Lancaster Avenue, Sefton Park, took control of Larrinaga & Company, with the assistance of his uncle Pedro de Larrinaga, aged 38. The latter arrived from Spain to look after the family interests, whilst Feliz's three sisters, Cruz (aged 20), Anselma (18) and Maria (17), and two young brothers, Miguel (14) and Domingo (12), were sent to Spain in the care of relatives to

complete their education. Pedro lived with his wife and family at no 174, Islington, Liverpool.

A cargo steamer launched and named in honour of the founder '*Ramon de Larrinaga*' of the founder was ordered from the Glasgow shipyard of Charles Connell & Company, began her maiden voyage from Liverpool 15th February 1889 to Puerto Rico and Cuba.

In 1892 the subsidiary formed in Manila to manage the six small steamers was dissolved. By then it was managing only three vessels, having sold the ss '*Jorge Juan*' in September 1883, lost ss '*Filipino*' in November 1884, and having just sold ss '*Castillano*'. An agent was appointed to manage the three remaining steamers. In May 1895 the ss '*Gravina*' was tragically lost when overwhelmed by a typhoon off the Philippines with heavy loss of life, only 3 survived from the 168 people on board. Later that year the two remaining steamers of the coastal fleet were sold to the Spanish Royal Mail Line: thereby Larrinaga & Co severed their interest in the Philippines.

After the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal, the Company established its first Manchester link with the arrival on the 24th January 1896 of the ss '*Saturnina*' carrying a cargo of cotton from Galveston: this to become the company's principal trade route.

On January 21st 1897 the Liverpool-owned ss '*Inchbarra*' was bought and renamed '*Telesfora*', she was to be the last steamer owned by the company to be registered at Bilbao.

It had been the will of Ramon de Larrinaga that his shipping company would pass to his children. This however proved a problem as strict Spanish laws restricted the ownership of Spanish vessels to Spanish citizens and all Ramon's children had been born in Liverpool. This problem was solved when Maria married her cousin Teodora in Liverpool in 1897, and the brothers and sisters of Feliz de Larrinaga returned to settle in Liverpool. As

British-born they were not allowed by Spanish law to register any future vessels under the Spanish flag. Thus, on 15th February 1898 the Migual de Larrinaga Steamship Company Limited was formed to register future steamers in Liverpool. When the Larrinaga family returned to Liverpool, they all bought large houses in the Sefton Park area. Feliz and his family at no 2, Parkfield Road, Maria and Teodora at no 23, Alexander Drive, Miguel and his family at 'Buenaventura', Greenbank Drive, and Anselma and her brother Domingo at 'The Hermitage', Church Road, St Michaels Hamlet, Aigburth.

Early in 1898 the US battleship *MAINE* on a good will visit to Cuba had been destroyed by an explosion in Havana harbour. Seeking compensation from Spain a U.S. battle fleet sailed from Key West, Florida, on the 22nd April 1898, to mount a blockade of Cuban and Puerto Rican ports. An hour after sailing, they siezed the ss '*Buenaventura*' on passage from Ship Island, Mississippi, to Antwerp with a full cargo of lumber, and the following day the US Government declared war with Spain. The '*Buenaventura*' then became a war prize, and was sold by the US Treasury Department.

The Spanish-American war lasted till August 1898, during which time the companies shipping service was greatly disrupted. On the 25th April the ss '*Saturnina*' was seized by the US Navy when at anchor off Boloxi, Miss, when waiting to load cargo. Escorted to Key West, Florida, for examination, she was released two days later, and returned to Boloxi to load her cargo of lumber for London. On 26th April ss '*Telesfora*' with a full cargo of wheat and cotton loaded at Galveston for Manchester, was ordered to stop by a US cruiser. Ignoring the order, she increased to full speed, outrunning the cruiser, and reached the neutral waters of Jamaica for refuge. She remained at Kingston, Jamaica, for a week before slipping away to resume the voyage to Manchester.

Cargo services to Cuba and Puerto Rico were cancelled using the Spanish flag steamers until peace was declared in August; the company's steamers were employed during that time on the coal trade to Spain and Italy. When peace was declared, Spain had lost her possession of Cuba and Puerto Rico, and there was no longer incentive to ship cargo there by Spanish vessels from Great Britain and Europe, and trade with the USA was given preference. Larrinaga & Co however, continued to operate Spanish-flagged steamers on the Cuba-Puerto Rico service from Liverpool until the last one was sold in 1917.

Feliz de Larrinaga remained in control of Larrinaga & Co until 1903, when he and his family moved to Spain. The Company was then taken in hand by Teodora, who remained head until his early death at Liverpool 6th January 1913. By this time the company only had two steamers trading under the Spanish flag, but 14 steamers registered at Liverpool were owned by the Miguel de Larrinaga SS Co. The two remaining Spanish steamers lasted into the WWII years sailing under the neutral flag, but were both lost during the war.

In the early hours of May 29th 1917 the ss '*Telesfora*' sank in the English Channel after being in collision with the French ss '*Edouard Shaki*' that had been steaming without lights. All her crew were saved by the French steamer. Later that year the ss '*Ramon de Larrinaga*' was sold to Hijos de Jose of Bilbao who did not change the vessel's name out of respect for Sen. Ramon de Larrinaga. The ss '*Ramon de Larrinaga*' was chartered by the Spanish Government to carry a cargo of petroleum in drums from New York to Bilbao, and, 180 miles off Cape Finistere, torpedoed by a German submarine with the loss of all her crew on 13th July 1918. She was sunk, possibly by mistake, as the German Navy were aware that the Larrinaga SS Co was British, and most of the fleet were on British Government charter.

# FLEET LIST (BILBAO REGISTERED)

- 1) OLANO (488grt) Built 1863 Harland & Wolff Belfast (Service 1863-83). Iron Barque sold 1883 to RJ Swyny L'pool. Wrecked Cape Horn 1884.
- 2) BUENAVENTURA (1763grt) Built 1871 Oswald & Co Sunderland (Service 1871-98). Iron ss US war prize 1898. Foundered off New York 1906.
- 3) EMILIANO (2009grt) Built 1871 Oswald & Co Sunderland (Service 1871-95). Iron ss broken up Middlesborough 1895.
- 4) YRURAC BAT (2037grt) Built 1872 Oswald & Co Sunderland (Service 1872-82). Iron ss lost in collision with Royal Mail liner ss DOURO 1882
- 5) CADIZ (2294grt) Built 1873 Oswald & Co Sunderland (Service 1877-92) Iron ss wrecked off Cuba 1892.).
- 6) CHURRUCA (616grt) Built 1878 Leslie, Newcastle (Service 1878-97) Iron ss sold Cie Maritima, Manila. Scuttled Hong Kong 1941.
- 7) GRAVINA (618grt) Built 1878 Leslie, Newcastle (Service 1878-95) Iron ss lost in typhoon off Philippines 1895.
- 8) ALAVA' (2244grt) Built 1879 William Doxford, Sunderland (Service 1879-1900) Iron ss broken up Italy 1900.
- 9) JORGE JUAN (819grt) Built 1880 McMillan & Son, Dumbarton (Service 1880-83) Iron ss sold 1884-China & Manila.S.S.Co.r/n AMATISTA sold 1888-Chinese Customs Service r/n PING CHING Scuttled Tsingtao 1937.
- 10) ELCANO (819grt) Built 1880 McMillan & Son, Dumbarton (Service 1880-95) Iron ss sold Cie Maritima. Wrecked near Philippines 1914.
- 11) FILIPINO (287grt) Built 1880 R.Chambers Jnr, Dumbarton (Service 1880-84) Iron ss wrecked near Philippines 1884.
- 12) CASTELLANO (225grt) Built 1880 R.Chambers Jnr Dumbarton (Service 1880-91) Iron ss sold F.Reyes & Co Manila. Wrecked at Hong Kong 1906.
- 13) ABEJA (198 grt) Built 1881 J & W.B.Harvey, Littlehampton (Service 1881-84) 2-masted wood schooner sold to J.Bartlett, Brixham Sunk by U.Boat 1917.
- 14) NICETO (2807grt) Built 1884 Doxford Sunderland (Service 1884-1910) Iron ss broken up Italy 1910.
- 15) SATURNINA (2808grt) Built 1884 Doxford Sunderland (Service 1884-1910) Iron ss broken up Italy 1910.
- 16) RAMON de LARRINAGA (2773 grt) Built 1889 by Connell.Glasgow.(Service 1889-1917) Steel ss sold to Hijos Jose, Bilbao. Sunk by U.Boat 1918.
- 17) TELESFORA (4069 grt) Built 1891 W Gray & Co W.Hartlepool (Service 1897-1917) Iron ss sunk in collision with French ss EDOURD SHAKI 1917.

# FROM REFINERY TO RIBBLE

Deep Sea Tankers to Preston Docks pre-WWII

*by Peter Kenyon*

Before the mid-1920's Preston's petroleum products were brought in small coastal tankers from UK ports such as Fawley, Stanlow, Barrow, Medway and Thameshaven. Among the tankers were *Ben Henshaw*, *Ben Read*, *Ben Robinson*, *Hera*, *Lara*, *Petrella*. Another was Everard's *Agility* (524g/'240). An explosion aboard the latter whilst completing discharge caused the port authority to introduce many new safety regulations covering the future discharge of petroleum products at Preston.

A system of transporting petrol in barges was employed by one company in parallel with the continued use of coastal tankers. Tank-barges, *Neerlandia* and *Theodor* were managed by Phs van Ommeren and towed by Bureau Wijsmuller tugs, eg *Utrecht* (322g/'19), *Friesland* (392g/'19), *Zealand* (292g/'15) and *Limburg* (294g/'16), and Borchard's German-flagged tugs *Fairplay II* and *Fairplay X*. These cargoes arrived with some regularity from Thameshaven between 11th June '25 and 28th June '28 when the *Neerlandia* towed by the *Zealand* made the last visit.

The first deep-sea tanker carrying petrol to Preston direct was the Gow & Harrison Co's *Valleta* (4903g/'25) with a cargo for Russian Oil Products Ltd marketing as R.O.P. The *Valleta* arrived 8th December '25 with 2,023 tons of benzine from Novorossisk, via London. This not only initiated many cargoes from the Black Sea, but also many visits by Gow & Harrison tankers. However most of the tankers arriving for ROP were van Ommeren's fleet eg *Duivendrecht* (6222g/'27), *Katendrecht* (5099g/'25), *Woensdrecht* (4668g/'26). Norwegian tankers also made voyages from the Black Sea for ROP, among them *Dagland*

(6346g/'27), *Raila* (5551g/'26), *Storsten* (5343g'25). Of course Russian tankers played a part in this trade - *Sovetskaya Neft* (8224g/'29), *Varlaam Anvensov* (6551g/'32): there was also a Roumanian vessel *Oltena* (6394g/'28). In 1930 R.O.P. built a coastal tanker *Rusoilprod* to serve their depots in between the large tankers. This vessel was to be seen frequently in Preston, and was sold to Russia in 1939 to be named *Mikhail Gromoy* and registered at Tuapse.

The Texas Oil Co began importing from Port Arthur, Texas into Preston when their *Dirigo* (6530g/'19) arrived 13th January '26 via Antwerp with 1,493 tons of petrol; the first of many arrivals of their US-flagged fleet, including *Reaper* (6407g/'20) 8 visits, *Shenandoah* (6531g/'19) 11 visits and *New York* (6389g/'16). Norwegian tankers were again prominent on charter to the company including *South America* (6246g/'31), reg. owners The Texas Co [Norway] A/S mngrs H.C. Mathiesen). This tanker made six visits to the port and indeed the last Texaco voyage 12th November '34 from Port Arthur via Amsterdam although other tankers, mostly Norwegian, brought cargoes for Texas Oil including *Fanny Hoegh* (6405g/'31), *Sysla* (6367g/'26), and *Beth* (6852g/'30), the latter arriving at the end of her maiden voyage 20th November '30 as did *Senator* (6589g/'33) 17th May '33. Tankers for Preston normally lightened at other UK/Continental ports first, but early in WWII some tankers were loaded to maximum draft for Preston.

Just before Texas Oil Co. discontinued trading to the port in 1934 Shell-Mex & BP made their first visit with *British Renown* (6997g/'28) from Abadan via Dublin, 14th October. Again Norwegian tankers were well represented with *Bisca* (6089g/'30), *Hidlefjord* (7639g/'28), *Skotaas* (8190g/'31). H.E. Moss tankers also called with cargoes ex Abadan, including *Luminetta* (6159g/'27) and *Lustrous* (6156g/'27). The last arrival direct from Abadan was 31st July '39, when the *Beaumont* (5702g/'29),

Norwegian, arrived via Belfast with 2,552tons 14cwt of petrol for Shell-Mex and 2,033tons 14cwt for Sealand Petroleum, who also had storage tanks at Preston. The largest tanker to use Preston Dock was the Norwegian-flag *Østhav* (8147g/'31) with 1,664tons for Sealand Petroleum and 2,811tons for Shell-Mex. Although her dimensions were 465.2ft x 59.7ft, the widest vessel to enter Preston Docks was Eagle Oil's *San Ambrosio* (7410g/'35) with a beam of 60' 4" (the locks were 66' wide). The latter made two visits to Preston and a final visit, light ship, 13th Oct '57 when she berthed for breaking-up at TW Ward's ship-breaking yard on the river diversion. Other large tankers broken up at Preston:

*British Judge* 6735g/21 arrived 8th June 1953

*Victorious* 8298g/31 arrived 9th April 1954

*Aase Mærsk* 6185g/'30 arrived 20th December 1960

The latter was taken over by the MoW.Trans. in 1940, when Denmark was attacked by Germany and managed by C.T. Bowrings and served with the British Pacific Fleet returning to Mærsk in 1945.

Other companies stored and distributed their products from the port ie Cleveland, City Petroleum, Watsons Storage, Dingle Storage and Sealand Petroleum, all using not only coastal but deep-sea tankers such as:

*Lunula* (6363g/'27) ardd 3.7.37 ex Pt Arthur via Dingle with  
2,419tons for City Pet'm

*Athene* (No 4681g/'28) ardd 30.7.37 ex Constanza via  
Avonmouth 2,317tons for Dingle Pet'm  
and 492tons for Watson's Storage

*Sysla* (No 6367g/'32) ardd 13.3.38 ex Houston via  
Thameshaven 3068tons for Cleveland.

During WWII the Petroleum Board marketed 'Pool Petrol' taken from the individual companies and sold generally. Moss's *Lumen* ardd from Swansea, via L'pool with 4012tons of Pool Petrol. Anglo-Saxon's *Ensis* and *Dorcasia* made similar coastwise



voyages. There were a few deep-sea voyages to Preston in 1940, eg Anglo-Saxon's *Dorcasia* arr'd direct from Curacao (draft 21' 11") to discharge the port's largest cargo of spirit - 7,000tons 18cwt. The *British Dominion* arr'd ex Aruba also via Stanlow 11th June with 3754tons 3cwt. The last deep-sea tanker to arrive before the War's end was Anglo-Saxon's *Diloma* ex Aruba via Stanlow with 6,855tons on 21'8" draft.

During the remainder of the War petroleum cargoes were imported only by coastal tankers. Large quantities of petrol were shipped out of Preston as "cased petrol", in specially adapted dry-cargo vessels, known as "Petrol Carriers" to various war destinations O.H.M.S., but that is another story.

Post-War, regular deep-sea tanker trade did not resume. The Norwegian *Strix* made two voyages ex Curacao. Several smaller tankers arr'd initially from US and Great Lakes ports with styrene and other spirits, later those cargoes arr'd from the Continent. Salvesen's *Polar Maid* (5289g/'18) made two whale-oil voyages from Antarctica for storage at Preston and re-export coast-wise in Everard's coastal tankers. During the War and for some time after, US forces had underground tanks on the dock estate. Post-war when coastal trade in spirit began to develop, increased storage capacity was needed. Agreement was reached to take over the US forces bunkers for commercial uses. The petrol already stored was transferred to a 'Mission'-class US naval tanker (too large for the Ribble) anchored off Nelson Buoy, taking the spirit from coastal tankers.

Deep-sea tankers were no longer seen in the Ribble, although a few small vessels arrived from the USA and Germany with chemicals. But right up to the closure of the port coastal tankers were a major part of the port's traffic. Preston was never a major oil port but here we show that it played its part in the distribution of petroleum products in the North West.

During the early 1930's commercial links between Liverpool and northern Germany were quite strong. The editor recalls shopping in Hamburg's large department store Alsterhaus several times between 1947 and 1953. The resemblance between Lewis's, Liverpool and the Alsterhaus were remarkable. Later I read the autobiography of Lord Woolton, (Managing Director of Lewis's and Minister of Food during WWII) in which he stated that he travelled to Hamburg in the Summer of 1939 to make arrangements for ties with Hamburg to be severed in the War which seemed to be inevitable. Apparently there had been mutual business operations between the two groups of stores. But the following article casts a light on other L'pool-Hamburg links

## The U.A.C. and the German Connection

by J.E. Cowden

In mid 1936 the United Africa Co Ltd placed an order for three vessels with Deutsche Schiff-und-Maschinenbau AG, Seebeck, Wesermünde; order somewhat unusual in two respects. Firstly Unilever (UAC's parent company) had, at the time of Hitler coming to power, large sums of money in Germany which the Nazi Government would not release. To overcome this problem, and wishing to make use of the cash, UAC directors decided to build a number of ships in German shipyards, using part of their finance. Secondly it was the first occasion that the UAC had built ships with a 'Maierform' bow. This form of bow, very similar to ice-breaker-bows, gave the cargo ships an odd look - always appearing very sluggish when underway.

The principal dimensions of the three ships were 433' x 57' x 23', with tonnage 5424 gross. The 3-cylinder (21", 35", 57" x 39") engine with a low-pressure turbine, double reduction gearing and hydraulic couplings gave a service speed of 10kts. The first down the slipway was the *Ethiopian* during March followed a month later by the *Liberian* and *Leonian*; all Liverpool registry. During WWII the *Ethiopian* and *Leonian* were both requisitioned by the Royal Navy for the duration.

All three units survived the hostilities with little incident. *Liberian*, on 6th July 1942, steaming through the North Sea was attacked by German aircraft and although she managed to evade

bomb damage, she was machine gunned - the third officer, on the bridge at the time, received wounds to an arm.

In 1947/8 large changes were seen to be taking place within the West African colonies causing UAC Ltd to consider how best to operate their shipping interests. Changes were proposed not only in West Africa, but the British Government in 1948 indicated that shipping could be nationalised, and UAC, being traders and shipowners, feared both of these operations could well fall under governmental control. A result of the deliberations was the formation of Palm Line Ltd, in 1949, taking over the shipowning/operating portion of UAC Ltd.

The new company wishing to retain a West African flavour to the names of their vessels and also incorporate the name "Palm" re-named as follows:

*Liberian to Volta Palm*

*Ethiopian to Benin Palm*

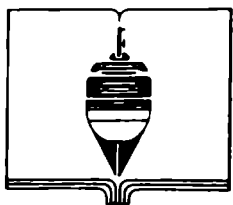
*Leonean to Mendi Palm*

All three vessels gave the UAC a number of years valuable service and with the introduction of new tonnage all three were disposed of 1951 "*Mendi Palm*", followed in 1955 by "*Volta Palm*" and in 1969 "*Benin Palm*".

Note:

The following vessels were built in Germany for United African Company:

		grt	cost price
			(£sterling)
1936	<i>Congonian</i>	4929	£88,315
	<i>Ethiopian</i>	5424	77,015
	<i>Guinean</i>	5205	80,348
	<i>Leonian</i>	5424	77,411
	<i>Liberian</i>	5205	81,048
	<i>Nigerian</i>	5423	77,740
1937	<i>Gambian</i>	5424	117,948
	<i>Takoradian</i>	5452	118,002



# MARITIME INFORMATION ASSOCIATION

c/o The Marine Society 202 Lambeth Road  
London SE1 7JW

The Association was formed in London in 1971 as the Marine Librarians Association to promote contact and cooperation between librarians, information orkers and others with an interest in the maritime world, and to develop a body of professional expertise relevant to the literature and information sources in maritime activities.

Membership is on an individual basis, to include librarians, information officers and all those having major or minor interests in subjects ranging over the broadest interpretation of 'maritime' topics. They include marine technology, shipping, shipbuilding, marine engineering and telecommunications, maritime law and economics, ports, cargo handling, fisheries offshore activities, maritime history etc.

Members are from universities, colleges, industry, government departments, learned societies, museums, professional institutions, research and naval establishments and other bodies related to maritime matters.

The annual conference is the main event normally held in London but increasingly a variety of venues have been favoured: L'pool (twice), Newcastle, Glasgow, Cardiff. Copenhagen, Amsterdam and Hamburg also feature in the list. Conferences comprise, with the AGM, a programme of lectures and visits, but also provide ample opportunity for the establishment and renewal of informal contacts, and for discussion of important functions of the MIA. Lectures given at the conference have included various aspects of nautical education, marine safety, maritime law, navigation, containerisation, marine surveying, naval architecture, and of course regular coverage of nautical publications, the



Thomas Dover (1660-1742)  
Physician and Freebooter  
*by Charles Dawson*

There are people still living who no doubt remember a nearly 250 year old remedy for a troublesome feverish chill called Dover's Powder. One wonders how many of them are aware of its origins. The writer can remember a young doctor who prescribed it calling it the "pirate's cure" but this was believed for many years to be a private joke of his. But the clue is to be found in even relatively modern dictionaries will give the formula for the powder: e.g. "preparation of opium, ipecacuanha, sulphate of potash, or sugar of milk, an anodyne diaphoretic. (Dr. Thomas Dover (d. 1742))" Of course, no apothecary will make up a prescription for you today.

Thomas Dover was born about the same time as Daniel Defoe (c. 1660-1731) and in "Robinson Crusoe", first published in 1719, we find interesting links with Dover's own story.

Defoe's masterpiece, highly praised by Rousseau, can be considered an early example of the type of literature that has come to be called "faction" to denote its mixed heritage of fact and fiction. "The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner" as the book was originally entitled in the long-winded tradition and capital letters of the period, is now accepted as being based by Defoe on what he knew of the experiences of a Scottish mariner, Alexander Selkirk, born at Largo, Fife, Scotland, in 1676.

Selkirk was sailing master of the ship *Cinque Ports*, 96 tons, 18 guns, which accompanied William Dampier's *St. George* on his expedition to the "South Sea" (Pacific Ocean) from England in May 1703. The vessel, worm-ridden and damaged after engagements with Spanish ships, required a safe haven where repairs could be carried out. John Clipperton, Chief Mate of *St. George* on this expedition, mutinied and turned freebooter in the Pacific, where an island (10°18'N 109°13'W.) still bears his name<sup>1</sup>. Owing to quasi-mutinous disagreements with Lieutenant Thomas Stradling, who had been promoted captain of *Cinque Ports* after the death of the original captain Charles Pickering,

Selkirk demanded to be put ashore "at the earliest opportunity". The chance came in September 1704 at the haven of Juan Fernandez where ships could take on kindling wood and fresh water. Selkirk later changed his mind about staying, but Stradling turned a deaf ear to his pleas and sailed away. Selkirk was left alone with his effects, which he had been allowed to take ashore.

The next British expedition to pass this way was led by Captain Woodes Rogers in the frigates<sup>2</sup> *Duke*, 320 tons, 30 guns, 117 men, and *Duchess*, Capt. Stephen Courtney, 260 tons, 26 guns, 108 men, which left Bristol 2 August 1708. This freebooting exercise had been financed by a group consisting mainly of "merchant adventurers" in Bristol with Sir John Hawkins in the lead. Dover had also contributed to the expedition but in order to "protect his interests", had actually joined it. What is more, in recognition of his financial aid, Dover was named as "second captain" of their flagship *Duke* even although he had never before set foot upon a ship.

Capt. Rogers had with him as "pilot for the South Seas" William Dampier, whose previous experience in these waters was invaluable; he had made his first circumnavigation, in stages by various vessels, in the years 1683-1691. His was the third English circumnavigation after Drake and Cavendish.

The Rogers' expedition left Cork 1 September 1708, where it called to ship more men and careen the vessels, together with twenty merchant vessels under convoy of H.M.S. *Hastings*, such protection being normal for the period. After parting with the man-of-war off Finisterre, a General Council of officers met, with Dover as President. His financial position gave him two votes. His way with men was put to the test soon afterwards, somewhere in the Bay of Biscay. The crew as usual at that time were a motley lot, not easy to handle.

While Captain Rodgers was on board a Swedish vessel they had intercepted, the crew on board *Duke* had made moves to take

over the ship. Dover played his part in subduing the mutiny and backed by the rest of the ship's officers - of which there was double the usual complement, precisely to deal with such situations - soon had the men under control.

They cruised through the Canaries, sighted Teneriffe on 18 September, made Cape Verde 29 September, and left St. Vincent on 8 October. They sighted Cape Frio, Brazil, on 16 November, where they "towed and rowed" for two days in foggy, rainy weather before they could anchor in the cove off the Isle of Grande, just north of the Tropic of Capricorn, to take on wood and water and careen their vessels. They left a letter for England - a report to their owners - with the Governor of Angre but did not clear the Brazilian coast until 3 December. Christmas Day saw them in the vicinity of the Falklands, and after rounding Cape Horn, they ran as far as lat.  $61^{\circ}53'S$ ., perhaps a record for the time.

Dover was aware of their need for fresh supplies and recommended they put in to Juan Fernandez. Rogers says they were very uncertain of its latitude, since charts of the time disagreed with one another. Dampier agreed to the visit, possibly with the additional motive of looking for Selkirk.

On arrival there 31 January 1709 and Capt Dover went in with the boat to reconnoitre. Captain Rodgers, in his account of their finding Selkirk still alive, wrote: "The castaway had so much forgot his Language for want of Use, that we could scarce understand him, for he seem'd to speak his words by halves". It is said that Commodore Anson during his circumnavigation thirty years later found some of Selkirk's ear-marked goats when he touched at the island.

After boiling down about eighty gallons of sea-lion oil for their lamps and for cooking, they left the island 12th February 1709. Capt Rogers, at Dampier's acknowledgement that Selkirk had been an experienced navigator, immediately appointed him



mate of *Duke*. Perhaps Dover heard that a certain shell-fish found off the coast of Chile when dried and powdered was an infallible remedy against drunkenness, because it created an abhorrence of wine. Perhaps it was in this region that he discovered the use for ipecacuanha, the root of a shrub that flourished there. On 16 March they took a small prize, a 16ton Spaniard, learning from her captain that their vessels were the first enemy to be sighted since Dampier's repeat visit five years earlier. It was from this captain too that they heard that Stradling, after abandoning Selkirk, suffered a fate worse than Selkirk: forced to surrender to Spaniards he was imprisoned for four years at Lima. Only he and the ship's carpenter had survived. They never-the-less reached England.

Rogers spent three days fitting out the prize which they renamed *Beginning*. Two days later she herself captured a 50 ton Spaniard, *Santa Josepha*, which they renamed *Increase* and used as the hospital ship of the fleet. On 29th March 1709 Selkirk was given command of her and they left the area on the following day bound for their next place of refreshment, an island they call Lobos de la Mer. Here they built a launch as an extra landing-craft.

After two days of further sailing north, they were in luck off the seaport of Payta, for here *Duke* took the galleon *Asunscion*, 500tons, and *Beginning* took a small vessel of 35tons. With so many prisoners, and their stores, especially water, running low they decided to make for Guayaquil, a few days sail further north. A council of war, with Dover once again as President, was held on board *Duke* 13 April 1709 to decide how the anticipated spoils from their projected raid on Guayaquil were to be distributed. Strict rules were also drawn up regarding the conduct expected of all: drunken, cowardly, mischievous or ungentlemanly (sic) behaviour would be punished severely and lead to "the loss of all share of whatsoever is taken in the expedition".

In capturing the French *Havre De Grace*, two men were killed and three wounded, among the former being Lieutenant John (?) Rogers, the twenty year old brother of *Duke's* captain, who was shot through the head and died instantly. The prize was not bartered but after being re-named *Marquiss*, was re-fitted and armed with nine guns as an additional cruiser. In her cargo were 500 bales of Papal bulls which they partly used to burn off their ships' bottoms when they careened them. With further captures, Captain Rogers now had eight vessels under him with over three hundred prisoners to contend with. The latter were put aboard *Duke* and *Dutchess* and three of the prizes and ordered to remain at sea for forty-eight hours "undiscovered", then sail for Punta Arenas on the "Rich Coast" (Costa Rica). The raid on Guayaquil was to be carried out from the boats, rowing and towing the remaining small prizes up the creek. At the island of Puna they heard the Spaniards already had wind of their impending attack.

We find Capt Dover taking a prominent part in the raid, details of which could have inspired the epic Hollywood film makers. An interesting observation by Rogers is that the native 'Americans' were divided by the Spaniards into as many as ten castes, "with more variety and exactness of colour than a draper can match his cloth and trimming".

On 11 May, on the way to the Galapagos, then said to be a haunt of pirates, many men of *Duke* and *Dutchess* fell ill of a malignant fever, which it was suspected they had contracted at Guayaquil. Dr Dover had no experience of it, so resorted to bleeding and medication with "Venice treacle, Diacodium, Mithridate and Gascoin's Powder". Mr. Hopkins, his "kinsman and assistant", succumbed.

Having found no fresh water on the Galapagos they made for Gorgona Island where they shot many monkeys, "fricasses and broth being made of them for the sick men". They left there 25 August and, "in sight of California", after several months of

tedium looking for suitable prizes, Council passed measures on 11 November regarding gambling. Two breaks in the monotony were a touch at the islands of Tres Marias off the coast of New Galicia (now part of west central Mexico) for food and water, and a return visit to the Galapagos hoping to find Simon Hatley, third mate of *Dutchess* who had been given command of a small prize bark and had been lost sight of there. They found no trace of him.

In December, with provisions getting low, they decided to abandon hopes of taking any large prize and made for Guam, but *Marquiss*, found to be leaking, had first to be repaired. On 21 December they engaged a Spanish galleon *Nostra Senora De Le Incarnacion De Sengano*. Her Captain, Sir John Pichberty, and Rogers were badly wounded in the action. An hour and a half later, she was taken and re-named somewhat impishly *Batchelor*, with Dover in temporary command. A few days later a large Spaniard *Bignonia*, 900 tons, 60 guns with close-quarters<sup>t</sup>, was fired at and Rogers was wounded further. They did not attempt to board her and luckily she sheered off, for she had a complement of 450. Rogers was against giving Dover complete command so a compromise was reached with divided responsibilities, Selkirk being made chief mate.

They left Cap San Lucas at the southern tip of California mid-January 1710, and celebrated Valentine's Day, drinking the health of "the fair ladies of Bristol" to remind them of home. They sighted Guam 11 March after a crossing of 58 days, their best day's run being 168 miles. They were met by flying praus, 30' x 2' x 3', which Rogers described in detail, noting that they reached an unprecedented speed of twenty knots, thought that one could be a curiosity in St. James's Park.

Despite being in enemy territory, Rogers seemed to apply enough charm to get on good terms with the Governor. In these strange waters, even Dampier, who had discovered some of the islands in 1699, seems to have lost his way. They were able to

bribe a local pilot to take them to Batavia from the island of Bouton off the Celebes, where they had wooded, watered and provisioned 29 May.

On 17 June near the north coast of Java, they met the first neutral vessel since leaving Bristol, a 600ton, 50gun Dutchman, from whom they borrowed a chart of those parts and from whom they learned that Queen Anne's Consort was dead. They anchored in Batavia Roads in the company of some forty vessels and began overhauling their now leaky vessels. *Marquiss*, honeycombed with worm, was condemned and sold for 575 Dutch dollars to Captain John Opie of the *Oley* frigate from London. Dutch help was begrudging and much correspondence passed before the Governor-General at Batavia gave permission for them to refit and careen at Horn Island. There, a number of men succumbed to the fever.

Most vessels there were Dutch and during their 4-month stay, only five other English ships touched at the port. Rogers remarks on the superb facilities there and how superior they were to the Indian yards. They left 4 October, to arrive at the Cape of Good Hope 27 December from where Rogers wrote to his owners. It was 5 April 1711 before they sailed for England in company with sixteen large Dutch East Indiamen, most about 1000tons, and six English ships.

They crossed the line on 14 May, "being the eighth time we have done so in our course round the world", says Rogers. They made Fair Isle off the Shetlands on 16 July where they were met by Dutch men of war and under their escort anchored at 5 m 23 July at the Texel, Holland, where they were met by some of the owners from England. Many delays occurred before they were ready to sail for London, with some East India ships, in convoy of H.M.S. *Essex*, *Canterbury*, *Medway* and *Dunwich*. The last entry in Rogers' log, on 14 October 1711, reads: "at 11 of the clock we

and our Consorts and prize got up to Erith, where we came to anchor, which ends our long and fatiguing voyage”.

Dover, or Dr Quicksilver as he became known for his new favourite treatment, went back to practising medicine and wrote a not particularly well-appreciated treatise called “The Ancient Physician’s Legacy”.

Rogers not only survived his wounds to publish his book<sup>5</sup> but was soon afterwards, in 1713, in command of *Delicia*, off on a “trading and slaving” expedition to Madagascar and Sumatra. He received a commission from George I on 5 September 1717 to take charge of a naval squadron which sailed from England in April 1718, with the task of helping to suppress piracy in West Indian waters. He was made Governor of the Bahamas, sailing from England in May 1729 and died there in 1732, one year after Daniel Defoe.

The next expedition to the Pacific, led by George Shelvolke in *Speedwell* of London 24guns, with 100 men sailed from Plymouth on 13th February 1719. It is said that the albatross incident in Coleridge’s “Rime of the Ancient Mariner” was suggested by the events recorded on that voyage. The story of Shelvolke’s voyage certainly contained several chapters of accidents. Despite being wrecked on Juan Fernandez on May 24th 1720, building a replacement vessel and then facing mutinies, Shelvolke and his loyal men made Macao and arrived home over three and a half years later in the East Indiaman *Cadogan*.

The persistence of men who “came back for more” is exemplified by the case of Hatley from Rogers’ expedition. He survived ill-treatment by Indians and imprisonment by the Spaniards, to sail once again, this time in Shelvolke’s expedition. Mutinous behaviour was also persistent. None other than Clipperton repeated his previous conduct from 1704 during Dampier’s expedition, when he turned freebooter on this Shelvolke expedition too.

## Notes

1 THE CONCISE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF CURRENT ENGLISH, Oxford, 1964.

2 At this time "frigate" or even "pinnace" meant quite simply a ship with poop and forecastle, irrespective of size.

3 PACIFIC ISLANDS YEAR BOOK, 15th Edition.

4 Close-quarters: Strong barriers of timber across a vessel in certain positions, used as a retreat when boarded, often having powder-chests on the deck over them and fitted with loopholes for small arms, which could be fired from the close-quarters upon a boarding-party.

5 Captain Rogers' magnificent journal of the expedition, over 500 pages long, published in London in 1712, called "A Cruizing Voyage Round the World" deservedly became quite popular. A synopsis of this called "Life Aboard A British Privateer" was compiled in 1894 by Robert C. Leslie, (Facsimile Edition Chapman & Hall, Diploma Press, Undated).

There is an intriguing story of the literary, commercial and political rivalry between Daniel Defoe and William Dampier which led to a parallel account of Rogers' voyage, called "A Voyage To The South Seas", being published in 1712. Although the author of this is given as Edward Cook, Second Captain of "*Dutchess*", it was possibly ghosted by Daniel Defoe himself as a piece of propaganda in support of his patron, Robert Harley, First Earl of Oxford whose aim to corner the trade to Spanish South America finally led to the disastrous "South Sea Bubble". The story is told in "Alexander Selkirk and the Last Voyage of the *Cinque Ports Saler*", by C.D.Lee, in "The Mariner's Mirror", August 1987.

## Local Notes

### West Side Story

Hamilton Oil having developed the oil and gas field in Liverpool Bay have decided to use Liverpool's Hornby Dock (west side) as a base for their supply and maintenance operations. This decision was taken in the flurry of competition from the nearby ports of Mostyn (Dee), Heysham and Barrow.

Local authorities estimate that about 1,000 people will be taken from the unemployment lists as a result. However currently a supply vessel attending the exploration rig off Formby Point is flying a Netherlands flag. Perhaps under new EEC regulations it may be a permissible for a British crew to be aboard ?

---

## Local Notes

Last year David Williams, Curator of Outside Collections, resigned from his post to take up professional photography. In the late Autumn Matthew Tanner, formerly of the Scottish Fishing Museum on the East Coast of Scotland, was appointed to the post. Perhaps we may persuade him to speak at one of our regular meetings in the near future.

## Research Notes

### Sources for Yachting History

#### Seminar 12/13th Feb at the Maritime Museum

The Seminar was the idea of William Collier of the History Dept of L'pool University who organised it in conjunction with Martin Black, both keen yachtsmen. Martin works near Fenchurch St, London and able to use Lloyds Register archives with excellent advice from Lloyd's archivist (and LNRS member) Mrs Barbara Jones.

The subject of yachting history to date has not been widely researched and the organisers are to be congratulated in the work they have undertaken. One participant, Janet Cusack, spent a couple of years studying the subject in preparation for a Masters's degree at Exeter University. Her research encompassed mostly local sources.

#### Transactions

Barbara Rushton, member, has compiled an analytical index to the several volumes of Transactions published by the LNRS since 1944. This is presently being prepared for publication. Further information will be available in the next issue.

Olive Williamson continues with her listing certain types of vessels listed in Liverpool Customs Registers.

Query: A reference in the press recently of a Liverpool ship *Elizabeth*, in 1773, on passage in the Mediterranean sheltering in Marsala a port at the Western corner of Sicily. The merchant/shipowner, John Woodhouse, visited local vineyards and, it seems, decided to invest in them. Thus Marsala wine became world-famous. Is the story true ?