

# LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY



Vol 38 no 1

Summer 1994

## CONTENTS

Lloyd's Register and its Records	B.E. Jones	1
From a unique Liverpool Tide Table		11
Item from Trondheim Maritime Museum	A.H. Rowson	13
Speaking Tubes on board ships 1897		14
Liverpool Bay Lifeboats		16
Conference on Maritime Records		17
Malcomsons of Waterford	C Dawson	19

Whilst there is traffic on the Mersey associated with the oil-gas fields in Liverpool Bay, and several unusual craft such as large crane barges, the editor was unprepared to see what was apparently a vessel with bridge well for'd and a long, low white hull moving seaward at a very good speed. He then noticed that in fact the 'bridge' was the "Sea Cat" bound for the Isle of Man - the low structure was the white wake.

# 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 (Speakers Sec)

## *Hon Officers*

*Secretary:* P.J. Tobay *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 Archives & Library  
Merseyside Maritime Museum  
Pier Head Liverpool L3 4AA

---

## Society Notes

The membership now numbers almost 140. Interest in the Society is increasing.

We are looking at the possibility of having the LNRS emblem (customarily printed on the front of our publications) embroidered on ties or scarves. It may also be possible to produce a lapel-badge or brooch.

The Council welcome any ideas on this matter. Please direct any thoughts on the subject to G.F.(Gordon) Wright, c/o the above address.

# LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting held 19th May 1994

at the Merseyside Maritime Museum 1230 hrs

Chairman A.H. McClelland and 24 members present

Apologies from A.S. Davidson, H.M. Hignett, N.R. Pugh, John Shepherd, Mrs E.M. Summerfield.

1) Minutes of 1993 AGM: were agreed with no matters arising.

2) Chairman's Report: The Chairman spoke of a successful year with a wide range of subjects being researched by members. Membership of the Society included quite a number who lived outside the immediate Merseyside area. The monthly meetings had been well attended and the venue had continued to be satisfactory. congratulations and thanks were due to Graeme Cubbin for his selection of speakers. His place as Speaker Secretary would be taken in the coming year by Ron Dennis. With regard to two items from the last AGM; closer links with other research bodies had been forged and Council recommended that the present venue and timing for meetings be continued. The quarterly BULLETIN continued to provide articles of topics of maritime interest.

3) Secretary's Report: The Secretary referred to the fact that membership of the Society continued to increase and over the last five years numbers had risen by 50%. Requests for research information continued to come in from far afield, often from non-members. Cooperation with the Maritime Museum & staff continued most satisfactorily, with the only drawback being the very restricted space now available for researchers in the Archives and Library Dept, this after the move to the second floor. Reference was made to a request which had appeared in a local newspaper seeking information about a local boat-builders but the letter gave no identification or phone no. other than LNRS. This had caused a degree of embarrassment to the Society. Could the culprit please own up so that a mass of information could be forwarded? \*

Generally speaking the Society continued to make sound progress.

4) In the unavoidable absence of the Treasurer, the Chairman circulated the Annual Balance Sheet and asked for any questions. One question arose, from the floor, regarding the cost of the BULLETIN. As the Editor was unable to be present and give details, it was accepted that the matter would be dealt with on his return. Otherwise the Balance sheet was accepted and Treasurer thanked in his absence. Overall the financial situation was a healthy one.

5) Elections of Officers: On a proposition by D. Eccles and seconded by G. Cubbin, the Council and Officers were re-elected en bloc by a unanimous vote.

6) A.o.B. The Chairman referred to the fact that as the Society Archives are now in the care of the Maritime Museum who are themselves short of storage space, the Society could not accept any more material. Items should be directed to the Maritime Museum itself for the consideration. Further to this M.K. Stammers (President and Keeper of the Museum) referred to difficulties of space, staffing and strict conservation that made acceptance difficult. Items of which the MMM had an adequate sufficiency included seamen's discharge papers (except for notable people or women) and liner ephemera, although complete historical archive collections would be considered. He agreed that the space available in the Archive/Library Dept was disappointing and the Museum were working on an improvement. However, the move had freed the ground floor for the National Customs Archives which was both interesting to the public and a great asset of national importance for the Museum itself.

Finally the Chairman implored members to be vigilant when they knew of the disposal of maritime material as, often, valuable items were discarded without being properly assessed.

The AGM closed at 1310hrs.

\*(The original letter written by H.M.H. to the "News" did give a name and a local address, but this info for some reason was not printed)

## Lloyd's Register and its Records

*by Barbara Jones (LNRS)*

*Archivist and Information Officer*

I wish to talk about the history and development of Lloyd's Register, and of the maritime records we hold.

Lloyd's Register is an independent classification society employing more than 3,900 technical and administrative staff in over 260 offices worldwide. Although the majority of our business is still marine based our expertise is not confined to the shipping industry, we have many experts in the industrial, offshore and engineering fields as well as software engineering and artificial intelligence.

Financially and commercially independent, LR, as a non-profit distributing organisation does not have shareholders. Profits are ploughed back into research and development.

Many people ask, "What is classification?" Classification is to set and maintain standards of quality, safety and reliability for all kinds of ships, floating docks, yachts and small craft and all types of fixed and mobile offshore structures. Requirements for the structural design, materials and construction are approved and construction supervised in any shipyard in the world, and an LR classification certificate issued. In order to maintain classification LR carries out periodic surveys and inspections throughout the life of the structure.

Both Lloyd's Register and Lloyd's of London, though not connected, owe their name and foundation to a 17th century coffee house owned by one Edward Lloyd. Each organisation went it's own way, Lloyd's of London to become the centre of the London insurance market and my organisation to become

one of the world's leading classification societies. Lloyd's first coffee house was located in Great Tower Street and we know he was certainly trading from 1688, the date Lloyd's take for their year of foundation.

Lloyd's was a favourite haunt of merchants, marine underwriters and others, all connected with maritime commerce. They exchanged information and gossip. Lloyd helped by circulating a printed sheet of all the news he heard. Started in 1696, 'Lloyd's News' was the forerunner of "Lloyd's List", still published by Lloyd's of London today. Lloyd's News came to an abrupt end in 1697 when the printer added an incorrect statement regarding the House of Lords. His newspaper stopped, Lloyd continued to supply his customers with intelligence. The waiter called a kidney would step into the pulpit, which also served for auctions, and read the news in a loud voice. A pulpit is still to be found on the marine underwriting floor of Lloyd's of London today: the "*Lutine*" Bell hangs above it. Their messengers are still called 'waiters'. The 'waiters' are still responsible for disseminating information, though it is now done using computer terminals and overhead screens.

When Edward Lloyd died on Sunday 15th February 1713, the ownership of the Coffee House passed to his daughter Handy. With her death in 1720 the Coffee House passed out of the hands of the direct descendants of Lloyd into the hand of the family of Handy's husband. One of these, Thomas Jemson, founded "Lloyd's List" in 1734. It has been produced ever since, firstly as a weekly newspaper but latterly as a daily publication.

In 1760 the Register Society was formed by the customers of the Coffee House. Here lies the origin of Lloyd's Register. The first Register, printed in 1764 and for use in the years 1764-66, was published in order to give both underwriters and

merchants an idea of the condition of the vessels they owned insured, or chartered. They employed retired sea captains to classify the vessels listed.

The early register contained details of the vessel's owner, master, tonnage, date of build, where built and the number of guns. The condition of the hull was indicated by the vowels A,E,I,O, or U in descending order of importance, the equipment, masts and rigging etc by the letters G, M, or B which stood for good, middling or bad. This system of classification lasted for some years, the G, M, and B, were replaced by the numbers 1,2 and 3, the Register for 1775-6 being the first to show the now famous A1 symbol

The majority of members of the Register Society were underwriters. The first committee was formed of some eleven members under the chairmanship of John Julius Angerstein. The men they employed, usually retired sea captains, to carry out inspections of the vessels, were not necessarily expert in the art of ship surveying. There were no clearly defined standards or rules, it was left to each surveyor to exercise his own judgement with the inevitable result that there were gross inconsistencies between the classes assigned to similar vessels.

In 1797 it became the practise to assign class according to where a ship was built. One built on the Thames, for example, could remain in the highest class for longer than one built on the Clyde, irrespective as to how well she had been maintained. This gradually led to friction between shipowners and underwriters, culminating in 1799 with the production of rival register by the shipowners known as the 'Red Book' because of its red cover; the underwriters continued to produce their 'Green Book' so called for its green cover. A cursory look shows there is little difference between the two.

The rivalry continued for a number of years and brought both parties to the verge of bankruptcy. In 1834, on the recommendation of a Committee of Inquiry which had met eight years earlier, the two Registers joined forces to become Lloyd's Register of British & Foreign Shipping. The word "Foreign" was dropped in 1914.

With the reconstitution of the Society in 1834, a General Committee was formed specifically to be responsible for the governing of the Society and for rules regarding ship construction and maintenance. Thomas Chapman, is thought of as the father of Lloyd's Register: the second Chairman to be appointed after the reconstitution - the first Chairman of this committee, David Carruthers, having died in office after only ten months. Chapman was to be Chairman for 46 years until his retirement in 1881, steering Lloyd's Register through many difficult period and laying the firm foundations we still have today. It is said that in the early years when the Society had very little money, he paid the staff salaries, one Christmas, from his own pocket.

The new Committee required that written reports be submitted by the Surveyors for recommendations for class. Fees were charged both for surveys and for entry in the Register. The majority of the surveyors were employed exclusively by the Society. We have examples of their reports from the early days of the reconstitution in 1834. In the early years the class notation was "A1", its application to anyone ship being limited in terms of years, the period being indicated by a figure before the notation eg "12A1", meaning the vessel could remain in the first class for 12 years.

The "Sirius" of 1837 was the first iron ship to be classed by Lloyd's Register. When the first rules for iron ships were under



discussion it was decided to give the iron vessels the same notation as the highest class of sailing ships i.e. 12A1. It soon became evident, however that different criteria were needed and it was decided that iron ships could remain in the first class so long as their strength and condition were maintained. It is said that long ago when amendments to the Iron Rules were under discussion, one member of the Committee declared that iron ships were so strong that "they would last 100 years". Thus the notation 100A1 was adopted. We no longer have different grades of classification, just the highest and we expect all vessels to belong to that class. That long-ago-member of the Committee has been proved right: there are still a number of iron-built ships on our SEADATA database, many of them well over 100 years old.

In 1891 the newly-formed Technical Committee took over, from the General Committee, the task of discussing, formulating and amending the rules.

As an indication how the Register has grown I must point out that, the current Register contained details of some 78,000 ships; the 1764 Register contained details of some 4,500 ships.

In the early years there were two designations of surveyor; shipwright, who were usually naval architects and carried out surveys whilst the ship was being constructed, and nautical who customarily had sea-going experience and carried out in-service surveys. Our first surveyor abroad was Captain Thomas Menzies, a ship-builder from Leith, who was posted to Quebec in 1852, as Exclusive Surveyor to Quebec and the St. Lawrence River. It was Menzies who, in 1853, suggested to the Committee that a sign be used to signify a ship built under Special survey and thereafter the Maltese Cross was used to signify this. His posting was swiftly followed by many others.

Lloyd's Register can be seen to have grown on the back of the British Empire: by the turn of the century we were classing 52% of the World fleet, today the figure is 22%.

There are four divisions covering all aspects of our work; plus a number of other subsidiary companies. Industrial Division foundation can be traced back to the start of the 1st World War, when we were asked to inspect a quantity of steel which was to be used for armaments. Things then went quiet for a few years until the late 1920's when we were asked to assist in the Middle East with inspections of oil tanks where weld fractures had occurred. Our Industrial Division has been growing steadily ever since and we now have experts in many areas who deal with contracts as far diversified as nuclear power stations or civil structures.

Offshore Division was formed in the 1950's: the first fully inspected platform going on stream in January 1958. This division has grown at a great rate ever since. We are now authorised to inspect any equipment used in the Offshore Industry on behalf of more than 135 governments world-wide. Our engineering division works across the board with each of the other divisions.

We have many items of interest to the researcher, though as a word of caution I must say that much has been lost over the years, so please do not expect too much of us! The records we do have are held in a number of different locations. All those of our plans and survey reports which had survived to 1970, were passed to the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. To look at the plans or surveys of a ship you believe to have been inspected by Lloyd's Register and it was lost, broken up or dis-classed prior to 1970, the researcher is advised to contact the NMM in the first instance. They do make a copying charge but

it is much more reasonable than the commercial fees that we sometimes have to charge for plan-copying. The plans at the NMM are kept at a remote location, so you must write first.

The plans of ships in service or those which have been lost, broken up or disclassed since 1970, are retained by our Records Centre. They are not open to the public, so again you have to write with your request. Most of the plans and reports are now on micro-film only. These records are subject to confidentiality laws. The reports and plans are regarded as being confidential between ourselves and the owner of the vessel: Shipowners' permission therefore has to be obtained in order to look at the records. This is also subject to a commercial fee because the majority of people interested in this service are looking at the records for their own commercial gain ie they are buying the ship. In these cases it is best to contact Mr Iain Mayoh of our Records Centre.

The Yachts & Small Craft Department have retained a small number of plans of the so-called 'classic yachts'. These are subject to the same restrictions as our Records Centre. The approach, therefore, must be made in writing.

All the records held by my department, the Information Group, are available to the public. We are open Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4.30pm: no appointment is necessary. We hold all of the published records of Lloyd's Register with the exception of the Rules. We have a complete set of Lloyd's Register of Ships from 1764 to date, and the ancillary publications associated with it, for example the List of Shipowners which was published originally from 1876 as a subsidiary section to the Register, but since 1955 has been a separate publication.

Other records we hold are:

The Yacht Register from 1878 to 1980, thereafter replaced by the Register of Classed Yachts.

The Register of American Yachts, first published in 1904 and published through to 1978

The Casualty Returns from 1890 to date. Unfortunately although this is a very useful publication to the researcher, they did not see fit to start producing an annual index until 1950, which means it should be used in conjunction with a posted edition of the Register.

The Wreck Books from 1940 to 1977. These are rather interesting; written in manuscript, one volume per year, the Casualty Returns were published from them. They are interesting in that they contain some material otherwise unpublished. They are also useful in that they are indexed. They ceased from 1977 because we changed to a computerised system. A number of old Wreck Reports were re-found recently.

Lloyd's Weekly Casualty Reports, the casualty reports of Lloyd's List, from 1953 to date.

Shipbuilding Returns which have been published since 1887; the Statistical Tables which have been published since 1878 and the Shipyard Orders Weekly Report which has been published since 1985. This, as its name suggests is a weekly report of confirmed shipyard orders and cancellations worldwide.

The Liverpool Underwriters Registry for Iron vessels, established in 1862. We have copies for 1862 through to 1884.

British Corporation Registers (founded in Glasgow in 1890) from 1893 to 1948.

Liverpool Register of Shipping 1842 to 1845.

We have a number of other "treasures", such as the Launch Books, which our office kept from 1938 to 1974. The information included is ships launched by area and alphabetically for any given year including their yard numbers. The Ghost Books and Special Service Books, which contained details of those merchant ships built in the War for Admiralty Service. If they survived the War they would be entered in the register, but of course many did not.

In addition to the above my department holds a small marine library which contains some 3,000 books, including many shipping company histories, historical technical reference books and books on the age of sail as well as holdings of publications such as Jane's Fighting Ships.

I am also responsible for the Archive Project. This is at present a closed collection because much of the material has yet to be sorted; also there are certain confidentiality issues to bear in mind, for example, the project contains some staff records. However there is much there which we are quite willing for the public to see providing we have prior notification. This includes some of the launch reports and survey reports of the Underwriters Registry for Iron Vessels, dated from 1859 to 1885.

We also have the Annals Cases which includes 66 cases on famous ships, such as the "Mauretania", the "Sirius" and the "Great Britain". The collections also includes a great deal of as yet unsorted material pertaining to the British Corporation. Many items continue to come to light: I recently discovered 150 glass slides, including one of the "Great Eastern".

A couple of decades ago Lloyd's of London handed most of their marine collection to the Guildhall Library, Aldermanbury, London but all post 1980 items have yet to be handed over by

that organisation. the Guildhall Library is open Monday to Saturday, 9.30am to 4.30pm

The Collection is extensive and the following covers only the more useful material:

Lloyd's List from 1741 to 1980. (a team of hard working ladies are slowly indexing this item.)

Voyage Record Cards compiled from 1927 to 1975. The Library needs 24 hours notice to produce these. The movements of each ship are recorded on one or more cards.

Lloyd's Shipping Index from 1880 onwards with some gaps. Latterly this has been a daily index of shipping movements,

Lloyd's Captains Registers 1869 to 1948. These form a record of service as captain or mate of holders of British master's certificates between 1869 and 1948. Information is of particular interest to genealogists.

Lloyd's Confidential Index 1886 onwards, with some exceptions. 30 year embargo. This is an alphabetical list of managing owners giving details of the vessels in each fleet, voyages during the year prior to publication and particulars of each vessel totally lost.

There are, of course, many other items of use to the researcher at both Lloyd's Register and the Guildhall Library.

From the miniaturised issue of Holden's Almanac a Liverpool Tide Table published in 1841, recently deposited in the Maritime Archives

## BLACK ROCK LIGHTHOUSE

This light is distinguished and known to mariners as a revolving coloured light, making a revolution every three minutes, exhibiting two brilliant white lights, and one red one, in due succession. Each light will attain its utmost luminous effect every minute, after which it will become gradually less brilliant, and will be, for a short period, totally eclipsed to a distant observer.

The lights can be seen, in clear weather, above the mean level of the sea five leagues. A single yellow light is exhibited from a lower window in western and southeastern aspects, denoting when twelve feet water is over the rock-gut bar. A black ball indicates the same, at tide time, by day. Three bells toll, in succession, during fog, and a blue flag summonses the Magazine life-boat when distress appears.

## BIDSTON LIGHT

This light is also masked so as to give a defined light in the Rock Channel, within certain limits, and to vessels inward-bound will suddenly disappear on the bearing off (sic) SSW, when abreast of East Wharf Buoy, R4 red, and suddenly appear, when outward bound.

These lines of masking and unmasking intersect that spot on the Crosby channel where the course alters, so that, in running up from the Formby Floating Light, the mariner must haul up from SSE $\frac{1}{4}$ E to SbyE $\frac{1}{4}$ E, on losing Bidston and Leasowe Lights, and on running down, keep away from NbyW $\frac{1}{4}$ W to NNW $\frac{1}{4}$ W on their opening out. All bearings by compass.

## LEASOWE LIGHT

This light is so masked as to give a defined light in the rock channel, within certain limits, and will suddenly disappear, bearing S.W. to vessels inward-bound, when off West Wharf Buoy, R3, red, and suddenly, appear, when outward bound.

## FORMBY LIGHT VESSEL

This vessel has been moved one-fifth of a mile S.by E.  $\frac{1}{2}$ E of her former berth into 30 feet at low water. Her application through the half-tide swatchway, when brought in line with the Rock Light-house, remains as heretofore, and when brought in line with the New Crosby Shore Light, leads in from seaward through the New cut, now called Victoria Channel, on a course of SE by E  $\frac{1}{2}$ E.

## CROSBY LIGHTHOUSE

A new light tower having been erected about a mile and a half SSW of Formby Lighthouse, towards Crosby Point, the light therefrom was exhibited, for the first time, on the evening of the 10th of Oct. 1839, and will be continued every night from sunset to sunrise. The light in this tower is stationary, of a red colour, elevated 96 feet above the sea at half-tide level, and is visible between the points of SW by W  $\frac{3}{4}$ W, which limits indicate respectively when a vessel is westward of Mad Wharf, and when she ought to shape her fair-way course up Crosby Channel.



## *Trondheim Maritime Museum*

Last May I went by the Hurtigruten coastal cruise ship from Bergen to Kirkenes. We called for a few hours at Trondheim and I was able to visit the Maritime Museum there. It was established in 1920 and the present building dates from about 1725 when it was the main guardhouse. It was later used as a prison, a stable, and, during the Second World War, a delousing house. There are many interesting pictures and artefacts including the steam engine used to generate electricity on the British Royal Yacht "*Alexandra*". This vessel became the "*Prins Olav*", a Norwegian cruise ship.

Of particular interest was the excavations carried out on the wreck of the "*Perlen*".

Originally the British merchant vessel "*Delamere*", she left Liverpool under the command of Captain Robert Batson and carrying a cargo of salt, cheese and pottery. On 27th July 1780 she was captured off the coast of Scotland by the French privateer the "*Sans Peur*" and taken to Bergen and declared a prize of war. She was bought by a Trondheim owner who re-named her "*Perlen*" and loaded with a cargo of, amongst other items, 57,000 bricks, she set sail only to be wrecked just outside the harbour of Trondheim.

Excavations were carried out in the 1970's and much information and material recovered and recorded. There is an entry in Lloyd's List, 29.8.80 about her voyage but no entry in Lloyd's Register. Ms Randi Larsson of the Trondheim Maritime Museum kindly gave me a copy of the excavation report and if any member wishes to see it they are very welcome. Also if any of our members can throw any light on the origins of the "*Delamere*" and her master, Capt Robert Batson, such information would be passed on to our friends in Trondheim.

A.H. Rowson - Hon Archivist

## SPEAKING TUBES ON BOARD SHIPS

AN EFFICIENT and reliable means of communication between the bridge and engine-room is an essential of the first importance on the large ocean steamers of the present day. The mechanical telegraph is generally found sufficient for most ordinary purposes, but the failure of these appliances is not an infrequent occurrence, and there have been serious disasters due to this cause. As a "stand by" in case of any such accident a speaking tube offers great advantages, for its use is not confined to a few set signals; unlimited facilities are afforded by this means for communicating directions on subjects entirely beyond the range of the mechanical telegraph. But until recently speaking tubes were not available for this purpose, so far, at any rate, as our larger vessels were concerned, the noise of the machinery rendering any order from the bridge absolutely unintelligible in the engine-room. A system of speaking tubes has now been patented by Captain Rose which appears to have overcome this objection most completely, and the value of the system has apparently been so fully demonstrated that these tubes have already been adopted on a number of steamers, including the last two new vessels - the *India* and the *China* - completed for the P and O Company. We have ourselves had an opportunity of inspecting the installation on the *India*, and of testing its working to some extent. The tube from the bridge to the engine-room of this magnificent vessel is nearly 300 feet in length, and although on the occasion of our visit the dynamo, pumps and other auxiliary engines were running we were able to converse with people on the bridge with the greatest ease. But the officers of the steamer are in a position to offer much more practical testimony to the value of these tubes. It appears that in the course of her last voyage the *India* was being maneuvred off

Suez, in waters that certainly do not afford too much room for a vessel of 8,000 tons, when the mechanical telegraph suddenly broke down. The speaking tube was immediately resorted to, and by this means the whole of the orders from the bridge were promptly conveyed to the engine-room during the navigation of these narrow waters, until there was time and opportunity for repair of the telegraph. We have it on the authority of the chief engineer himself that every order from the bridge was clearly heard in the engine-room even when the engines were running at full speed. The equipment of the *India* includes a speaking tube of much greater length than that leading to the machinery department. There is also a tube over 400 feet long from the navigating bridge forward to the after part of the ship, by which orders can be instantly and quietly transmitted - a point of some importance in case of accident or emergency, when it may not be desirable that passengers should hear the orders given - and humorous proof could be furnished that even through this long length of pipe the human voice can be heard without the least difficulty. These tubes were fitted in the *India* by Messrs Durham, Churchill and Co, the proprietors of Captain Rose's patents, who have completed a like installation on the sister ship, the *China*, and the two large vessels - the *Egypt* and the *Arabia* - now building for the P and O Company are to be similarly equipped. It may be explained that the special features of these speaking tubes consist principally in their insulation and mouth-pieces, and as the great length of piping does not admit of the usual blowing of a whistle by an intending user, electric call-bells are provided, as in the case of a telephone. It is scarcely necessary to emphasize the desirability of an alternative means of communication between the bridge and engine-room of large and powerful ocean-going passenger steamers. In the case of a vessel travelling at 15 or 16 knots an hour a messenger, in the event of the mechanical telegraph breaking down, could scarcely be despatched from the

bridge to the engine room with such promptitude as to enable the engineer on duty to start reversing the engines in less than a minute or a minute and a half, and in that period the ship would have travelled nearly half a mile. In traversing narrow channels or crowded waters at reduced speeds the distances covered would be pro rata, and at very slow speeds, there is the difficulty of steering to be overcome. We are assured that there is scarcely a captain or pilot who could not tell of accidents and "close shaves" through the failure of mechanical telegraphs at critical moments, and who will not hail with satisfaction the advent of a thoroughly efficient and reliable means of communication.

from the same Lloyd's List

We regret to learn that there is a prospect of friction between the various branches of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution located around Liverpool Bay. The branches in question are the Hoylake, Formby and New Brighton, each of which send representatives to the Liverpool executive. It will be remembered that consequent upon the Board of Trade inquiry into the loss of the *Carmel* the Royal National Lifeboat Institution sanctioned the appointment by the Liverpool executive of a superintendent for the lifeboat stations situated on Liverpool Bay. As yet the appointment has not been made, but we learn that a meeting will be held shortly to make the final selection. The branch which objects to this arrangement prefers to act independently and be responsible to the central authorities in London alone. It is to be hoped, however, that wiser counsels will prevail, and that friction, which must prejudice the administration of the Liverpool Bay lifeboat services, will be averted.

## MERSEYSIDE MARITIME RECORDS USERS' GROUP

### Conference on Maritime Records

5th March 1994

MARITIME RESEARCH has an amazing number of facets and on this "Salty Saturday" we learned why. The Conference opened with Ken Senar, who, working on family history, learned of his grandmother's emigration to Australia in 1919 on s.s. "*Bahia Castillo*", a former Hamburg-Amerika liner taken as war reparations. the ship was to carry emigrants to Australia, but in addition, servicemen and munitions workers being repatriated after WW1. The story of the voyage had been a family legend for decades. Ken managed to confirm the details by tracing records held at Melbourne and Canberra. He proved that not only was the story true but it may have been understated, whereas most family tales become embellished over the years. the conditions for those on board were appalling - even the water was turned off for part of the time, although there were 118 children under 12 years of age and a total of 655 passengers. Then 30 armed guards boarded at Durban to protect the crew from the rioting passengers. Whilst at Fremantle many passengers were callously left on the quayside when the ship departed in great haste. An Inquiry later exonerated the crew.

The next speaker, Harry Hignett, briefly outlined a few lesser-known sources available including crew muster rolls, codes using signal flags for identifying ship-portraits and other records which indicate that cases similar to the *Bahia Castillo* incident were, at that time by no means unique.

The morning session continued with the Archivist (LNRS) of Lloyd's Register, Barbara Jones who gave an illustrated history of Lloyd's Register (a concern separate from Lloyd's of London, the insurance market), founded around 1680/88. Today they are not only involved in shipping, but also in building, engineering,

offshore exploration rigs etc and even artificial intelligence, Barbara then spoke of the very extensive records they hold or are on deposit in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich and brought reproductions of some items for those present to see.

The morning ended with Barbara Yorke's illustrated lecture on the Formby Lifeboat, which she researched as a member of local history society. Her work uncovered the fact that the Formby Lifeboat was the earliest in Britain. She also brought out the whole question of the history of life-saving in the UK and on the Continent. Completing her talk, showed a video copy of the practice launch of the lifeboat in 1916. A man knocked on her door and asked her if she would like to have the film.

The afternoon session opened with Geoffrey Place who spent many years working on the history of the Port of Parkgate, some ten miles downstream from Chester (his interest led to a Ph.D). with a fine touch of humour he related the search for material for the local history which brought to light the time and money spent by several governments in maintaining customs men and coast guards fifteen years after the last vessel had left the port.

Adrian Jarvis completed the session with a talk based on his study of the vast records of the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board now held by the M'side Maritime Museum and showed records holding details of corruption and incompetence of the 19th century. One senior member of the Board appointed family contacts to key posts and their actions increased the cost of one dock by 700% more than usual. One man appointed 36 dead, retired or fictitious men and collected their wages. His ruse eventually came to light because no one ever seemed to take holidays. It took one man ten years to compel the Board to admit they had not kept proper checks on the administration.

15 LNRS members were present, including the longest serving member and the newest !

## Malcomsons of Waterford

*by Charles Dawson*

In the Summer 1993 BULLETIN the author dealt with shipbuilding at Barrow-in-Furness, one of the less-well known shipbuilding areas in Britain. Another area that is rarely included in the lists, but which, in fact, built some of the finest steamships of the 19th century, was at Waterford, on the River Suir in Ireland. The Malcomsons became the most famous of the ship builders and shipowners there.

BOAT-BUILDING at Waterford had been established quite early on - by the Vikings, in fact, so that, when in 1222 an edict was sent out by King Henry III that galleys should be built "for the defence of the King's realm of Ireland", a necessity first created in the time of his grandfather King Henry II<sup>(1)</sup>, Waterford was naturally enough included with Dublin and Limerick, which had also been Viking strongholds, as the relevant shipbuilding ports, Henry II had, in fact, already emulated the Vikings by upgrading their strongholds to royal desmesnes. Waterford's first dry-dock, of no mean size for its time - 160' x 48' x 15' - was built as early as 1735, by which time a sail-cloth works, established by immigrant Huguenots, had already been in operation for some fourteen years.

Although a decline in trade had come about in Waterford towards the middle of the 19th century, as almost everywhere else in Ireland at the time, shipbuilding showed a remarkable revival there during this period and it developed through the decades on a major scale.

An important factor that seems to have been behind this notable revival was that it was engendered by those particular types of individual we could sum up as idealistic; often enough they would no doubt have been considered as abnormal. They were certainly people who had struggled to see their ideals carried through; we already have mentioned the Huguenots.

Among the first of the new breed of shipbuilders were the Pope family who had previously been active as merchants and shipowners before turning to shipbuilding. Perhaps the most famous vessel they built was the steamer *Killkenny* of 1837, She was 680 tons, 280 hp and made her name after she was bought by the East India co, renamed *Zenobia*, and which was still serving as the Bengal station in 1854.<sup>(2)</sup>

The next shipbuilders were the Penroses, who were Quakers, and also, surprisingly, the innovators of glassmaking at Waterford.

They were followed by Charles Smith. and after that, by William White. The latter in 1854 built *Madge Wildfire*, 846tons and in 1856, *Merrie England*, 1045tons, built for James Beazely of Liverpool.

It is however the Malcomsons<sup>(3)</sup> on whom it is intended to concentrate in this short article - particularly regarding their move into shipowning in the Transatlantic, Baltic, Black Sea and other services - since they came to be by far the most significant of the Waterford shipowners and shipbuilders.

It is believed that they migrated from Scotland in the 17th century and they too, were Quakers. David Malcomson had built up a flourishing flour-milling trade and in 1825, at sixty years of age, he embarked on a new ambitious and entirely different enterprise, the cotton mills at Portlaw. The Malcomsons idealistic approach led to the development of a model village, with complete integration between factory, housing and service areas; one well worthy of being compared with those schemes that Quaker families founded in England.

The beginnings of their interests in shipping seem to have been with John Malcomson, who is recorded as one of the trustees of the Waterford Commercial Steam Navigation Company set up to run a service between Waterford and Liverpool. For them, Lairds of Birkenhead built the iron p.s. *Duncannon* 200 tons,



launched 11th Jan. 1837 for the company, which was represented in Liverpool by Archer Daly of 2, Cook St.

The ambitious company moved quickly, taking over the activity of the Waterford & Bristol Steam Navigation Co, later that year\*. The vessels transferred, all Merseyside-built wood paddle steamers, were *Nora Creina* (built by Wm. Seddon & Co, Birkenhead, 1826) and *Mermaid* (built by Russell & Co, Birkenhead, 1834); acquisitions from other owners were *Gypsy* (built, Mottershead & Hayes, L'pool 1828), *St. Patrick* (built Humble, Hurry & Millcrest, L'pool 1832) and *William Penn* (built Humble, Hurry & Millcrest L'pool 1833). Their little *Clonmel* (built Robert Russell & Sons, Birkenhead, 1836) was sold to Australia in 1849 but ended her days there in the following year, being wrecked on Wilson's Promotory, Victoria, on 3rd January<sup>(4)</sup>.

Joseph, David's eldest son, inherited his father business acumen, and became head of the firm of Malcomson Brothers. Not only did they have controlling interests in flour and cotton, but also in peat works, coal mines, fisheries, railways, and shipping. Arising out of all this business activity, it was natural that in 1843 they should open the Neptune Iron Works. At first it undertook the repair and maintenance of their own fleet of coastal steamships, but by 1847 they had ventured into shipbuilding with the launch of p.s. *Neptune*, 172' long, 326 tons. from then on their production of vessels both for the home and foreign fleets came to include tugs, river paddle steamers, ice-breakers, transatlantic, liners and classic steam yachts. The ships built in the 1870's were all of the latter category, and one them, *Phoenix*, built in 1879 is still in commission on the River Shannon. She must be one of the oldest of her type in Europe

\* In references to the company in registers, "Commercial" was sometimes omitted or replaced by "United Steam", and "Ship" was sometimes substituted for "Navigation". The title was officially shortened some time in the 1850's to the Waterford Steamship Company, when vessels were nominally owned by at least three concerns.

Malcomsons soon branched out into running continental services, some examples of vessels on these being:

- "Camilla"* iron p.s.318t, bt London 1844; London-Baltic 1849.Sold L'pool Dec 1863, presumably as blockade runner, but too late to go into action.
- "Lion"* iron p.s. 374t, bt Glasgow 1847; London-Holland 1848
- "Magnet"* iron p.s. 245t, bt Belfast 1844; London-Baltic 1849 (owners shown as Petersburg S. Co Waterford)
- "Mercury"* iron s.s. 348t, bt Port Glasgow 1835; London 1853
- "Neptune"* iron p.s. 326t, bt Waterford 1847; London - St Petersburg 1843, London-Bremen 1849
- "Ranger"* iron s.s. 162t, bt London 1846; London-Amsterdam (in 1853); London-Baltic 1848
- "Victory"* wood p.s. 326t, bt Liverpool 1832; L'pool-St Petersburg in 1847<sup>(5)</sup>

Malcomsons had control of both the Waterford and the Cork Steam Ship Companies and were also shareholders in the P&O Line. With the first vessel they themselves built, *Neptune*, mentioned above, they ran their first voyage from London to St Petersburg<sup>(6)</sup>, in 1849, which could be considered a reply to the Dublin-based St George Company's p.s. *"Hercules"* , 265t, built Liverpool 1835, which had made a voyage in 1845.

The Lloyd's Register of 1849 which first shows *"Neptune"*, 326t, in fact gives her voyage as London-Bremen; not before the 1853 edition is a voyage given as London-Baltic: but for *"Neptune"*, 535t,250hp, which suggests that she was re-engined between these dates. Another competitor in the St Petersburg service, but sailing from Hull, was *"Helen McGregor"*, 436t, bt 1843 by Lairds of Birkenhead; first voyage 8th May 1845. Malcomsons even ran from Liverpool to St Petersburg with p.s. *"Victory"* in 1847, listed above.

Malcomsons bought their first screw steamer s.s. "*Dublin*" in 1847. Already by 1849 they had become convinced of the advantage of screw propulsion, and altered the original design of the iron s.s. "*Mars*" 548t which they built for their Waterford-Bristol-Liverpool service, from p.s. to s.s.<sup>(7)</sup>

Other vessels they built for their own services were:

<i>Gipsy</i>	iron ss	691	grt	bt	1859	for their Irish river services.
<i>Ida</i>	" ps	172	"	"	1867	" " " " "
<i>Lara</i>	" ss	801	"	"	1868	" " W'ford-Bristol "
<i>Rosa</i>	" ps	148	"	"	1863	" " Irish river services
<i>Tintern</i>	" ps				1860	" " " " "
<i>Vandaleur</i>	" ps				1868	" " " " "
<i>Zephyr</i>	" ss				1860	" " W'ford-Bristol "

Their Waterford-Bristol service survived until July 1912 when the goodwill of the company was taken over by the Clyde Shipping Co of Glasgow, the last two vessels involved being "*Reginald*" 859t bt 1878 and "*Dunbrody*" 940t, bt 1886, both built by the London & Glasgow Shipbuilding Co, Glasgow. Some steamers they built for their local river services could later be found running on the W'ford-Bristol route. One of them was the p.s. "*Tintern*" (of 1860) which replaced p.s. "*Duncannon*", the steamer that Laird Bros had built for Malcomsons in 1837. Some of the other of these Malcomson steamers were quite long-lived: p.s. "*Rosa*" (1863) was about thirty years old when she was scrapped, and p.s. "*Ida*" over forty years old<sup>(8)</sup>.

Between 1847 and 1882, Malcomsons built some 40 steamships at Neptune Works. When the end of the Crimean War (1854-6) was in sight, several attempts were being made to establish new transatlantic steamship services and the Malcomson Brothers, as early as January 1856, announced their intention of running such a service between Liverpool and New York via Queenstown. They eventually inaugurated the service from Liverpool on 8th July 1863 with s.s. "*Cella*" (2,058t) built by them in 1862. She returned to London, from where she sailed for New York on 1st September, via Le Havre. All subsequent voyages followed that route, and the Malcomsons accordingly called the service the London & New York Steamship Line (L&NYSL). They thus became the first company to operate a regular first class

steamer service between those ports. In the light of what happened to that service - which we shall see later - it is interesting to speculate how well they might have fared if they had continued sailing to and from Liverpool.<sup>(9)</sup> See the Fleet List below.

After the end of the Crimean War, Malcomsons built "Odessa" in 1857 for the Russian S.N.Co and "Avoca" in 1861, an ice-breaker for the Russian Government. After Joseph's death in 1858, his brother William took over the business and Waterford became, as we have seen above, a leading centre of iron steamship building, giving an air of great prosperity to the city. Neptune more or less reached its zenith under William, but external forces were about to shake the Malcomson empire. The first signs had come when the American Civil War depleted their raw cotton supplies: their cotton village at Portlaw took the first brunt of this. one source says that "it went into decline, given the *coup de grace* by backing the wrong side in the American Civil War", but it is not certain how direct their involvement with the Confederacy was.<sup>(10)</sup>

One of Malcomson's steamers comes into the picture here as a suspect blockade runner. she was the steamer "Minna" 615t, 214.1' x 26.4' x 18.6', built by Palmer Bros Jarrow, in 1856, one of the ships of the London, Constantinople & Odessa Line (LC&OL) owned by Malcomsons. She was sold by them in 1862 for £9,000 through Melchir G. Klingender, one of the Confederate purchasing agents in England acting for Fraser, Trenholm & Co, the Liverpool branch of the Charleston-based George Alfred Trenholm. She served as a transport between Nassau and Liverpool for most of her Confederate career and was captured off Cape Rowan, South Carolina on 3rd December 1863 by the USS "Circassian" and later sold in prize court to private US interests, re-named "Oriental", and finally lost in

1876. Although Malcomsons might have been suspected of blockade running they were apparently not directly involved with "*Minna*", although they may, of course, have been aware of the intentions with her when they sold her. Ships sold for this purpose usually fetched prices above their true market value.

(Ironically, USS "*Circassian*", (1,387t, 295' long), was originally a British transatlantic liner, built like "*Minna*" in 1856, but by Robert Hickson & Co, Belfast, - later Harland & Wolff. She had run the blockade for the Confederacy but was captured by the Union vessel "*Somerset*" in the Mexican Gulf 4th May 1862 to be re-named "*Circassian*"<sup>(11)</sup>)

Troubles with financial backers, including the collapse of their bankers, Overund & Gurney of London, followed the depression due the American Civil War. Sadly too, Malcomsons had overestimated the cargo requirements of the London-New York trade, so that their large screw steamers were really too big to be profitable on that route. But what magnificent vessels they were, almost the equal of the best liners on the North Atlantic, Cunard and Inman included. We can see the writing on the wall when they began selling off many of their ships.

In 1877 Malcomson Brothers declared themselves bankrupt. Several of their successors in the London-New York trade also found to their cost that it was an extremely precarious one.<sup>(12)</sup> Malcomson's Waterford Steamship Company was therefore taken over and continued to run efficiently to and from Liverpool, first with their original fleet: "*Zephyr*" (of 1860, 686t)<sup>(12)</sup> and "*Lara*" (of 1868, 801t), and after these with subsequently-built ships: "*Reginald*" (of 1876, 859t), "*Comeragh*" (of 1879, 816t), "*Dunbrody*" (of 1886, 940t), "*Menapia*" (of 1892, 697t). Their Waterford-Bristol service apparently survived until July 1912, when the goodwill of the company was taken over by the Clyde Shipping Co of Glasgow, the last two vessels involved being "*Reginald*" and "*Dunbrody*" above, both built by the London & Glasgow Shipbuilding Co, Glasgow. It has been Malcomson's

proud boasts that, during the time of operation of their Liverpool-Waterford service, they had never lost a ship or human life.<sup>(14)</sup>

## Malcomson Brothers London & New York Steamship Line

### FLEET LIST

<i>Cella</i>	iron s.s. 2,058t, 237.4' x 34.4', bt Neptune, W'ford 1863 (for £33,500. Sold T&J Harrisons L'pool 1870. Soon after chartered for cable-laying service in Far East; returned to T&JH 1871. sold Hughes L'pool 1874. After two further ownership changes, became (Turkish) <i>Sharki</i> in 1887. Out of register 1891.
<i>Iona</i>	iron s.s. 1,988t, 315' x 34', bt Neptune, W'ford 1863. Sold Anchor Line, Glasgow 1865. renamed by them <i>Macedonian</i> 1873. Wrecked Mull of Kintyre 1881, no casualties



**IOWA/MACEDONIA**

The 4-masted sisters *Cella* and *Iona* must rank among the most elegant steamships of the period.

<i>Bellona</i>	1,914t, 300.3' x 34.2', bt Smith & Rogers, Glasgow 1862. Sold T&J Harrison L'pool 1870. Sold Hughes, L'pool 1875. Sold Jos. Hoult, L'pool 1879, renamed <i>Benbrack</i> , wrecked Texel, Holland 1889
<i>Atlanta</i>	2,668t, 339.1' x 34.2', laid down as <i>Ohio</i> 1863, completed as <i>Atlanta</i> . Sold T&J Harrison, L'pool 1870. <sup>(15)</sup> Sold Hughes, L'pool 1873. after 4 changes of ownership, scrapped 1897.
<i>Cordova</i>	1,417t, 245.5' x 30.2', bt Neptune, W'ford. Used on Malcomson services until 1868 when chartered to LNYSL making only one voyage. Sold T&J Harrison L'pool 1870. Sold Italy 1883. B/u 1901
<i>William Penn</i>	2,629t, 316.3' x 36.3', bt Malcomsons W'ford 1866. Laid down as <i>Manhattan</i> 1865, launched as <i>William Penn</i> 1866. sold Allan Line,

	Glasgow, lengthened and re-named <i>European</i> 1869. Sold Hughes, L'pool 1872. Broke her back entering Morpeth Dock, B'head 1875. Hulked 1897.
<i>Paraguay</i>	1,444t, 251.2' x 32', bt Palmers, Jarrow 1864 for River Plate SS. Co. Bought by L&NYSL 1869. Sold Hughes, L'pool c.1875. Sunk after collision, R. Scheldt 1891.
<i>Parana</i>	1,372t, 251.4' x 32.2', bt Palmers, Jarrow as <i>Norma</i> , 1862. Became <i>Parana</i> (R Plate SS Co). Bought by L&NYSL 1870. Sold Hughes, L'pool c. 1875. After further 4 changes of ownership. scrapped 1906. <sup>(14)</sup>
<i>Indiana</i>	2,700t, bt by Malcomsons, 1867. Never actually sailed for L&NYSL. Sold Maritime Steam Transport Co. Marseilles and re-named <i>Poitou</i> .

#### Other vessels owned by Malcomson Bros

<i>Brenda</i>	772t, 212.5' x 25.9', bt Palmer Bros Jarrow 1865. Sank in collision Thames, 5.11.1875.  <i>Brenda</i> and <i>Minna</i> (see above re latter's time as blockade runner), it seems were originally intended for Malcomson's transatlantic service, but in fact ran for the LC&OLine from July 1896 for, it is believed, several years.
<i>Aurora</i>	589t, 205.5' x 26', bt J. Robinson & Co, Cork 1856. Sold to Maxwell, March 1870.
<i>Aboena</i>	1,751t, 265' x 34.5', bt Neptune, W'ford 1857. Sold foreign December 1858.
<i>Pomona</i>	1,225t, 251.5' x 29', bt Palmer Bros Jarrow, 1859. Foundered off Gozo, Malta, 22/2/1860. <sup>(17)</sup>

*Avoca*, *Una* and *Unica*, apparently of approximately the same size as *Cella*, were advertised in the New York Herald 21/12/1863 as due to be commissioned on the New York service but nothing transpired from this. *Una* however, has been shown as being in the 'Eastern Trade'.<sup>(18)</sup> It seems therefore that she, and the other vessels above may have run for Malcomson's LC&OLine for varying lengths of time.

Malcomsons were also apparently one of the pioneers in the river Plate trade, but were absorbed by Lamport & Holt.<sup>(19)</sup> *Paraguay*, above, was originally built in 1864 for the River Plate

S.S. Co, possibly Malcomson's title for their South American Line, although this has not been checked. The Liverpool, Brazil & River Plate S.N. Co became Lamport & Holt's title for the South American line only in 1866.

## REFERENCES

- 1 By the Laudabiliter (Papal Bull) of 1155, (some sources say it was possibly a forgery) by which Pope Adrian IV (Nicholas Breakspear the only English Pope) granted Henry II "permission" to invade Ireland in order to "promote ecclesiastical reform".
- 2 William Irish: *Ship-building in Waterford*, Decies No 46, Journal of the Old Waterford Society, (Autumn 1992), p46.
- 3 Irish, op cit, p48
- 4 Graham Farr, West Country Passenger Steamers, (Prescot 1967) p63
- 5 Lloyd's Registers, sections entitled "Ships Navigated by Steam" from 1847.
- 6 John Kennedy, The History of Steam Navigation, (Liverpool 1903) p297
- 7 Kennedy, op cit, p298
- 8 Farr, op cit, p 273
- 9 N.R.P. Bonsor, North Atlantic Seaway (Jersey 1978) p595-8
- 10 The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland (Oxford 1991) p 205
- 11 Stephen R. Wise, Lifetime in the Confederacy, (Columbia, S. Carolina 1988, p293
- 12 Bonsor, op cit, p596
- 13 Farr, op cit, p329
- 14 Kennedy, op cit, p298
- 15 Duncan Haws, Merchant Fleets No 15, T&J Harrison (Hereford 1988) p 41
- 16 Bonsor, op cit, p598
- 17 Bonsor, op cit, p346 and p 1922
- 18 Kennedy, op cit, p297
- 19 George Chandler, Liverpool Shipping, (London 1960) p 150



# LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th APRIL 1994

## INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

1992/93	EXPENDITURE	1993/94	1992/93	INCOME	1993/94
77.10	"THE BULLETIN"	132.81	791.72	Subscriptions	922.00
38.19	Sundry Printing	13.00		Donations	11.00
144.72	Postages	95.17	26.81	Refreshments	27.20
		229.90		Sale of Transactions	47.47
35.00	Speakers' Expenses	74.50			
48.68	Miscellaneous	39.05	10.00	Miscellaneous	12.00
728.74	BALANCE	678.14			
1071.43		1019.67	1071.43		1019.67

## BALANCE SHEET

1992/93		1993/94	1992/93		1993/94
£		£	£		£
136.47	Current A/C Balance as at 30/4/94	214.61	147.73	Current A/C Balance as at 31/3/92	136.47
1483.46	Deposit A/C Balance as at 30/4/94	2094.28	737.65	Deposit A/C Balance as at 31/3/92	1483.46
			5.81	Deposit A/C Interest	10.82
			728.74	Balance Inc/Exp	678.14
1619.93		2308.89	1619.93		2308.89

signed  
John Shepherd  
Hon Treasurer

30th April 1994

## Printing of the BULLETIN.

At the AGM a query was made as to cost of our quarterly journal. It seems best if the process were to be explained.

The copy is typed via a word processor and put on disc for storage etc. the majority of the typing is carried out by the Editor. Occasionally a couple of the articles may be typed by a member who owns a word-processor and if the author of the article likewise uses a word-processor. When complete the disc is handed to a print-producer who makes a fair copy for the Editor to prepare for photo-coping. The latter process is carried out gratis by friends of the Society.

On return the pages are stapled, folded and handed to the Hon Secretary who arranges the despatching via the GPO. A few members who attend the Maritime Archives regularly collect their copies, thereby saving a little postage.

It must be borne in mind that the postage is about 25p per copy in the UK. The envelopes cost about 8p each

## Local Notes

Saw the "Arcade Eagle", (reg. Oslo) leaving the Mersey 25th June. A stern-door RO-RO effort obviously running to Ireland. A container, visible on deck, had the old English motto "Pandoro" in large letters on its side

The activity on the Mersey, related to the development of the Oil/Gas fields in Liverpool Bay can be observed on clear days when one or two work-barges with heavy lifting equipment appear on the horizon

---

## Research Notes

There was considerable response to a query in the Wallasey News asking for information on boatbuilders Henry B. Hornby of Wallasey. The firm closed around 1965 after more then 70 years operation. They built many small craft not only for MD&HB but also for the RN and Trinity House. And they built several hundred surf-boats for West Africa mainly ordered by Elder Dempsters, for whom they also produced a considerable number of life-boats. Collection material for the history of the firm and for other boatbuilders on Merseyside is proceeding well. Any information on firms such as A. Rutherford, who were building surfboats for West Africa as early as 1897 is welcomed by Ken Tinkler who has taken up the research.

Barbara Rushton has completed the index to the transactions. It is now being prepared for publication at a price for members of about £1.50 inclusive of postage.

# LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

## PROGRAMME 1994/95

### 1994

Sept	15th	Topsail Schooners a Hundred Years On	L. Roberts
Oct	20th	Marine Paintings	G. Davies
Nov	17th	The Fate of the Collins Side-Wheeler " <i>Pacific</i> "	Peter Day
Dec	15th	Christmas Social and Quiz	M.K. Stammers

### 1995

Jan	19th	The Port of Liverpool	E. Leatherbarrow
Feb	16th	Seeing the Light	A.J.Hirst
Mar	16th	Ship's Propellers	L. Bodger
Apr	20th	Ships & the Port in my Care	John W. Wall
May	18th	AGM. Fishing Boat Development and Registration in the 19th century	M. Tanner

LNRS Archives  
Maritime Records Centre

# LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY



Vol 38 no 2

Autumn 1994

## CONTENTS

Journal of (1890's) Voyage to NSW	'Sandy' Williamson 29
A Plea for Accuracy	Charles Dawson 36
A New Project for a Swedish Museum	Chas Dawson 40
Larinaga's	David Eccles 42
Palm Oil	J.E. Cowden 52
Preservation of Valparaíso Tug	R.C. Shepherd 56

### Maritime Archives & Library

Last year the research room was moved from the ground floor to the second floor where the accommodation was less than a third of the former space. However lately the existing accommodation has been improved and there are now another three places available. During 1995 it is hoped to add at least a further four places for researchers

# 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 (Speakers 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 Archives & Library

Merseyside Maritime Museum

Pier Head Liverpool L3 4AA

---

## Society Notes

Please note that subscriptions are due immediately after the AGM in May. This year a considerable number of members are somewhat tardy in paying their due. Would you be kind enough to check if your subs have been paid.

The following account of a voyage to Australia was written by my father Alfred Williamson, B.Sc., in about 1945-6, but unfortunately his illness and subsequent death prevented its being completed.

Sandy Williamson, member

### The "*John Williams IV*"

THE FOURTH "*John Williams*", a mission ship belonging to the London Missionary Society, sailed from the East India Docks, London on Friday 18 May 1894 for Australia. The Captain was Roger Turpie who had been in charge of previous ships of the same name. He was genial, white-haired man whose chief joke about short trousers was that you had "put your legs too far through your trousers". Mr. Edward C. Hore was the first officer. He had been a missionary for the L.M.S. in East Africa in the neighbourhood of Lake Tanganyika. He had actually surveyed that lake and taken out, in pieces, from England, a small steamer which he built and launched on the lake. He too was bearded, and so was Mr. Cardwell, the second mate. The boatswain was named Cullen, and Frazer was the pantry boy. My father, Mr A. Williamson, was the chief engineer, Mr Morris, a Welshman, was the second engineer, and Bob Jones was the donkeyman. Two of the sailors were Macpherson and Macleod and there was one named Nicholson and a fireman named Cameron.

The ship moved off at about 10 am and sailed down the Thames to Gravesend. Many visitors came aboard here to see the ship, and, when they left, sang "God be with you till we meet again". And so about 2 pm the ship set off for Australia and the South Seas. Next morning, at about breakfast time, we passed the Isle of Wight. Crossing the Bay of Biscay was not too rough, and after passing the NW corner of Spain, we sailed along the coast of Portugal being close to the land at Cape Roca at the mouth of the River Tagus.

The passengers on the ship were:

Mrs Turpie, the captain's wife

Mrs Hore, the chief officer's wife

Joan Hore, a girl of 5 or 6

Miss Hore, her aunt

A girl named Adelaide, under the care of Mrs Turpie:  
aged about 12

Mrs Williamson, my mother and sons Charles, aged 10

Fred aged 6 and Sandy aged 5

We were a very friendly party, and occupied our time in various ways. We three boys had slates and pencils and my father used to give us writing to do, and sums to work. Miss Hore taught us how to crochet and we used to make small wool mats with coloured wools. We read too, and Joan Hore had books about missionaries and one about the ship itself.

The ship was a three-masted schooner, square-rigged forward, and provided with steam power. She was built on the Clyde by R. Napier & Sons, under the direction of Gilbert S. Goodwin, marine engineer, of Liverpool. Her work was to be among the South Sea Islands and to New Guinea, with Sydney, NSW as her headquarters. The ship was able to carry about 385 tons of coal, but this would not carry it to Australia, so quite a good distance was covered with canvas set. The engines gave a speed of eight and a half knots, about 200 miles a day. The ship was 204ft long and drew 13ft of water. She carried 2,200 sq.ft of canvas. Cabins were built to take six married missionaries, and fifteen native teachers with their wives. Across the bows were the words "Peace on earth, goodwill among men" and an angel was her figurehead. She had a yellow funnel and her hull was painted grey.

After Portugal, the next land sighted was the island of Madeira and some weeks later, on a Saturday afternoon, we anchored at Jamestown, St. Helena, for water. We did not go ashore, but from the ship we could see the spire of St. James'



Church. We could see where Jacob's Ladder led up the hill. That night a gun was fired at sundown and we steamed away southward. We did not call at Capetown but sailing away to the east, reached Fremantle, at the mouth of the Swan River in Western Australia, two months and ten days after leaving England. Thus it would be about 23 July 1894. On 22 June 1894 I had my seventh birthday on the ship as she sailed southward in the Atlantic Ocean.

We went ashore at Fremantle, and walked about in what was then a small town of mainly one street. While we lay at anchor, a storm came up, and we had to sail away to safer anchorage. Here we caught fish in a way that anglers dream about. Over went the line, and up came a fish. The talk was that we were among a school of fishes. We had them swimming about in tubs on the deck, and the one that I remember most was the long-nosed garfish. We did not go to Perth which lay not far away. After a week at Fremantle, we sailed southward and had very bad weather as we rounded Cape Leeuwin. I remember well that oil-bags were put out, and the service was held in the saloon where Miss Hore played the harmonium, and "Rescue the perishing" was sung.

After crossing the Great Australian Bight, we came to Port Adelaide. Visitors from Adelaide came to see the ship and Mother took us by train to Adelaide. The chief street was King William Street and one of the surprising things to us children was, that trains went through one of the streets. A certain "Johnny Allsorts" had a sort of universal store, which we visited. While at Port Adelaide, Mother and we three boys were invited to stay with Halleys, who lived out in the country. We went by train and then by buggy, about 12 miles, to their house. They were a family of missionaries, who had been in China, for they had all sorts of Chinese souvenirs in the house, huge heavy Chinese hats, Chinese sweets (horrid things!), Chinese clothes and costumes. They grew oranges too and had an orangery. Heavy rain fell during our visit, but when it went fine we went about the place. They had tangerines, and a kind

orange called mandarins. I do not know how long we stayed, but they were certainly very good to us. Their son was called Eustace.

Leaving Port Adelaide, we passed Kangaroo Island next day and sailed across Port Philip to Melbourne. We sailed up the River Yarra and berthed by a chain ferry called the 'Penny Slow-Coach'. At Melbourne, we often went up Collins Street shopping, and into Cole's Book Arcade, a famous Australian bookshop. More visitors came to the ship daily, for the "*John Williams*" was a famous ship to the Congregationalists - the "penny ship", the new mission-ship to the South Seas.

Leaving Melbourne, we sailed south to Tasmania where we stayed at Hobart for a week. Visitors came to see the ship. Mother took us about at Hobart and one of our first surprises was to find that Hobart had electric trams in its streets while Liverpool trams were still pulled by horses in 1894. We used to go to the museum. At the front entrance was a model of a large gold nugget that was found in Tasmania. We were berthed at the pier and the next ship was being loaded with small bags of heavy material, lead ore. These were stacked on the pier. Tasmania is noted for apples and we saw hundreds of boxes being loaded on to another ship. These boxes contained about 40lbs of apples and were being sold at 18 pence a box. We had apples daily all the way to Sydney.

And then began the last lap, for we left Hobart and sailed north to Sydney. Here we were going to live. So after a few days on the ship, we finally left it on 19 September 1894, Sandy's birthday, after 125 days, a solid four months of ship-life and 10,000 miles at least. Our first house was "Whittonville" in Grosvenor St., near Bondi Junction. While there, we children attended Waverley School, until Charlie started to be a chorister at St. Andrews' Cathedral and attended their school.

Our next house we called "Linacre" and it was in View Street, Woollahra. It was a long narrow cottage of one storey. So we changed schools and went to Woollahra School in Forth Street. Mr.

Farr was the headmaster, and Mr. W.R. Southworth and Mr. Fell (a big chap) who used to take us to Bondi Baths. On our way home we used occasionally to call and see Capt Turpie (Old Roger) who lived in a house called "Salcombe".

And what of Sydney? I can remember quite a lot about the place, thought I was ill in bed for over a year. Dr. Lamrock used to attend to me, and eventually recommended exercises on a horizontal bar that hung in the gateway of the lattice fence. We went to St. Steven's Church and to Bondi Junction Wesleyan Chapel, and among our other outings, we went on a Sunday School picnic to Cabarita, where there was a pleasure ground. On the way, by steamer, we sailed up the harbour and passed the famous old clipper ship "*Sobraon*", then a reformatory ship for Sydney boys. We used to pass a monument, a broken column in the harbour, in memory of Searle, a rowing man, who was drowned there. For picnics, Mother used to take us to Bronte Beach, Bondi Beach, Coogee Beach and Manley beach, where we had sea bathing in the Pacific Ocean. There was an open-air baths at Bronte on Nelson Bay, that was a great favourite, as it had one part of very shallow water. Bondi Baths was an oval open-air pool and we used to walk there

from school. Watson's Bay near the South Head was a favourite place for a day out. Occasionally we went down to Rose Bay, where the "*John Williams III*" was at anchor, before being sold out of the L.M.S. service now that the "*John Williams IV*" was in commission. Mr. Cullen was in charge of the ship which had a plentiful supply of cockernuts.

One Saturday afternoon, Mother took us out for a trip on a steamer, via Sydney harbour, out of the Heads and to the Hawkesbury River. The scenery was really lovely, and the weather was glorious. We lived quite near to land that was covered with native vegetation. Eucalyptus shrubs grew wild, we pulled a handful of leaves, squeezed them, sniffed and then threw them away. There

were berries called 'five corners' and "ten corners", green sweet tasty things. Flannel-flowers and various kinds of ferns grew wild. Among other outings, we used to go to Circular Quay and then walk via the Argyle Cut to Dalgety's Wharf<sup>1</sup> to the "*John Williams*". At the next wharf might be moored the "*Salamis*" or the "*Thermopylac*" or the "*Aberdeen*" famous sailing ships in their day. Though a crew of mainly Scotsmen took the "*John Williams*" out to Australia, her crew for work in the South Seas was a native crew, christian natives from Samoa and Rarotonga.

We used to go to Leichardt to see a Mrs Williamson who managed a milliner's shop there and was the wife of one of Father's cousins. We went on the trams from Bondi Junction to the centre of Sydney, and then out to Leichardt by another tram, which passed Sydney University on the way. The trams were hauled by small steam-engines, boxed in, and the carriages were on the 'toast-rack' principle. The conductor walked along a footboard on the side and collected the tickets, and rarely handled money. In one part of the town were cable cars that ran down to Rushcutters Bay. Buses ran to town via Edge

cliffe Road and occasionally we used these. The driver took the fares and people sat on the top as well as inside. On the way we passed some cable cars hauled along by a cable under the ground in between the two rails. These cars were open with side seats like an Irish jaunting car, but they pulled a closed saloon as well. As we went to town on the tram, the chief landmarks were Centennial Park, a big square open-space where the park policemen rode about on horses, Darlinghurst Jail and Hyde Park. The bus ran to town via Edgecliffe Road and through Hyde Park. The terminus of the traffic was Circular Quay, from which ferry boats started for Manley, Watson's Bay, Neutral Bay, Mosman's Bay and all parts of the harbour.

Our View Street bungalow had a back garden, and we had friendly neighbours. Robertses lived directly at the back of us;

Saunders in a weatherboard cottage next door, and Parsonages, Herdmans and someone else in bungalows similar to ours. At the front, opposite, lived Stewarts and their house looked over a small valley in which the Chinese had gardens or allotments. They were market gardeners and as far as I can remember worked hard carrying huge water-cans, two each, one on each side, hanging from a pole. The opposite hill was covered with 'bush', native vegetation, gum trees and scrubs.

The weather was decidedly warmer than England's, for Sydney is 33.5 degrees south of the Equator while Liverpool is 53.5 degrees North; thus Sydney is 1400 miles nearer. The warm weather came in November, December and January, but it was mild in the winter months of May, June and July. There was no twilight. When the sun sank, darkness came on suddenly. Only once was it cold, when a thin film of ice came on the lake in Hyde Park.

As children we were taken to St. Andrew's Cathedral, where Charlie sang in the choir and attended the cathedral school. He won two prizes there, "Eric or Little by Little" and the "Pictorial Tour of the World".

In Australia Street lived the Andersons, Mr. and Mrs.; Freddie, Rita and Lily. Fred had lovely long black curls. In Bathurst Street lived the Howes, and their father was an artist.

Edgcliffe Road led to the Old South Head Road, and here on the right was a small public park, while on the left in a small wooden hut lived a man known as 'The Hermit'

NOTE <sup>1</sup> Dalgetty's Wharf at Miller's Point at the entrance to Darling harbour was used exclusively by Shaw Savill vessels. They were the agents for the Aberdeen Line. The Argyle Cut connected Dalgetty's wharf with Circular Quay: today known as 'The Rocks' and a tourist attraction.

## A PLEA FOR ACCURACY

*By Charles Dawson (member)*

WRITERS on maritime matters ought always, of course, to strive for absolute accuracy in the reporting, but this is more easily said than done. There is an excuse for writers of fiction to embroider their sea stories or cross the line between fact and fancy, but absolutely none for those who endeavour to put forward the facts.

I first became aware of the dangers when preparing an article on the ship "*Lancing*". She was one of the small band of vessels that had begun life as steamships and later converted to sail. She was probably the only ex-steamer that became a four-masted ship, since in the conversion she was fitted with a mast extra to her original three.

One interesting point about these vessels is that a number of them sailed extremely well and "*Lancing*" was no exception. A number of theories have been put forward as to the reason for this. Basil Lubbock thought that the filling in of the propeller void had helped, but probably the great length-to-breadth ratio was the main important factor.

"*Lancing*" anyway became a record-breaker, and I was tempted to head my article "The Ship That Went Faster When They Took Out Her Engines". That could perhaps be acceptable in a newspaper headline, but it could have been misleading in what I hoped would be a serious attempt, in a highly-respected periodical, to describe her feats. "You cannot believe everything you read in the newspapers" is a good maxim, but the serious writer should be prepared to include even the most highly respected authorities among those to mistrust.

In the 1979 *GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS*, the transatlantic record of "*Lancing*" in February 1916 from the USA to

Scotland was given by the publishers as 6 days 16 hours, whereas this was her time, not from New York as stated, but from the Newfoundland Banks to Muckle Flugga. Who kidded whom?

Lawrence Schoonover, who wrote "The Revolutionary", a romanticised but nevertheless very entertaining piece of 'faction' - as the blend of fact and fiction has come to be called - about the life of Captain John Paul Jones, wrote that a sailor's conversation, because of his life in such a special environment, soon loses its novelty and eventually takes the form of interminable yarns, usually imaginary. No one, he adds, can tell a whopping big lie with as straight a face as a sailor.

Joseph Conrad interestingly enough, did not demand the absolute truth: he believed that the facts of a legend need not be literally true, but he insisted that they ought at least to be credible. One of my favourite yarns - it is not true - but it is credible - is the one about the hulk of the great "*James Baines*" being used as part of the landing stage at Liverpool after she was burnt out in April 1857. Samuel Walters painted a superb impression of the tragedy the following year.

Whoever coined that yarn, our old friend Basil Lubbock repeated it, and no doubt hundreds have perpetuated it since; it seems that the drive to be 'one up' can sometimes cloud even the best man's judgement. The worst aspect of such careless reporting without corroboration, is that something that starts as a yarn can end up as being taken as the 'truth' that finally becomes very difficult to refute. It is strange that in the English language, a 'truism' can be either true or fictitious.

A special temptation is to embroider a story of galantry. One particular journalistic method lets the writer out of the problem of making the long and hard search for the truth about how a hero's life ended. One proud example is the story of Captain William Wilson and his ship "*Emily St. Pierre*" (see BULLETIN Autumn 1991). It is a superb story of how the

Captain recaptured the vessel after his crew had been taken prisoner by a Federal gunboat, who suspected the Captain of attempting to run the blockade - it was during the American Civil War when English, and some French, interests were giving aid to the Confederacy. After describing the feat and the glory it gained the captain, the sequel is that the gallant captain did not live long enough to enjoy his fame and honours, It goes that he invested the 2,000 guineas he was awarded in a larger ship from which he was washed overboard and lost just over a year later in a storm off Finisterre. The truth is that he died some six years later. A copy of the log of the "*Glasgow*", his last ship, gives the details of his death. He died of natural causes: "a severe headache and dead within 36 hours" it is stated, and he was buried at sea in the Gulf of Aden. The truth about his possible involvement with blockade running has proved more difficult to establish.

**AMONG old family papers, my wife found some shipping share certificates for companies that traded between 1920 and 1925.**

**Obviously these certificates are worthless but I would be grateful if you could tell me where I can find out more about these redundant companies.**

**THE Stock Exchange says that you should contact Companies House, which has an Archives Department in Cardiff that has records of companies dating back to 1844. For details call 0222 380928.**



## AN INTERESTING CASE OF CONVERSION

*by Charles Dawson*

An interesting case of conversion, and incidentally one of longevity, was that of the Irish packet steamer "*Leitrim*", 249.4' x 27.2' x 14.7', 796 grt. She was built by Laird Bros, Birkenhead in 1874, engined by the builders' compound oscillating type. After some years in the Dublin-L'pool service of the Dublin Steam Packet Co as a passenger and cargo ship, she was down-graded to a cattle-carrier.

When berthing at Liverpool in dense fog, 20th December 1896, she was struck on the after side of the starboard paddle box by the ship "*Nicosian*". Alongside the wharf she settled down, drowning seventy-five cattle in the after hold, although a much greater number was saved.

After this she was laid up until June 1899 when she was largely dismantled. During the ensuing year she was re-built as a grain elevator, with towers on fore- and after-decks. An innovation was that she was made self-propelling, with a new compound engine by Fawcett, Preston & Co driving twin screws.

She was re-registered in March 1901, still in her old name, but with new grt 717, and stationed at Sharpness for the Severn Ports Warehousing Co Ltd of Bristol. Here it was customary to lighten the more heavily laden grain ships in the tidal Severn before they entered the docks. In her new guise, "*Leitrim*" could handle 100-120 tons of grain per hour and her hopper could hold up to 600 tons when required.

In 1959 after nearly sixty years, "surplus to requirements" on 30th September she left for Hull in tow of the Grimsby tug "*Lady Cecilia*", arriving 3rd October. Then in 18th June 1963 when she was towed for breaking up at Dunston (Tyne).

## A Century-Old Wreck to be Salvaged

by Charles Dawson (member)

AN EXCITING piece of news that has come out of Sweden recently is the proposal to salvage the steamer "Vega" with the ultimate aim of exhibiting her alongside the 17th century Swedish warship "Vasa" in Stockholm.

"Vega" is the three-masted steam-assisted whaling barque with which the Finnish-Swedish explorer Nils Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld in the summer of 1879 successfully navigated the North East passage after some three centuries of striving by many dedicated men.

"Vega", 156' long x 27.5' at her broadest, was built of oak in Bremerhaven in 1877-3, and to resist the pressure of ice - was skinned with greenheart, or bebeeru, *ocotea rodiaei*, an extremely hard timber originating from Guyana, South America. She had a 60hp steam engine giving her a speed of about seven knots, although she could sail at ten.

On her return to Stockholm in the Spring of 1880 via the Suez Canal, thus rounding the double continent of Euro-Asia, she was sold to a shipping company in Gothenburg, Sweden. After a couple of years service in Norway at the turn of the century she was bought by Ferguson of Dundee for whaling.

Already on her first voyage things went badly; in Melville Bay, NW Greenland, she fastened in the pack-ice during a violent storm. The crew attempted to blast her free, the usual method, but "Vega" was rammed by a massive, sharp block of ice, and was holed and sank. Her crew, all 44, miraculously escaped.

She is still there believed to be in an upright position, and well preserved in the Arctic conditions. To salvage her is not so much a marine archaeological exercise, since details of her constr-

uction are completely known. Rather it is a matter of Swedish national prestige, a sort of counter to the case of the warship "*Vasa*". Magnificent though the latter vessel is to see, she was a national disaster at the time of her sinking.

The idea of salvaging "*Vega*" came from the Swedish packaging millionaire Gad Rausing and was quickly taken up by Bengt Grisell, researcher in ship design at the royal Technical University in Stockholm.

First it was necessary to check who owned the ship, and after a considerable genealogical investigation, Grisell found the descendants of the last Scottish owner. It is hoped that negotiations to purchase will be clear to allow work to begin during 1994. The position of "*Vega*" is roughly known within an area about three nautical miles square and is anticipated to take about two months to establish accurately by side-scan sonar.

A two-man American research submarine will be used to place cables under the hull of the "*Vega*" and she will presumably be lifted in stages as was "*Vasa*". It is expected to take about two months to lift her, weather permitting.

## MIGUEL de LARRINAGA S.S.COMPANY.(1898 - 1931).

by David Eccles

EARLY in 1897 the legal problems concerning the will of Exmo Don Ramon de Larrinaga were solved, and the company passed to his descendants who had been born in Liverpool. On the 28th July 1897 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Toxteth, Maria, the youngest daughter of Exmo Don Ramon, married Teodora de Larrinaga, the son of Exmo Don Niceto de Larrinaga, who had died whilst acting as company agent in Manila in 1880. He was a Lawyer, and with Maria's younger brothers Miguel and Domingo, both of whom had studied Law in Spain, were to take control of Larrinaga & Company. Feliz de Larrinaga and his uncle Pedro however remained in control until 1903, as the company were the British agents for the Spanish Royal Mail service to the Philippines, Straits Settlements and Bangkok, and this enabled the new owners to gain experience in shipping and trade.

At this time Larrinaga & Company owned six cargo steamers registered at Bilbao, and were trading Liverpool to Puerto Rica & Cuba and were establishing a service from Galveston to Manchester. It was decided that each member of the Larrinaga family would register a subsidiary company, and purchase a steamship to be managed by the parent company.

Registered on the 15th February 1898 by Miguel, the Miguel de Larrinaga S.S. Co bought its first steamer, the 1892 built, Liverpool registered 6838grt "*Samoa*" from Crow, Randolf & Co, of Chapel Street, Liverpool, a week later 23rd February 1898. With length 445ft, a capacity of 11,000dwt, and a service speed of 10 knots, she was far larger than the Spanish steamers then owned by the company. The family then placed an order with two Clydeside shipbuilders, Russell & Co and C.Connell &

Co, each for a 6,500 dwt, 11 knot cargo steamer. Named "*Anselma de Larrinaga*" and "*Maria de Larrinaga*", they were equipped with telescopic topmasts for the Manchester (Ship Canal) service to Texas, and delivered later in the year. Early the following year Larrinaga & Company moved to 30 James Street, and an placed an order for a further two 6,500 dwt steamers, again on the Clyde, with R.Duncan & Co, and Russell & Co. of Port Glasgow with smaller boilers to give a speed of 9½ knots. Named "*Domingo de Larrinaga*" and "*Teodoro de Larrinaga*" they were also placed on the Manchester service. The new steamers were of the three-island type, with tween-decks, each owned by an individual member of the family, operated as a single ship company managed by Larrinaga & Company. W.M. Clarke of Seacombe, was taken on as company secretary, and G.S.Goodwin & Company were superintendent engineers.

After independence of Cuba and Puerto Rico from Spain, in 1898, trade between Liverpool and those two islands had fallen off, and the 10-day service from Liverpool was shared with other companies. However trade between Texas and Manchester was on the increase, with frequent steamer sailings outward in ballast. With a larger fleet, coal could be loaded in South Wales for Brazil, to cover the expense of the outward passage to Texas, and any northbound cargo would be a bonus. During 1900 it was decided that the British ships not required for the Cuba service would be registered under the ownership of the Miguel de Larrinaga S.S.Co, and to finance the cost of new ships they would mortgage their two latest acquisitions, and sell the "*Samoa*".

The family had been most pleased with the steamers built by Russell & Co, and placed an order with them for a series of four, flush-decked 7,500dwt 10½-knot tween-decked steamers to be delivered over a two year period. In January 1901, the "*Samoa*", which, of over 11,000 dwt and draft 25' 11", had proved to be too large for the company's established cargo services, and had often

been chartered out to liner companies, was sold to the US Government, to become US Army transport "*Dix*" operating from San Francisco to Hawaii and the Philippines. Later in the year "*Miguel de Larrinaga*" entered service, followed by "*Asuncion de Larrinaga*", "*Mercedes de Larrinaga*" and "*Pilar de Larrinaga*" delivered in early 1903, all to the Miguel de Larrinaga S.S. Company. During this period the steamers owned by Anselma, Domingo and Maria were transferred to the parent Larrinaga & Company, retaining their Liverpool registry the subsidiary steamship companies were dissolved. Simultaneously a Spanish shipmaster, Capt Juan Bautista de Ojinaga, was appointed marine superintendent. His service in the company had included command of the ss "*Churruca*" in the Philippines.

In September 1901 Teodora de Larrinaga, bought the 1897-built, 2500 grt Glasgow-registered cargo steamer "*Homeric*" from A. Weir & Company. He renamed her "*Bernilla*" registering her in Liverpool for the Bernilla S.S. Co. of 30 James Street, with himself as manager. This vessel traded on the Larrinaga Cuban service until September 1906, when the "*Bernilla*" was sold to Greek owners and renamed "*Athina*", and the Bernilla S.S. Company dissolved.

During 1907 the Miguel de Larrinaga S.S. Co found that the financial position allowed further expansion, and an order was again placed with Russell & Co for a series of four sister ships to those ordered in 1901, but with larger engines to give a service speed of 11 knots. These four steamers were to be delivered over a two-year period, and to be named "*Esperanza de Larrinaga*", "*Gloria de Larrinaga*", "*Ventura de Larrinaga*" and ss "*Victoria de Larrinaga*". They were used to establish a cargo service between New York and the River Plate. About this time, one of the owners, Domingo de Larrinaga, was appointed Vice-Consul of the Republic of Uruguay in Liverpool.

On the 8th October 1908, one of the ship owners, Miss Anselma de Larrinaga died at her home, 'The Hermitage', Church Road, Aigburth, aged 39. Her share in the company was divided amongst her brothers and sister.

In 1912 the "*Gloria (de L)*" and "*Ventura (de L)*" were mortgaged to the Liverpool Mortgage Insurance Co Ltd for working capital, allowing an order to be placed with Russell & Co, for three 9000dwt flush-decked 11knot steamers to be delivered over a three-year period, to be named "*Niceto de Larrinaga*", "*Jose de Larrinaga*", and "*Minnie de Larrinaga*".

On the 6th January 1913, the head of the family business, Don Teodoro de Larrinaga, son of Exmo Don Niceto de Larrinaga and husband of Maria de Larrinaga, died at the age of 41 in his family home, 'Villa Maria', 23 Alexander Drive, Sefton Park. His place as head of the family was taken by his brother-in-law, 39 year old Don Miguel de Larrinaga of 'Buenaventura', Greenbank Drive, Sefton Park, who, besides controlling the steamship company, took control of Larrinaga & Company, ship agents, brokers and general merchants, of 30 James Street, and L.de Larrinaga & Co. shipstore dealers and merchants, at 18, King Street. Then Larrinaga & Co became a limited liability company. Under the Articles of Association of the company, each side of the family was represented by a Managing Director. As the son of Teodoro was only 12 years old, the company secretary, W.M .Clarke, was appointed Managing Director until young Miguel de Larrinaga came of age.

AT the outbreak of WWI the Miguel de Larrinaga S.S. Co owned 14 steamers with one completing on the Clyde. In addition, two steamers owned by Larrinaga & Company, the "*Telesflora*" and "*Ramon de Larrinaga*", Bilbao registered, were to sail as neutral during the war. In the interest of Spain's neutrality, at the outbreak of war, all the company's Liverpool-registered

steamers had the yellow bands of the Spanish national colours encircling their black funnel painted out.

On the 3rd October 1914, the company sold the "Teodora de Larrinaga" (bt 1899), then undergoing survey on Tyneside, to Sale & Company of London, to be renamed "*Tung Shan*". Three days later, on the 6th October 1914, the company lost their first steamer due to enemy action. The 1912-built "*Niceto de Larrinaga*" (Capt Robert.F.Nagle) on passage from Buenos Aires to London with a cargo of grain, was stopped by the German armoured cruiser "*Karlsruhe*". The crew were captured without casualty, and the steamer scuttled by explosive charges placed in the engineroom. The crew were transferred to the German supply ship "*Crefeld*", and all freed at Tenerife, November 27th 1914.

During 1915 the five oldest of the companys' vessels were chartered to the government as colliers, and the following year five steamers were converted to enable them to carry 2000 ton of fuel oil in double-bottom- and deep- tanks, and taken into government service as fuel-oil tankers. Only three steamers ("*Jose*", "*Pilar*", and "*Ventura*"), were left to maintain commercial voyages between Texas and Manchester. In 1916 an order was placed with Russell & Co, Port Glasgow for two 9,000dwt shelter-deck cargo steamers, named ss "*Niceto de Larrinaga*" and ss "*Richard de Larrinada*". They had a speed of 11 knots, and even though built as coal burning steamers, they could carry fuel oil with a flash point over 150°F in the double-bottom and deep-tanks for government cargo. Flush-decked, they had raised forecastles, and cruiser sterns.

During 1917 the company lost three steamers by enemy action with heavy loss of life. On the 28th April the 1913-built ss "*Jose de Larrinaga*" (Capt David.H.Parry) on passage from Galveston to Manchester with a general cargo of cotton, grain, and lumber was torpedoed by the German *U81* 150 miles off the south coast of Ireland, 12 lives were lost including her master. A week



later on the 4th May, the "*Pilar de Larrinaga*" (by 1902)(Capt B.J.Morres) on passage with general cargo from Galveston to Manchester, was torpedoed in the Irish Sea by the German U65, with the loss of her master and 19 men. On the 8th October, the "*Richard de Larrinaga*" (bt 1916) (Capt George.J.Bonner) on her third voyage for the company, in ballast from Manchester to Galveston, was torpedoed by the German *U57* about 15 miles off Ballycotton Island Co. Cork. The master and 31 crew were lost. Earlier in the year, the "*Ventura de Larrinaga*", (Capt John.V.Jones) on passage from Galveston to Manchester, had been attacked and damaged by gunfire from a surfaced German submarine on the 27th March, escaped, and put into Cahirciveen, Co Kerry, for repair, which took about five days, before continuing her passage to Manchester, arriving there 3rd April 1917.

In 1918 the "*Miguel de Larrinaga*" (bt 1901)(Capt E.B. Williams), whilst on passage from New York to the English Channel for orders, foundered in a North Atlantic storm on February 5th, 400 miles off Cape Race: the first Larrinaga vessel to be lost due to marine peril. "*Esperanza de Larrinaga*" (Capt J.H.S. Newton) which had sailed from Newport News 24th April for Manchester, was torpedoed and badly damaged 13th May, but beached at Lough Swilly, Co Donegal. After refloating, she was towed to Manchester, arriving there July 20th, repairs taking over ten weeks to complete. After loading for Galveston at Manchester and Liverpool, she sailed October 16th 1918. On the 9th August 1918 the ss "*Anselma de Larrinaga*" (Capt.F. Basterrachia), on passage from Puerto Mexico to London with a cargo of Asphalt, was torpedoed in the English Channel. Towed, badly damaged, into the Solent and beached off Netley; she was refloated and towed to Manchester for repair, arriving there on November 28th 1918. Repairs took nearly five months, and it was not until April

22nd 1919, that she was on the berth to load at Manchester for Cuba.

During 1918 all outstanding mortgages on the company's steamers were redeemed, and by the end of the year government charters completed, with all 12 steamers returned to commercial service.

On the 28th August 1919 the company purchased from the Shipping Controller the 1918 Japanese built "*War Nymph*". A coal-burning steamer of 11,000dwt she was renamed "*Pilar de Larrinaga*". WWI ended November 11th 1919, during which the company had lost five steamers, three masters and sixty-six men. Post-War, the company placed an order with R.Duncan & Co, for two 5,800grt steamers. Delivered the following year, "*Ramon de Larrinaga*" and "*Telesflora de Larrinaga*" each had a raised forecastle, a cruiser-stern, a capacity of 10,000dwt and speed of 11 knots.

In April 1921, the company suffered a tragic loss: the 1907-built "*Esperanza de Larrinaga*" (Capt J.H.S.Newton) with a full cargo of wheat, sailed from Galveston on January 24th 1921 for Reggio, Italy. She called at Norfolk, Va for bunkers and water, and left there February 2nd. Though equipped with wireless, she was never heard of again. Posted missing at Lloyds 18/41921, no trace of the vessel or 40 crew was found.

The "*Victoria de Larrinaga*" was lost the following year, fortunately without loss of life, when, on the 29th April 1922, after passing through the Windward Passage, she ran onto a reef on the Mouchoir Bank. She had sailed from Cienfuegos, Cuba, with a full cargo of sugar for the U.K., three days earlier.

In July 1923, marine superintendent, Capt J.B.Ojinaga died, and a British shipmaster, Capt G.B.Thompson, was appointed to the position. Capt Thompson held a charmed life during WWI. He handed over command of the "*Niceto de Larrinaga*" three months before she was captured in 1914, and relinquished of the

*"Richard de Larrinaga"* eight months before she was torpedoed and lost with all hands in 1917.

In 1924 the *"Anselma de Larrinaga"* (bt 1898) was sold to Italian owners on 28th April. She was renamed *"Chiabrera"*, registered in Savona. Later the same year they placed an order for three 5,200grt coal-burning steamers with F. Schichau, of Danzig. With raised poops, forecastles and counter sterns, they had a capacity of 8,000dwt, and a speed of 10knots. Named *"Miguel de Larrinaga"*, *"Ena de Larrinaga"* and *"Sylvia de Larrinaga"*, they were all delivered within 12 months from placing the order.

In 1927 two 11-knot steamers were purchased from Prince Line; the *"Moorish Prince"* (bt 1941) became *"Anselma de Larrinaga"*, and had capacity of 9,300dwt. The *"Burmese Prince"* (bt 1911) 8,000dwt became *"Lucille de Larrinaga"*. Both had been built for Prince Line's New York/South American service. Later in the year, the (Canadian-bt 1920) Norwegian steamer *"Lock Tay"*, was purchased and renamed *"Jose de Larrinaga"*, with a capacity of 8,200dwt and a speed of 10knots. In the same year Ramon de Larrinaga, son of Don Teodoroa, inherited his position as one of three Managing Directors of the company at the age of 25.

In 1928 the company sold three of its old steamers to Greek owners: the *"Maria de Larrinaga"* (bt 1898) was renamed *"Theotokas"*, the *"Domingo de Larrinaga"* (bt 1899) renamed *"Massaliotis"*, and the *"Mercedes de Larrinaga"* (bt 1902) was renamed *"Maroussio"*. An order was then placed with R. Duncan & Co, for a 9,000dwt, 10½ knot three-island type steamer with long bridge-deck, for delivery later in the year as *"Maria de Larrinaga"*.

In 1929 the *"Asuncion de Larrinaga"* (bt 1902) was sold to Greek owners and renamed *"Elengo.A.Kydoniefs"*, and an order placed with Lithgows Port Glasgow for three 9,000dwt, 11-knot cargo steamers three-island long bridge-deck type, to be named *"Domingo -," "Richard -,"* and *"Rupert de Larrinaga"*.

In October 1931 the Miguel de Larrinaga S.S.Co Ltd, and the managing company Larrinaga & Co Ltd, both owned by the family, were voluntarily liquidated, and their assets amalgamated to form the Larrinaga Steamship Co Ltd, and Miguel de Larrinaga became Chairman of the new company, with its address remaining at 30, James St, Liverpool. This was during the great depression, and out of the fleet of 17 coal-fired steamers, 7 of them were laid up, 3 in Manchester, and 4 in the South of England. Larrinaga's maintained sailings between Texas and L'pool/Manchester, and continental ports, and also from L'pool to Cuba using their own steamers, and trading from L'pool to the Philippines, Straits Settlements and Bangkok as agents for the Spanish Royal Mail Co. steamers.

#### FLEET LIST.

- 1/. *Samoa* (6839grt) bt 1892 by *Doxford, Sunderland*. (service 1898-1901)  
Sold USA r/n *Dix* U.S.Transport. Scrapped 1928.
- 2/. *Anselma de Larrinaga* (4090grt) bt 1898 Russell & Co  
(service 1898-1924). Sold Greece r/n *Chiabrera*. Scrapped 1934.
- 3/. *Maria de Larrinaga* (4018grt).bt 1898 C.Connell & Co Glasgow.  
(service 1898-1928). Sold Greece.r/n *Theotokas*. Sank 18/2/31.
- 4/. *Teodoro de Larrinaga* (3999grt).bt 1899 Russell & Co  
(service 1899-1914). Sold British. r/n "*Tung Shan*". Scuttled 15/5/17.
- 5/. *Domingo de Larrinaga* (4076grt) bt 1899 R.Duncan & Co.  
(service 1899-1928). Sold Greece.r/n *Massaliois* Scrapped 1/12/32.
- 6/. *Bernilla* (2535grt) bt 1897 Russell & Co  
(service 1901-06). Sold Greece. r/n *Athina*. Sank 2/1/09.
- 6/. *Miguel de Larrinaga* (4089grt) bt 1901 Russell & Co.  
(service 1901-18). Foundered N.Atlantic 5/2/18.
- 7/. *Asuncion de Larrinaga* (4142grt) bt 1902 Russell Co (service  
1902/29). Sold Greece r/n *Eelngo.A.Kydoniefs*. Scrapped 1933.
- 8/. *Mercedes de Larrinaga* (4152grt) bt 1902 Russell & Co  
(service 1902-28). Sold Greece.r/n *Maroussio*. Scrapped 1934.
- 9/. *Pilar de Larrinaga* (4136grt) bt 1902 Russell & Co  
(Service 1902-17). Torpedoed/sunk by UC65 4/5/17 (20 men lost).
- 10/. *Esperanza de Larrinaga* (4981grt) bt 1907 Russell & Co  
(service 1907-21). Missing with all hands Feb 1921.

- 11/. *Gloria de Larrinaga* (4649grt) bt 1908 Russell & Co  
(service 1908-33). Scrapped Italy July 1933.
- 12/. *Ventura de Larrinaga* (4648grt) bt 1908 Russell & Co  
(service 1908-33). Scrapped Port Glasgow July 1933.
- 13/. *Victoria de Larrinaga* (4648grt) bt 1909 Russell & Co  
(service 1909-22). Wrecked on Mouchoir Bank. 29/4/22.
- 14/. *Niceto de Larrinaga* (5018grt) bt 1912 Russell & Co  
(service 1912-14). Sunk by Cruiser *KARLSRUHE* 6/10/14.
- 15/. *Jose de Larrinaga* (5017grt) bt 1913 Russell & Co  
(service 1913-17). Torpedoed/sunk by *U81* 28/4/17. (12 men lost).
- 16/. *Minnie de Larrinaga* (5046grt) bt 1914 Russell & Co  
(service 1914- Larrinaga S.S.Co. Ltd.).
- 17/. *Niceto de Larrinaga* (5569grt) bt 1916 Russell & Co  
(service 1916- Larrinaga S.S.Co.Ltd.)
- 18/. *Richard de Larrinaga* (556grt) bt 1916 Russell & Co (service 1916/7)  
Torpedoed and sunk by *U57* 8/10/17. (35 men lost).
- 19/. *Pilar de Larrinaga* (7352grt) bt 1918 Mitsubishi Zosen Kaisha  
Nagasaki (ex "War Nymph"). (service 1819- Larrinaga S.S.Co.Ltd.)
- 20/. *Ramon de Larrinaga* (5791grt) bt R.Duncan.Co.Ltd  
(service 1920 - Larrinaga S.S. Co.Ltd.)
- 21/. *Telesfora de Larrinaga*. (5780grt) bt R.Duncan Co.Ltd  
(service 1920 - Larrinaga S.S.Co.Ltd.).
- 22/. *Miguel de Larrinaga* (5231.gt) bt 1924 F.Schichau.Danzig.(Service  
1924-Larrinaga S.S.Co.Ltd.).
- 23/. *Ena de Larrinaga*(5200grt) bt 1925 F.Schichau.Danzig  
(service 1925 - Larrinaga S.S.Co.Ltd.).
- 24/. *Sylvia de Larrinaga*. (5218.gt) bt 1925 F.Schichau.Danzig.  
(Service 1925 - Larrinaga S.S.Co.Ltd.).
- 25/. *Anselma de Larrinaga* (5955grt) bt 1914 Short Bros Sunderland  
(ex *Moorish Prince*) (service 1927 - Larrinaga S.S.Co.Ltd.).
- 26/. *Lucille de Larrinaga*. (4825grt) bt 1911 Short Bros.Sunderland  
(ex *Burmese Prince*) (service 1927 - Larrinaga S.S.Co.Ltd.).
- 27/. *Jose de Larrinaga*. (5303grt) bt Canadian Vickers Ltd, Montreal  
(ex Norwegian *LOCK TAY*). (service 1927 - Larrinaga S.S.Co.Ltd.).
- 28/. *Maria de Larrinaga*. (4988grt) bt 1929 R.Duncan.Co.Ltd  
(service 1929 - Larrinaga S.S. Co.Ltd.).
- 29/. *Domingo de Larrinaga*. (5358.gt) bt Lithgows Ltd.Port Glasgow.  
(service 1929 - Larrinaga S.S. Co.Ltd.).
- 30/. *Richard de Larrinaga*. (5358.gt) bt 1929 Lithgows Ltd.Port  
Glasgow. (service 1929 - Larrinaga S.S. Co.Ltd.)
- 31/. *Rupert de Larrinaga*. (5358.gt) bt 1930 Lithgows Ltd.Port  
Glasgow. (service 1930 - Larrinaga S.S.Co.Ltd.).

## Elæsis Guineesis (Palm Oil)

*by J.E. Cowden*

THE OIL PALM is indigenous to West Africa. It requires a rainfall of between 80 and 100 inches (200-250cms) per annum, a temperature of about 90°f (34°c) and a humidity around 90%. The soil should have a high clay content to retain moisture: a marked dry season is detrimental. The fruit is harvested continuously throughout the year, with a seasonal peak between March and May. The fruit grows in bunches containing several hundred fruits, each fruit rather like a date, in so far as it contains a nut, the kernel of which is the commercial palm kernel, and a pericarp from which the palm oil is extracted. The oil is a red liquid which is traditionally used by the locals as food, as an illuminant and for making soap in combination with soda ash.

The Industrial Revolution brought an increasing need for machinery lubricants and lighting oils and the rising standard of living in Europe increased the demand for edible oils and soap. Vegetable oils, of which palm oil was the most important, were needed to supplement the animal and marine oil then available. The best quality of palm oil came from the country stretching eastwards from the Niger Delta to the Cameroon River; this part of the West African Coast was known as the Oil rivers. British trading interests had become, in these parts by the 1840's that a consul was appointed. His task was to regulate the legal trade in palm oil from the Oil Rivers ports of Benin, Brass, Bonny, New and Old Calabar, Opobo and the Cameroons. Although the consul's jurisdiction was the Bights of Benin and Biafra, his HQ was, in fact, on Fernando Po.

The British traders lived aboard hulks moored at the mouth of the rivers and creeks by which the palm oil arrived at the coast. Among the more well-known traders and hulks were :

R.W. King & Co of Bristolhulk "Dawstone" at Calabar

British & African SN Co Glasgow hulk "Shackamaxton" at Bonny.

African SS Co Liverpool hulk "William Money" at Bonny

Taylor Laughland & co Glasgow hulk "Realm" at Calabar

Hatton, Taylor & Co L'pool hulk "Merlin" at Calabar

For the carriage of palm oil to the UK, hoops, staves and bungs were exported by the thousands and assembled in West Africa to form large barrels known as puncheons. As the production of palm oil increased with the demand for the product in the UK Elder Dempsters sought new methods of carriage.

They had a vessel "*New Columbia*" with boilers fired by coal or oil. When coal was used the fuel tanks were not performing their designed function thereby wasting profitable cargo space. In 1928 at Calabar the "*New Columbia*" loaded palm oil in the fuel tanks as an experiment. It was a moderate success save only that the palm oil solidified on the passage home and there was no method of heating the oil for discharge. However a couple of months later heating coils were fitted in No 2 lower hold to form deep-tanks with heating coils. The result was entirely successful and the carriage of palm oil in bulk had arrived.

Not only did the United Africa Company (UAC) own ships they also owned large plantations in the Oil Rivers districts as far afield as the Belgian Congo (Zaire) and where increased volumes of palm oil were available. Furthermore the smaller West African states had developed their lands for the cultivation of the palm. To take into account the larger volumes carried in the palm oil trade, puncheons were withdrawn alongside the introduction of new vessels entering the trade, the majority of

which had been fitted with heated deep-tanks capable of accommodation some 500-700 tons of oil.

Over the years oil, in small quantities, was also being extracted from other West African products—groundnuts, cotton, lime, rape, karite, tallow, glycerine and latex. As the expected tonnages of these commodities grew, palm oil was being carried according to three grades. This brought about difficulties in stowage eg a plantation might have, say, a parcel of 150tons of grade one oil. This could not be mixed with other grades, which, with a 500ton deep-tank produced a loss of freight revenue.

The UAC decided to introduce two specialised vegetable-cargo carriers with one or more deep-tanks of varying cargo capacities, thus overcoming the problem of shipping smaller tonnages. The first of these was the "*Congonian*" built at Kiel 1936. Four years later this ship was torpedoed and sunk off Freetown. The second of these vessels was the "*Matadian*" built Newcastle in the same year. She was torpedoed and sunk off the African coast in 1944.

Due to the importance of palm oil to the UK war effort an urgent replacement for the "*Congonian*" came in 1942 for the UAC. A replacement for the "*Matadian*" came in March 1948 ordered by Elmina & Co of Freetown (managed by UAC).

Long after the delivery of the "*Matadian*" changes were seen in the West African territories causing the UAC to re-think how best to operate their shipping interests. Not only was the change taking place in Africa, but the British Government of the day indicated that shipping companies could well fall under government control. As a result the Palm line was formed taking over the shipping interests of UAC.

The Palm Line retained a West African flavour to the names of their new fleet and incorporated the suffix "Palm" with the names of their vessels. Thus "*Congonian*" became "*Opoho Palm*" and "*Matadian*" became "*Matadi Palm*". In 1953 Palm Line



ordered another vessel "*Tema Palm*", this time from Bremerhaven. Eight years later "*Opobo Palm*" was sold. The same year the company acquired the (10-year old) "*British Rover*" (x-B.P. tankers) and re-named "*Makeni Palm*". At this juncture the Company renamed their "*Tema Palm*" to "*Makurdi Palm*", thus bringing all three vegetable oil carriers under the class 'M' vessels. Between 1963 and 1969 all three tankers were disposed of.

In 1971 Palm Line ordered yet another oil tanker "*Matadi Palm*" which, to carry the various categories of oil, had 28 tanks of varying sizes. This vessel lasted until 1986 when she was sold.

#### NOTES:

R.W. King & Co of Bristol and Hatton, Cookson & Co L'pool were acquired by the African & Eastern Corporation which later merged with the Royal Niger Company to form the present day UAC.

Hulks "*Merlin*" caught fire at New Calabar in 1864. as she carried explosives caused consternation in the whole settlement. 10 hulks were moored downwind of the "*Merlin*" and a strong Harmattan wind blew smoke and sparks over them. They were mostly covered with palm-mat roofing which in that season was very dry. Being Saturday the principals had gone downstream to a party. When the juniors saw hat was happening they slipped the mooring and drifted on the ebb-tide. Alas when the tide turned that drifted back in time to be near the "*Merlin*" whe she blew up, thereby setting fire to eight other vessels all of which had explosives on board and in due course all blew up.

Co-incidentally the very same day, the Hatton, Cookson vessel "*Lottie Sleigh*" blew up in the River Mersey with a quantity of explosives being shipped to West Africa.

## Mersey-built Tug for Scrap?

IN 1911 the probably one of the first vessels built by H & C Grayson of Garston the steam tug "*Poderoso*" was delivered (as yard no 69 - 37.7m x 7.6m x 4.01m). Her coal-fired boilers enabled the engines to provide a speed of 8 knots. She later had a large sheave fitted on her bow with drums connected to a large capstan which enabled her to lift up to 40 tons.

The owners, PSNC, sent the vessel out to assist the manœuvring of their ships at Valparaiso. After being replaced by motor tugs she was purchased by Prochelle & Co of the same port and later sold on to Messrs Kenrick & Co. For a number of years she was employed in the recovery or lifting of anchors and chains from the sea-bed in addition to shifting and replacing buoys. Burning coal and manned by 20 crew "*Poderoso*" was quite uneconomical and Mr. C. Kenrick donated the tug to a charity on condition that it remained in Valparaiso and was well maintained. Eventually the University bought her for the symbolic sum of \$1 hoping the port community would raise the finance for her preservation.

Time dragged on and at the end of 1993 the port authorities served notice that the "*Poderoso*" presented a danger to the safety of the Bay and if, by 28th February last, nothing had been resolved as to her future she would be sunk at sea. Public outcry after this warning demanded action. The Mayor of Valparaiso appointed a committee to ascertain if it would be possible to bring her onto a vacant slipway for repair/renovation. However a report, whilst confirming the feasibility of the project, showed that the cost was far beyond the amount which could be raised by the public. It was finally decided that the "*Poderoso*" should remain afloat after repairs had been made. There the matter rests at present.

This article has been provided by our member R.C. Shepherd who, in the late 1930's, worked for PSNC in their Valparaiso office

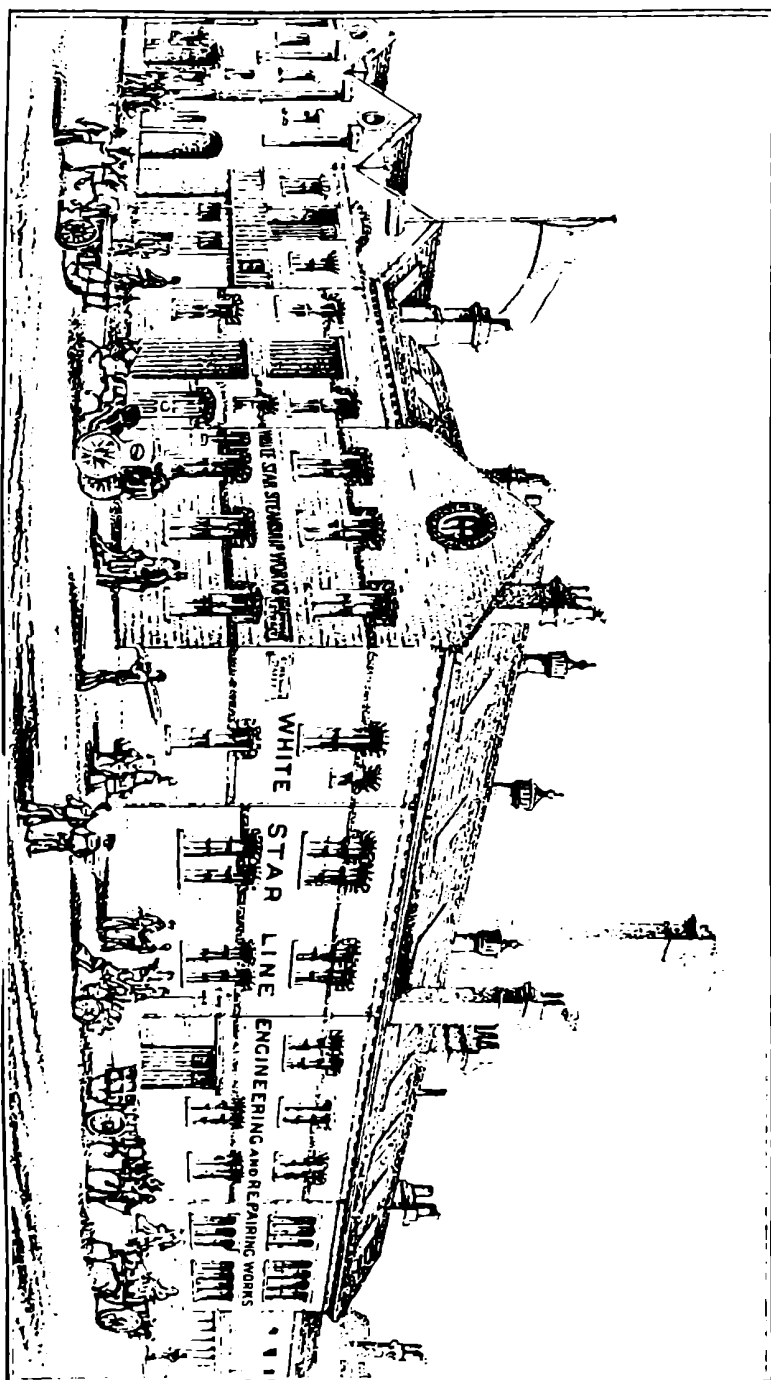
### Local Notes

For a couple months a large crane barge has been working on the gas pipe-line from about two miles west of and a little north of Formby Point and due west for about 11 miles, thereby linking the gas source to the main line north of the Point of Air. The maneouvring of the barge was assisted at times by as many as eight tugs and service vessels. Quite a display of lights during the late evening especially for beach walkers at Ainsdale.

### Research Notes

Barbara Rushton has completed her Analytical Index to the Transactions of the Society. It is now available to members at £1.50 inclusive of postage.

As a result of enquiries about local boat-builders, the name of Cochrans arose and further enquiries point to the movement of the firm to Annan (Dumfries & Galloway) where they are important manufacturers of pressure vessels, mainly for the oil and chemical industries. The firm were certainly substantial boatbuilders before WWII in addition to being boiler-makers. But their main claim to fame is that they built the "*Resurgam*" the submarine which was lost when the vessel drifted crewless out the River Foryd (Rhyl). The fate of the submarine has never really been established; even searches with sophisticated instruments etc have found no trace.



# LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY



Vol 38 no 3

Winter 1994/5

## CONTENTS

Operation Postmaster	57
Fresnel, Designer of the Lighthouse Lens	Charles Dawson 72
White Star rules for Safe Navigation	76
Wallasey Shipowners	83
Atlantic Ocean Liner Passages	84

*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 (Speakers 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 Archives & Library

Merseyside Maritime Museum

Pier Head Liverpool L3 4AA

---

## Society Notes

A Society calendar has been produced in A4 size. The 12 illustrations have been taken from the David E. Smith collection: all of commercial sailing vessels on the Mersey in the 1920's and 30's. Now available at £2 post free.

## Errata

*for the last BULLETIN (v2 no 2)*

Re the tug "*Poderoso*", p 56, the vessel was not one of the first built by H.C. Grayson of Garston but was yard no 69.

The owners of the hulk "*Merlin*", page 53 should be listed as Hatton Cookson & Co and not Hatton, Taylor as printed.

## Operation POSTMASTER

*by Gordon Wright*

John O.C. Duffy, Principal Engineer of Nigerian Marine, was called to the office of the Governor of Nigeria, in September 1941. The Governor's deputy explained that John was to go into the adjoining room to meet a naval officer and a consular official who required assistance from Nigerian Marine pointing out that it was a matter which the Governor did not wish to be directly linked.

A Commander RN then explained that several ships lying at Santa Isabel, Fernando Po, owned by Germans and Italians, were to be seized. A couple of small vessels were to be requisitioned to carry a party, Frank Force, take possession of the ships and tow them to a harbour controlled by the Allies. The target vessels were the "*Duchessa d'Aosta*" 8,000grt and "*Likomba*" (199grt) and a couple of smaller craft. John Duffy arranged for two tugs to be made available with a master experienced in towage: the "*Lagos Vulcan*" and the "*Nuneaton*" (tug/launch) neither entirely suitable for the task.

The 'Frank Force', formed by the Special Operations Executive, was to be ready for action in November. The delicate nature of the operation required secrecy to avoid diplomatic embarrassment. Apparently in the port of Santa Isabel any special celebration, religious or otherwise, meant parties held above the port in the cool air half way up the mountain. It was thought that Christmas celebrations would provide an opportunity. Richard Abell, of the British diplomatic service with responsibility of contact with consuls in the region, was the link with Fernando Po and had considerable interest in the organisation of the raid, and in fact could have planned the entire venture.

It was early in the New Year before the chance arose.

The two vessels cleared Lagos at 0500hrs 11th January 1942, the "*Nuneaton*" under tow, initially at slow speed until daybreak. Lt-

Cmdrs Duffy and Oldland were the engineers aboard "*Lagos Vulcan*" which had Lt Duff (of HM M/L 1016) as Mate and a young man named Dennis as Quartermaster. The crew of "*Nuneaton*" was Lt H.H. Goodman in command; members of the Frank Force making up the rest of the crews.

The journal of the Master (Thomas T. Coker) reads:

Sunday 11th Jan.: 0620 increased to half speed watching the "*Nuneaton*" which was steering rather wildly until I managed to get her sheered onto my port quarter where she towed fairly comfortably while I steered "*Lagos Vulcan*". Majority of crew suffering from mal-de-mer all forenoon. Noon obs pos 5° 48.5'N 4° 2.5'E co S36°E, dist 52 miles.

Monday 12th Jan.: Crew shaking down and breakfast in big demand. Lt.Duff mustered fatigue party for ship-cleaning and assisting cook. Capt Appleyard is endeavouring to steer, so hope to get an hour's nap as I have been steering since leaving Lagos, with a few spells from Lt Duff who is not used to steering this type of vessel, so I dare not leave the bridge yet.

0930 Dennis comes to the wheel; not very successful at first, but is improving rapidly; suggest to Capt Marsh-Phillips that if steering improves I should show crew how to make tow-rope fast using the tug's quarter bitts to practice on.

1100 As the steering seems to have improved I was able to leave the bridge in charge of Lt Duff with Dennis at the wheel and muster the hands aft for two-wire drill, at the same time keeping a weather eye open should the tug run off her course which would be rather disastrous for the "*Nuneaton*".

While I was giving a demonstration of how to make the tow-wire fast to the bitts of "*Duchessa d'Aosta*" so that there would be no chance of the tow-wire slipping when making a getaway, should the operation be successful, when I happened to glance astern and notice that the "*Nuneaton*" sheered away too far on our port quarter so that the 6" manilla tow rope stretched away too far abeam. This caused the "*Nuneaton*" to be towed



over onto her beam ends. I slipped, at the same time shouting down the engineroom to stop the engines. This fortunately saved a very ugly situation, although valuable stores and equipment were lost overboard from the "*Nuneaton*". The "*Nuneaton*" was hove alongside and all the hands turned to bailing and the situation was well in hand by noon. Noon pos. 4° 12.1'N 6° 48.2'E. Co S32°E dist 145nm

Intend to make this course and speed until 1500hrs.

1500hrs approx pos 3° 57.3'N 6° 37'E dist run 50 miles (by log). Engines stopped. all hands to dinner as we are well ahead of time. Capt Marsh-Phillips orders boarding drill at 2100hrs. Collapsible canoes sent away and are to board us unobserved. Very successful indeed and unless keen lookout was posted at every 20 feet of vessel's length in the same conditions of darkness, boarding could not be prevented to a ship stationary. 2200hrs Carried on with both engines just rolling over so giving the firemen and engine-room staff an easy time so that they will be at concert pitch when the time comes. This will ease consumption of bunkers as we have decided to tow our captures to Lagos. Every man is fully confident that we shall be successful in our venture and are all keen to get cracking, but as the show is planned for 2400hrs on Wednesday we have plenty of time in hand.

Wednesday 14th Jan.: This is the great day and it opens fine and clear. First vessel sighted a tanker bound eastward at 0740hrs, about 9 miles distant on port beam.

1000hrs Santa Isabel peaks sighted bearing 140° approx 40 miles.

1100hrs High peaks sighted ahead presumably in the Cameroon peaks.

Noon pos. by bearing and observation 4° 3.1'N 8° 31.5'E. Stopped engines and engineers order boiler tubes to be thoroughly cleaned; towing and boarding gear checked over. Lt Goodman tried out "*Nuneaton*" under her own power;

small arms cleaned and explosive charges prepared to cut moorings. All this afternoon was spent preparing for Zero Hour. "Nuneaton" provisioned and fresh water supplied by 1630hrs. Capt Marsh-Phillips gave all hands the final check up, and all was set, all hands in the best of spirits.

1730hrs both vessels under way, "Lagos Vulcan" taking the leading position with "Nuneaton" taking up line astern to give an impression that she was in tow should another craft or aircraft sight us.

### Story of the Action

Alongside the "Duchessa d'Aosta", starboard bow and boarding party away 2405hrs, although one of the crew stood on the promenade deck with a very bright light showing on us; presumably this was a watchman, but he seemed not to take much interest in us berthing alongside, so the party scrambled on board and captured their first prisoner, who was in his pyjamas and was taken forward so that he could not raise the alarm. As soon as the last man was off "Lagos Vulcan" I steamed ahead to pass the tow-wire and I must say this was very fast, in record time, Just as I heard the shout from the tow-wire party that all was fast, I heard the first explosion as the crew of "Nuneaton" got busy in their corner. It had been arranged beforehand that as soon as I received word that all was fast I should give one short blast on our whistle, this to be the signal to detonate the charges on the moorings of "Duchessa d'Aosta" and for me to "full away". There was one bunch of cables on the starboard quarter which I later learned had been overlooked, and as I had already rung for full speed ahead on both engines, some of these parted with the strain and made it very uncomfortable for a member of the party to lay a second charge, but he managed it somehow and what a charge, it lit up the whole place with a brilliant green flash and pieces of metal were flying uncomfortably near. Then I heard a shout from the "Duchessa" to "pull, pull like hell" but I don't think

anyone needed persuasion and away we came gathering speed rapidly.

Thursday 15th Jan.: Red Gas buoy abeam 0025hrs, Co N25°W to get an offing before daylight. 0300hrs dist. run by cross bearings 15 miles, speed dropping back, which is only to be expected after the fine show they have put up down there, and not knowing how things were going topside. No sign of "*Nuneaton*", but do know she got away just ahead of us. "*Duchessa d'Aosta*" towing exceedingly well and have got her nicely sheered on my port quarter, and there she is going to remain if I stay on at the wheel until we get to Lagos. I cannot say I will welcome the dawn, until I am certain we are far enough away from the land, although I must admit that I should like a glimpse of the vessel on the end of my tow-rope. 0400hrs dist run 18 miles. co altered to N70°W to steam to our rendezvous with H.M. Corvette "*Violet*" pos 4°N 8°E. This was arranged before leaving Lagos.

0600hrs Dawn and Cape Formosa light just visible bearing 115°. Lt Duff keeping a sharp lookout for "*Nuneaton*".

0700hrs Fine and clear. Several small vessels sighted directly astern. Asked "*Duchessa D'aosta*" if they thought we were being pursued and was informed that they were the small craft moored to the "*Duchessa*" and they discovered them alongside when daylight broke and had cast them adrift rather than let them smash themselves up alongside the ship. "*Nuneaton*" sighted well astern on starboard quarter, making a lot of smoke evidently pushing her to make the rendezvous on time.

Noon pos 3° 58'N 8°28'E. expecting to sight HM corvette any minute now as visibility is good and rendezvous is fixed for 1300hrs.

1300hrs and have not sighted any vessel and have only a mile or so to go. Anyhow we will tow for another half hour as the

engineers suggest that we stop and clean all boiler tubes and give the firemen a spell.

1330hrs. Signal our intention to Capt. Marsh-Phillips and suggest that it would be a good chance to victual the "Duchessa" if they are short of provisions and as it was fine and smooth, we cast off two wires and went alongside the starboard bow. Capt. Marsh-Phillips came aboard "*Lagos Vulcan*" and congratulated all hands and ordered "Splice the Mainbrace"; rum was produced from some unknown source in a traditional navy keg and a tot was passed to each man. I then suggested to Capt Marsh-Phillips that as soon as we had passed sufficient stores to the "Duchessa" and had stood off and cleaned tubes, that I should go back to "*Nuneaton*" which was only just visible astern and if possible render assistance, should any be required. To tow them towards the "Duchessa" as it now seems that "Violet" is overdue, possibly with a U-boat., anyhow we shall manage. But bunkers are my only worry should we get head winds, but Mr Oldland thinks we will just do it.

1630hrs engineers inform me that steam is ready, so with a hail to the "Duchessa" I steamed towards the position "*Nuneaton*" was last seen.

1700 hrs Sighted "*Nuneaton*" dead ahead

1740hrs closed within speaking distance and Lt Goodman informed me that he has a slight engine defect but all hands were working on it and he should be underway in hour or so. We re-victualled him with stores and water and he assured us he would be quite alright and if in any doubt would proceed to Bonny river and I was to tell Capt Marsh-Phillips that everything would be alright and that he had no prisoners, as the crews of both "*Bibundi*" and "*Kalsomo*" had beat a hasty retreat to the shore on being boarded. Bidding "*Nuneaton*" bon voyage I steamed towards the "Duchessa". I wanted to get the tow-rope connected again before darkness set in.

1910hrs: All secure and full away. As there was still no sign of "Violet", a sharp lookout was kept in case we made contact during the night.

Friday 16th Jan.: 0700hrs log 53 miles, co N85°W. "*Duchessa d'Aosta*" towing very well and sheered slightly on the port quarter. Sharp lookout being kept for any sign of "Violet". Chief Engineer asked for volunteers to trim coal from main thwartship bunker to stokehold and all that could be spared turned to.

Noon Observed pos 3° 37.3'N 6° 45.5'E log 78 reset co N80°W

1420hrs sighted aircraft approaching from northerly direction to pass astern. Identified as Lockheed Hudson and as "*Duchessa d'Aosta*" has large Italian flags painted on her sides we do not know what to expect. We made contact with aldis lamp and were informed that HMS "*Violet*" was aground at Akassa and had been for several hours. After exchanging a few pleasantries with lamp the aircraft resumed her flight.

1750hrs sighted large Spanish ship broad on port bow steaming easterly evidently bound for Fernando Po. We wonder what they are thinking as it is evident they have already been informed by radio to keep a lookout for us, although she has maintained her course and speed and passed about six miles off.

1800hrs Biscuits, bully beef and fish issued to native firemen and they are quite happy; drinking water is strictly rationed to one kerosene tin per man per day. Have been discussing with Chief Engineer our consumption of bunkers and providing there was no strong head winds and we maintain our present speed we should just make it.

2400hrs Heavy showers and sky overcast. Washed out of my bunk which is the fire-hose box on starboard wing of bridge.

## OPERATION POSTMASTER 14/15th January 1942

From C-in-C South Atlantic to CHM Waldoock, Head of Military Branch Adm.

Operation Postmaster was successfully completed about midnight Jan 14/15. The three Axis vessels concerned escaping from Fernando Po without Spanish apparently realising any more than a small vessel had entered the harbour and left with the Axis vessels.

Axis Broadcasts are making the most of the incident and are alleging that the vessels were 'cut out' by Free French or British destroyer, in fact only a small tug belonging to the Nigerian Government was employed and it is now towing the "*Duchessa d'Aosta*" in the direction of Lagos.

H.M.S. "*Violet*" reported that she had intercepted the large Italian vessel and placed a prize crew aboard. There is no trace at present of the small German tug and the barge she was towing, but pair are expected to make better time than "*Duchessa d'Aosta*" and are probably on their way to Lagos.

Saturday 17th Jan.: 0120hrs Squall passes and stars quite brilliant. Lt Duff brings up some coffee. I take over the wheel from him as no set watches can be kept when so shorthanded, considering there are only three on deck, made up of Dennis, Lt. Duff and myself. That comprised the total deck crew.

0700hrs log 71 fresh WNW wind. Hope it does not last long. Altered course to N40°W

0800hrs breakfast, then all hands to trimming bunkers to stokehold

Noon Obs. pos 4° 18.2'N 5° 22.5'E log 93

1235hrs sighted smoke bearing three points on starboard bow; is it "*Violet*" ? evidently a coaster bound easterly as this smoke was observed at intervals until passed away on the quarter up to 1430hrs.

1600hrs presumed position 4° 30'N 5° 12'E. As we have quite a good offing we have not much to worry about.

From C-in-C South Atlantic 17th Jan 1942 Most Secret

Information has been received that the Italian steamship "*Duchessa d'Aosta*" and the German tug "*Likomba*" have been intercepted off the west coast of Africa by one of our patrols. It appeared that these ships were endeavouring to reach the Vichy port of Cotonou to take on sufficient fuel to enable them to continue their voyage to a port in German occupied France.

Sunday, 18th Jan.: 0800hrs "*Duchessa*" signals that she required stores so cast off tow-rope and go alongside as it is fine and calm. Inform Capt Marsh-Phillips position regarding bunkers and tell him that we will be able to make Lagos Roads but doubtful if sufficient coal would remain to tow vessel into harbour, we may need another tug to assist or take the "*Duchessa*", now that contact with "*Violet*" seems out of the question, but the engineers informed him that they would do their best and we might have a little in hand.

0920hrs Tow-wire connected up and full away towards Lagos  
Noon Obs pos. 5° 32'N 4° 20.5'E

1300hrs Wind freshening NW but we are certainly steaming a trifle better as bridge gauge is registering 105lbs, but do not think it will last long.

Fresh head winds, steam back to 85lb, cleaning fires, firemen must be getting tired, most of them have never been away from home for more than 36 hours.

2000hrs Winds fall away to a calm, steam pressure varying between 95 and 105lbs. Calm bright and clear through the night

Tuesday 20th Jan.: Dead calm and clear, our first thoughts are will the bunkers last out today, engineers estimate that we have sufficient, this was rather reassuring news which we passed on quickly to Capt. Marsh-Phillips

Noon Obs pos. 5° 55'N 3° 57.8'E 43 miles to Lagos Bar

1500hrs sighted corvette steaming towards us, a shot was fired

across our bows, at the same time a string of bunting was hauled aloft, identified as stop, heave to and do not attempt to abandon or scuttle your ship. This caused quite a laugh between us, considering we were doing about two knots. I did not think it was necessary to stop, if I had stopped I might quite easily have fouled our propellers with the tow-rope. It turned out to be the missing link, HMS "*Violet*", who sent over a boat and boarded us and informed me that he was taking us prisoner in the name of His Britannic Majesty and that I was to tow the "*Duchessa*" to a port in Nigeria. He then asked me where we were bound, it had been arranged that if we were intercepted by "*Violet*" I should say we were out of Bari bound for Kotonou, and I replied with this. He then said he was placing an armed naval rating on board. He then boarded the "*Duchessa*" and must have had rather an uncomfortable time judging by the remarks passing between the two ships. We asked if they had seen anything of a small motor tug and they assured us they had not.

1700hrs "*Violet*" takes up position ahead and just as twilight is falling we were approached by some M/Ls from the Lagos Patrol, also a 'T' class vessel probably "*Colinsay*" or "*Canna*" so we were well provided for with escorts, the dirty work having been done and we were almost home (Lagos). No attempt was made by "*Violet*" or any other vessel to assist us with the towing of the "*Duchessa*", although I am certain it would have been rather annoying had they attempted to put a tow line aboard, after bringing her this far without assistance, it might have been a different story had the engineers not assured us that we had sufficient coal to take us to Lagos. I guess they were rather brownd off aboard the "*Violet*" to be steaming at about 2 knots but we cannot help their troubles.



From H.M.S. "Violet" to C-in-C South Atlantic 19th Jan 1942

Have intercepted "*Duchessa d'Aosta*" in 03° 53'N 06° 02'E steering westwards. Have placed prize crew aboard without opposition. Escorting to Lagos unless otherwise ordered.

"*Likomba*" and "*Bibundi*" these are the two small German ships taken with "*Duchessa d'Aosta*", both will be sent to Freetown for naval service. 30 Italian prisoners taken.

From C.H.M. Waldock, Head of Military Branch, Admiralty. app. 1st Lord to C-in-C South Atlantic.

It is of utmost importance that nothing should transpire to connect H.M. Government with this operation. Consequently it is suggested that:

- a) Presence of colonial tug should be explained as having been diverted to provide assistance for H.M.S. "Violet".
- b) Raiding party must be taken off captured ships and colonial tug before repetition before arrival at Lagos.
- c) Crew of "Violet" must be silenced and greatest care taken to ensure that no leakage occurs through the crew of colonial tug.
- d) Steps should be taken to see that all members of the raiding party including natives are prevented from returning to Lagos until after all official inquiries or other resulting proceedings have been completed.
- e) All members of enemy crews should be kept under closest guard.

Wednesday 21st Jan.: 0730hrs A Sunderland flying boat circles around and informs us that the S/T ("*Lagos*) *Atlas*" had left Lagos the previous evening with instructions to assist us with our tow, but she must have passed too far off and not detected us in the darkness.

1130hrs Cassarina Clump visible a point to starboard, with smoke beyond, possibly from Lagos Incinerator chimney.

1315hrs Cutter dan buoy at Entrance to swept channel dead ahead, distance 3 miles.

From Head of Military Branch, Admiralty

Vessels should not repetition not be placed in prize pending instructions.

Request very early report on her cargo and in particular whether there is any evidence in cargo, wireless log or ships papers of vessel having given assistance to enemy.

Following is text of interim communique issued in consequence of enemy allegation that Axis ships were 'cut out' by British or Free French warships. Begins:-

"In view of the German allegations that Allied naval forces have executed a cutting out operation against Axis ships in the Spanish port of Santa Isabel, Fernando Po. The British Admiralty state that no British or Allied warship was in the vicinity of Fernando Po at the time of the alleged incident. As a result however, of this information obtained from German broadcasts, the British C in C despatched reconnaissance patrols to cover the area. A report has now been received that a large unidentified vessel has been sighted, and British naval vessels are proceeding to the spot to make investigations"  
Ends

From C-in-C South Atlantic to Admiralty 20th January

"Violet" reports that "*Nuneaton*" with "*Likomba*" and "*Bibundi*" in tow was waiting by "*Duchessa d'Aosta*" apparently broken down ten miles 000° from Cape Formosa, Fernando Po at 1700/15th. "*Duchessa d'Aosta*" expected to arrive Lagos Jan 21st but tug short of coal.

From Foreign Office to Madrid, Jan 19th

MOST IMMEDIATE MOST SECRET

Your telegrams No's 108 & 110 of 17th & 18th Jan. Incident at Fernando Po

- 1) Following communique issued by Admiralty (for your guidance).
- 2) For your own information, although no British or Allied warship was concerned, operation was carried out by S.O.E. with our approval, every precaution has been taken and it seems reasonably certain that nothing can be traced of our particular participation in the affair. One of the ships concerned carried an extremely valuable cargo and is herself a valuable modern liner.
- 3) If you receive a protest or enquiries from the Spanish Government you should confine yourself to drawing attention to the Admiralty communique and to saying you are reporting the matter to His Majesty's Government.

4) PLEASE BURN THIS TELEGRAM AFTER PERUSAL

From Head of Military Branch, Admiralty Jan 21st  
to C-in-C South Atlantic

- 1) Nature of final communique cannot be decided until all British and enemy ships involved in the operation have reached port, request very early report concerning "*Likomba*", "*Bibundi*" and "*Nuncaton*" particularly the last named of which nothing is known here.
- 2) Further interim communique will be issued on following lines when the "*Duchessa d'Aosta*" has reached Lagos.

Begins :-

With reference to the previous statements concerning the Axis ships reported by the Germans to have sailed from Fernando Po, the Admiralty announced that the British warships despatched to make investigations have intercepted and captured the 8,000 ton Italian "*Duchessa d'Aosta*". The Italian

ship which was in difficulties when intercepted, has been taken to a British port.

Ends

From C-in-C South Atlantic to Admiralty Jan 21

"*Likomba*" is a small German tug, shown in Lloyds. "*Bibundi*" have no details but presumed is a similar vessel, "*Nuneaton*" is a launch from Lagos forming part of POSTMASTER

The above have not been located since 1700/15th. Concur in proposed communique. Air reconnaissance yesterday shows that "*Duchessa d'Aosta*" should arrive Lagos today 21st.

From C-in-C South Atlantic to Admiralty Jan 22nd

"*Likomba*" and "*Bibundi*" have been intercepted and boarded south of Lagos today 21st, and are being sent to Lagos under armed guard.

From C-in-C South Atlantic to Admiralty Jan 22nd

"*Duchessa d'Aosta*", "*Likomba*" and "*Bibundi*" all arrived Lagos 1600 & 1800 Jan 21st. It appears that their wish was to reach Vichy territory when intercepted.

From C-in-C South Atlantic to Admiralty Jan 23rd

"*Duchessa d'Aosta*" carried in tons : wool 1524, copra 400, tanning extract 590, skins 130, asbestos 245, copper 365. total 3254

To Sir Samuel Hoare, Madrid From Anthony Eden, Foreign Minister Jan 28th

Sir

During our conversation this afternoon the Spanish Ambassador raised the incident at Fernando Po, which he said considerably puzzled him. He asked me whether I could tell him anything about it.

I replied that I was as puzzled as his Excellency, that I knew no more than the Admiralty Communique and that the whole story was most confused and bewildering. The ambassador

agreed that it was, and said that he would greatly like it if we we finally to pin the guilt upon the Germans. I agreed with him, that this would be most satisfactory, and added that I had asked the Admiralty if at any time they got any information to let me know, in which event I would of course be glad to pass it on to his Excellency. Meanwhile, we had received a note from the Spanish Government, to which I would return an answer in due course.

John Duffy, LNRS member for many years died in 1992. Sir Richard Abell, former Ambassador to Sarawak, died in 1993. They were probably the remaining surviving members of the Frank Force.

**Vessels involved:**

***"Duchessa d'Aosta"*** bt Trieste 1921, 8,241grt 451' x 57' x 23'

(1943 r/n *"Empire Yukon"* managed by Canadian Pacific.)

***"Nuncaton"*** bt 1935 Northwich, Chesh 3nrt reg. 56 x 14 x 7.25

***"Lagos Vulcan"*** bt 1919 as *"Dandy"* 141.2 x 29 x 14.9

***"Lagos Atlas"*** bt 1918 as *"Spry"*

***"Likomba"*** 199grt 118.6 x 22.2 x 7.5

## Augustin-Jean Fresnel (1788-1827)

*by Charles Dawson*

As in many fields of human endeavour, the history of the advance of knowledge of optics is strewn with the names of men who put forward new ideas but were either ridiculed or seen forgotten.

One of the men who advanced the theory of optics to the degree that made possible the widest applications is nevertheless probably still relatively little known. His name is at least perpetuated in that of the lens he developed, although it is probable mainly in the technical field that his achievement is fully recognised. His contribution was wide-ranging enough to have saved the lives of thousands at sea and to have improved life for many on land.

Augustin-Jean Fresnel was born in Broglie in Normandy, (49°01'N 0° 32'E). Ill-health was to plague him throughout his short life, yet despite a slow start in school, he overcame these obstacles - and many others in later life - in a way that is worthy of the highest acclaim. By the age of 26 he had graduated at the École Polytechnique and had commenced exchanging ideas with his uncle Léonor Mérimée, an artist who had become more interested in the technnolgoy of painting. His uncle's stimulation led to Fresnel's speculating on a number of scientific questions, one being the nature ot light, and resulted in his putting down his thoughts in a paper he called "Reveries". Again through the influence of his uncle, it reached the hands of André-Marie Ampère (1775-1836) who was only one of the men who encouraged Fresnel to go further.

However, after finishing his technical training at the School of Bridges and Highways he was channelled into a position supervising the building of a major road project in the Rhône

Valley. It was work for which he was not suited and although he hated it, he worked hard at what he was always to consider a "duty". He was cashiered from the service for expressing opposition to Napoleon who had escaped from his imprisonment on Elba to lead his new campaign. This gave Fresnel a brief period of leisure sufficient to enable him to formulate the basis of his scientific theories and the concept that bears his name.

Fresnel would have been the first to recognise the debt he owed to all the despised European pioneers of new ideas in optics: Christian Huygens (1629-1695) the Dutch physicist who as far back as 1690 had first put forward a wave-theory of light; also Fresnel's compatriot Georges-Louis Leclerc (1707-1788) with his idea of 1748 to divide a lens surface into concentric rings in order to reduce weight. Fresnel gained an interview with Dominic Francois-(Jean) Arago (1786-1853), another young man who was already a famous scientist. It was Arago who referred Fresnel to the advanced treatise by the Englishman Thomas Young (1773-1829) who had resurrected Huygen's century-old theory from neglect and obscurity, but who himself suffered from the prejudice arising out of the chauvinistic adoration of Newton which then held sway in English scientific circles, echoes of which still linger on today. In France, it was Arago who supported Fresnel's wave theory of light, later confirmed by Fizeau and Foucault, against the emission theory favoured by Laplace, Biot and Poisson.

In September 1815, Fresnel astounded Arago with a letter in which he outlined his latest thoughts on the subject of colour fringes, which he augmented with an addendum in November that year. With Napoleon by this time once again in prison, Fresnel was reinstated in his old position. We might think that this was a tragedy for him, but by now there was no holding him back from continuing with the experiments he had started to conduct, by which he could test his own theories. Even although

he had resort to only the crudest of equipment his results were considered so promising that he received an invitation from Paris and was granted some months' leave of absence in order to substantiate his theories using more advanced instruments.

On 29th July 1818, at the instigation of Arago, Fresnel submitted a paper on light diffraction and interference to the Académie, in which he had summed up and corrected all his work up to that time. The paper today is considered a masterpiece, but the prejudice of the "old school" at that time won the day, and his paper was dismissed by the Académie in only five sentences.

For his pains, Fresnel was sent off to Rennes, over 300 kms from Paris, and placed in charge of a workhouse for loafers. He must have been near to desperation at this but once again his colleague Arago came to his aid and arranged a position for him near Paris. Now once again near the centre of things, Fresnel published two more classical papers in 1819 and 1821.

At last his theories were being accepted and at about this time, overworked and with his health dangerously near to total collapse, he was appointed Secretary to the Commission for Lighthouses.

However he was still bound to the Bridges and Highways Administration where his work consisted of solving such pressing problems as devising barge signals for the Ourcq Canal and how to light up the 2.5m diameter clock dial of the Paris City Hall. Nevertheless it was during his tenure with the Commission for Lighthouses that he developed his famous lens. After some brief battles with bureaucracy, he succeeded in having examples installed at the principal lighthouses round the French coast.

Up to that time the first attempts to capture light and direct it on a concentrated parallel beam to ships a distance away had been made in England during the 1760's with a parabolic reflector and the bullseye lens, a type called *catoptric*, still in use today in the revolving system of some lightships. However even in the most



cleverly designed reflecting system of this type, a good deal of light can escape. To cope with this problem, the refracting lens was developed by which vagrant light could be captured by "bending" it and thus directing it to the desired part of the reflecting apparatus. This system is called *dioptric*.

It was the genius of Fresnel that led him to develop his compound type, combining the two types, previously mentioned, into what is called the *catadioptric*. His invention, essentially unchanged today, consists of a bullseye with a succession of concentric prismatic rings assembled around it in proper relationship. Each succeeding ring was ground to the profile of the outer part of lens having the same diameter and aperture as the ring, and the same focal length as the central bullseye. When a source of light was placed at the common focus of such a lens "panel", a concentrated beam of light was projected. By compounding these lens panels and mounting them on a carriage so that they could revolve round the light source, Fresnel produced the first truly powerful flashing light from a single steady source.

To avoid light scatter in the vertical plane of either lens type, Fresnel used his earlier discoveries regarding the internal reflection of prisms, adding in later designs additional triangular prisms above and below his panels. In these, light was both refracted and internally reflected, which steepened the angle of incidence at which it could be gathered, thus making it emerge horizontally, parallel to that of the main lens panel beam. This type is called *catalioptric* and is the basis of all lighthouse systems today.

The first Fresnel coastal beacons were so superior that soon lighthouses all over Europe were being supplied with equipment to his designs. It took time for the USA to react, for it was not until 1841, after Fresnel's early death that the first experiments with a Fresnel lens were carried out on the south tower of the

Navesink Light on the New Jersey Highlands. Mariners reacted strongly and exerted such pressure on the authorities that it was not long before Fresnel lenses were being fitted to nearly every lighthouse in the Country.

Besides application in lighthouses, the Fresnel lens naturally lends itself to searchlights, with the same requirement for a concentrated narrow beam. For both applications, it would be virtually impossible to make a really large lens of the old traditional type of solid glass disc because the thickness and weight would be prohibitive. Fresnel also devised the drum lens used in a multitude of applications today such as on emergency vehicles, in which the central lens section is shaped as a continuous horizontal belt with parallel prisms above and below. The familiar ship's navigation lights are now usually of this type. Unlike the revolving bullseye lens panel, the drum lens is fixed and for a flashing effect is used in conjunction with a rotating light source.

Even those of us who have never heard of Fresnel - which included the writer until he was invited to produce this article - or those who have never been to sea, are undoubtedly indebted to the genius Augustin-Jean Fresnel.

## Wallasey Shipowners and their Houses

John Wilson, and shipowner bought land at Poulton known as The Breck, and built a large house "Heathbank" there in 1834. Ten years later the house was sold to John Ripley, of Canning street, Liverpool, owner of the barque "*Bencoolen*" wrecked with all hands off Formby in 1846 (BULLETIN ???).

In 1869 Heathbank was occupied by John McInnes inventor of an anti-fouling composition for ship's hulls, which enabled him to found the McInnes Homes for Aged Mariners at Wallasey.

Captain Isaiah Weaver bought Heathbank in 1902 after living in Mount Pleasant House, Wallasey for several years. He married one of John Herron's two daughters whilst master in S.R. Graves' vessels and later became a partner in John Herron & Company ship-owners.

A well-known shipowner of the early 1800's, Edward Oliver, was said to have owned ships at the age of 18. He lived in "Liscard Castle" Church St, Wallasey, in 1843 and four years later was living in Liverpool. In 1855 he was returned to Wallasey living in Clifton Hall, quite near the site of the former Wallasey Grammar School. He had been recognised by the bankers, merchants etc trading between Britain and the USA as the outstanding businessman in that sphere of commerce. He owned 142 vessels free of mortgage and valued at over one £1 million. However the failure of Barnardd's Bank in 1858 reduced him to bankruptcy. In 1860 he went to live in Western Australia and died there in 1896.

In 1860 Samuel Smith, cotton broker, bought Clifton Hall. His son John Gordon Smith died, at an early age shortly after. Samuel built and endowed the Gordon Smith Institute for Seamen in his memory.

Capt John Herron bought Clifton Hall in 1883. Born in Kirkcubbin, Strangford Lough, he was master of the "*Lord*

*Raglan*" in the Pacific when his daughter was born aboard. He was superintendent of the fleet of S.R Graves, an important shipowner and director of the Cunard Line, who, when elected MP for L'pool, sold his fleet to John and William Herron. John Herron was to become chairman of Wallasey Ferries. His son-in-law, the Capt Isaiah Weaver, mentioned above, was sailing in the Graves fleet and ultimately obtained a partnership in John Herron & Co.

The master of the second "*Lord Raglan*" married John Herron's Mary youngest daughter and took her and their two children to sea with him. All were lost when the vessel vanished without trace in 1890.

Heathbank was purchased by Spillers (the Millers) post-WW2 and used as a recreational centre for their employees until the 1970's.

-----

Travel Today and Yesterday: A comparison

Today normal flight times from the UK to New York are:

8¼hrs westwards 7hrs eastwards a time diff 12% approx

Between 1873 and 1876 the White Star liners "*Baltic*" and "*Adriatic*" over 4 years) New York to Liverpool averaged:

Baltic westwards 9d 10h 23mins

" eastwards 8d 18h 34mins

time difference 15h 49mins

Adriatic westwards 9d 11h 41mins

" eastwards 8d 12h 18mins

time difference 23 23mins

Time diffs averaged = 12% Some things never change !p84

## WHITE STAR LINE SAFETY PROCEDURES 1877

*What a pity these measures were not observed when the "Titanic" was afloat.*

THE WHITE STAR Line takes the risk of insurance in a large measure on each of its steamers, a further practical guarantee, if one were required, of the confidence which is felt in the vessels, and as affording an additional incentive to cautious navigation. In order to familiarize the crew with the appliances for life-saving, and other purposes, a complete inspection is made by the commanding officer before a vessel is ready to sail, accompanied by the Marine Superintendent. The crew are drawn up, the muster roll called, the boat service drill is performed, the boats are lowered and the entire operation necessary in case of wreck is gone through; and a similar drill in defence of fire is also performed. The ship is then inspected, boats examined, gear overhauled, rockets seen to, and every possible detail looked into before the ship is certified. All this is not only done in connection with the sailing of every White Star steamer but what is more, the same drill is performed at sea, and without notice. Just as the bugle call summons an encampment to arms and to battle, the call is made at sea to man the boats, or to do battle with fire; and thus the crew and the appliances in case of need are ever on the alert, and ready to prove the efficiency of their drill in port. The discipline of a White Star boat is hardly less than that of a vessel commissioned by Her Majesty's government. This commendable solicitude for the safety of their passengers is apparent in almost every regulation of the Company.

The question of safe ocean lane routes having from time to time engaged the earnest consideration of the managers, they

deemed it important that united action should be taken by the various companies with a view to accomplish so vital an object, and the following letter was addressed to the Secretary of the North-Atlantic Steam Traffic Conference:-

Gray Hill, Esq., Secretary  
White Star Line  
Liverpool January 1st 1876  
North Atlantic Steam Traffic Conference.

### LANE ROUTES

Dear Sir, - Referring to the failure to agree upon an International rule obliging all steamers passing between Europe and North America to follow fixed lane routes (which, personally, I much regretted at the time), and having since given a good deal of consideration to the matter during four Transatlantic passages, made within the past eighteen months, I have determined, as far as practicable, with this company's steamers, to follow Maury's Steam Lanes, and would suggest that a conference be called, to consist of a nautical and lay representative from each of such European lines as may respond to an invitation to be issued by the North Atlantic Steam Traffic Conference, and that a Committee thereof make a joint report, to unanimously adopted, the responsibility of non-agreement to rest with those who do not accept the Committee's recommendation.

These lanes, if generally adopted, would, I think, materially lessen the risks of collision and of ice.

Pending the discussion of this subject on the part of the Conference, the commanders of the White Star steamers are instructed to follow the routes named.

I am, dear Sir,  
Yours faithfully

THOMAS H. ISMAY

Unfortunately, however, from various causes, perfect unanimity was found to be impossible, and, for the steamers of this Company it was decided to adopt the Lane routes recommended by Lieut. Maury, of the United States Navy, as being generally acknowledged to constitute the safest and most reliable courses for all seasons of the year. Thus, in the months of February to July inclusive, the commanders strike the meridian of 50°W. Long. at nothing to the north of 43°, and from August to January inclusive, to strike the Flemish Cap, shaping a course which will take their ships well south of the Virgin Rocks; whilst in the passage from New York to Liverpool a uniform southerly route is adopted, taking the steamers south of the banks at nothing to the north of 41° 50' in order to avoid meeting the steamers bound west: this route is some 100 miles longer, but is considerably safer.

THE FOLLOWING RULES ARE EXTRACTED FROM THE COMPANY'S BOOK OF REGULATIONS FOR THE SAFE AND EFFICIENT NAVIGATION OF THE WHITE STAR STEAMERS, AND THE ATTENTION OF PASSENGERS IS INVITED TO THEM:-

“The Commanders must distinctly understand that the issue of the following instructions does not in any way relieve them from entire responsibility for the safe and efficient navigation of their respective vessels; and they are also enjoined to remember that, whilst they are expected to use every diligence to secure a speedy voyage, they must run no risk which might by any possibility result in accident to their ships. It is to be hoped that they will ever bear in mind that the safety of the lives and property entrusted their care is the ruling principle that should govern them in the navigation of their ships, and no supposed gain in expedition, or saving of time on the voyage, is to be purchased at the risk of accident. The Company desires to establish and maintain for its vessels a reputation for safety, and only looks for

such speed on the various voyages as is consistent with safe and prudent navigation."

"A wide berth should be given to all headlands, islands, rocks, shoals, and coast generally; and the Commanders are particularly enjoined, on all occasions when nearing the land, or in places of intricate navigation, to take frequent cross-bearings of any well-marked objects that may be visible and suitable for verifying the position of the ship."

"Should the weather be unsuitable for cross-bearings, the engines should be eased, and, if necessary, stopped occasionally, and casts of the lead taken."

"In cases of accident by stranding, the point to which those whose duty it is to inquire into the circumstances attending such casualties, as well as the general public, invariably direct the most particular attention, is whether there has been any omission to use the lead, and Commanders, when approaching the land in thick weather, should take frequent soundings, quite regardless of the delay which this may occasion."

"Whenever there is fog, whether by day or night, the steam whistle must be sounded if the vessel be under weigh, and Commanders are reminded that the Regulations require that the whistle shall be sounded at least every minute. The fact of the whistle having been regularly sounded must be recorded in the log-book."

"In order to lessen the risk of collision, the company have adopted the following tracks, viz.:-

"Outwards. --From Cape Clear to Nantucket, the ships sailing on or after 1st February to the 31st July to cross the meridian of 50°W., nothing north of 43°, and from the 1st August to 31st January to strike the Flemish Cap, shaping a course which will take them 50 miles south of the Virgin Rocks."

"Homewards. --On leaving Sandy Hook steer for the light-ship to be well clear of the inward bound steamers, then follow



Maury's Steam Lane, as laid down by him for all the year round, avoiding its northern edge, so as to give the outward bound steamers a wide berth."

"Nantucket. – In approaching these shoals too much care and caution cannot be exercised. In thick weather frequent soundings must be taken, and Nantucket light-ship must not be approached within at least 20 miles."

In the event of falling in with vessels derelict or in distress, Commanders should bear in mind that by deviating from their course or from the usual employment of their ship, in order to render assistance to other vessels, questions as to Insurances might arise, and responsibility be incurred to passengers and owners of cargo for detention or risk to which they or the property on board may be exposed. As a general rule, therefore, Commanders are requested not to interfere in such cases, unless it be for the purpose of saving human life, or unless the vessel which fallen in with be one which belongs to the White Star Line, and under no circumstances must they, in rendering such services, expose their own vessel or the lives of the passengers on board to hazard."

"The side and mast-head lights to be particularly attended to and always ready, and when in use to be placed according to Government regulations. All lights, except such as the Captain or Executive Officer shall permit (or the law requires), are to be put out every evening at 10 o'clock in the fore-castle and steerage, at 11 o'clock in the saloon, at 11.15 o'clock in the smoke-rooms, and at 11.30 o'clock in the sleeping berth or state rooms."

A crew should be appointed to each boat, which, with the tackling, is required to be kept in good order and ready for immediate service. The ship's company should be exercised at their stations as often and may be possible, in working the pumps, fire-hose, handing along buckets, &c, so that the crew may be kept in proper training and the stores in efficient order, in case of fire or other accident."

"Commanders are requested to discourage, as far as possible, communication between saloon and steerage passengers, so as to avoid any annoyance or delay to the former on arriving at their destination, for should it become known to the Health and Quarantine officers, when passing the ship, that such communication had existed on a voyage in the course of which any contagious or infectious disease had occurred, saloon passengers, who might otherwise have been allowed to land, would probably be made subject to quarantine."

"The Commander is expected to make a thorough inspection of the ship at least once in every twentyfour hours, accompanied by the purser and surgeon. 11 a.m. will probably be found the most convenient hour for this duty. In the engine-room inspection, the Commander to be attended by the chief engineer only."

"It is to be understood that the Commander, when making his periodical inspection of the Ship, is not required to inspect the state-rooms when they are occupied, or when doors are closed."

"Divine service is to be performed on board every Sunday, weather permitting, and it is desirable that the Commander should attend."

"Should any complaints be made to the purser by the passengers, or even come to his knowledge indirectly, as to the quality of the provisions, the inattention of stewards, or any other cause, the complaints should be at once inquired into, and if possible set right, and a report thereof made on the ship's arrival in port."

## Local Notes

Powergen plc, constructing two power stations near Connah's Quay, expect to taking gas for their plant from Hamilton Oil in 1996. About the same time the latter will also begin extracting oil from Liverpool Bay both for export and distribution locally.

.....

## Research Notes

David Eccles, has almost completed his research Larrinaga S.S. Co.s. Final article will be printed in the next BULLETIN. He continues with a detailed career outline of every vessel operated by the firm under both Spanish and British flags.

Clive Guthrie continues with his history of Yarwood's of Northwich. Has listed well over 900 of the 1,000 or so vessels built by the firm.

If any of our members, pursuing specific research projects, would let the editor know, such information could be printed in these pages. Often researchers come across details or other information which are of interest to other researchers.

The successors to Chadburn's (Ships' Telegraphs) Blocktube Marine Ltd., wrote if we had any information or source material re the history of the firm. All early records seem to have been lost when the main factory was destroyed by fire during an air raid in 1941. David Eccles heard the query and visiting the Science Museum, London, noticed a display of William Chadburn's first telegraph dated 1875, fitted to the paddle steamer "*Iona*". David took a couple of camera shots which have produced three good photographs of the telegraphs, and which have been sent to the firm.

It is hoped to produce a short article on the firm in the next few months.

# MADEIRA, TENERIFFE, AND WEST COAST OF AFRICA.

## THE AFRICAN STEAMSHIP COMPANY, (INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER,)

INTEND DESPATCHING THEIR  
FAST AND POWERFUL STEAMSHIPS,

ETHIOPIA .....	1,761	Tons.....	Captain Davis.
AMBRIZ .....	2,121	" .....	" Simonds.
AFRICA .....	1,717	" .....	" Addison.
BENIN .....	1,530	" .....	" Wilkin.
BIAFRA .....	1,486	" .....	" Bell.
MONROVIA ...	1,019	" .....	" Cawthorne.
ELMINA .....	1,018	" .....	" Rattray.
EBOE .....	653	" .....	" Auchinleck.
WHYDAH.....	418	" .....	" Hooper.

EVERY ALTERNATE SATURDAY,

*(Unless prevented by unforeseen circumstances.)*

AFRICA.....Saturday, 16th October.

BIAFRA .....Saturday, 30th October.

LOADING BERTH, NORTH SIDE COBURG DOCK.

A separate Shipping Note is required for each Port with each Cart Load and contents of packages described therein. **NOTE.**—Goods for Sierra Leone will be landed there at Company's expense, but Shippers's risk; at all other ports they must be taken from alongside on arrival, or they will be carried on, transferred to floating depots, or landed and stored entirely at Shipper's risk and expense.

**NOTICE.**—All Goods are received on board the Company's floating depots entirely at Shipper's risk until delivery be taken or transhipment completed on board Steamer. Parcels addressed to different Consignees, and made up in one Package, will be charged Freight on each Parcel as if shipped separately.

ALL LETTERS AND NEWSPAPERS MUST PASS THROUGH THE POST-OFFICE.

ALL FREIGHT MUST BE PRE-PAID.

Bills of Lading, according to the Company's form, are to be had of Messrs. C. Skipper and East, St. Dunstan's Hill, London, E.C., and of the Liverpool Printing and Stationery Co., Limited, 38, Castle Street, Liverpool. **N.B.**—Two unstamped copies are required with each set of Bills of Lading, also a third or Consul's copy, for Madeira, stating weight, value, origin, and contents.

The destination, in letters two inches in length, must be marked on two sides of every package.

**Notice** is hereby given, that no Goods or Property will be conveyed as Cargo in these Vessels, except under Bills of Lading in the form adopted by the Company for the time being. And if, from any cause whatever, Goods or Property shall be shipped as Cargo, without a Bill of Lading, the Company only agrees that the same shall be conveyed and delivered on the terms of the Bill of Lading adopted by the Company, and they shall not be under any other liability whatever than the liability incurred by them by the terms of the Bills of Lading.

Goods of a dangerous nature can only be taken under a special agreement, and parties shipping any such goods without such agreement will be held liable for all consequences arising therefrom. Special attention is directed to the 329th section of the New Merchants' Shipping Act.

For further information apply, in LONDON, at the COMPANY'S OFFICES, 14, LEADENHALL STREET; and in LIVERPOOL, to

ALEXANDER SINCLAIR,

## LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY



Vol 38 no 4    Spring 1995

### CONTENTS

Three Early Screw Steamers on the Mersey	Terry Kavanagh 85
James Sewill Nautical Optician	Joseph Wolfman 89
Needles Haystacks and Passenger Lists	Debbie Beavis 94
Larrinaga SS Company (1931-75)	David Eccles 99

### MAY MEETING and AGM CHANGE OF DATE

Please note that due to an unusual set of circumstances the arrangements for the Annual General Meeting have changed. The Meeting will now take place one week later, viz May 25th. Same venue same time.

We have been lucky enough to have acquired a video film of the raising of the *EMPRESS of CANADA* and which will be shown. Further details overleaf.

The planned talk by Mr Tanner will now take place next 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 (Speakers 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 Archives & Library  
Merseyside Maritime Museum  
Pier Head Liverpool L3 4AA

---

## Society Notes

Recently, our member, Ralph Tattershall met the daughter of Capt Colbeck former Water-bailiff and Harbour Master of the MD&HB. She kindly offered a video copy of a film made by her Father of the raising of the EMPRESS OF CANADA after capsizing in Gladstone Dock as the result of a fire. The equipment consisted of a number of steam winches pulling on wires led over stout struts on the side of the ship. Steam was provided by MD&HB steamers moored nearby. Don't understand ? Come and see how it was done

## Three Early Screw Steamers on the Mersey

by Terry Kavanagh

SCREW STEAMERS on the Mersey scene are seldom, if ever, written into the usual items of maritime history of the area. However there were experiments as early as 1840 with at least three vessels "*Experiment*", "*Dædalus*" and the "*Liverpool Screw*".

The "*Experiment*" was an old iron boat (52' x 7' draft 2'9") owned by Buckley, Kershaw & Co. She had been acquired by Peter Taylor, a Lancashire merchant, for the purpose of testing his patent propelling machinery. This consisted of a 5hp high-pressure rotary steam engine, fitted with metallic packing adjusted by set-screws and driving twin, four-bladed interlocking screw propellers (fig 1). After several private trials the "*Experiment*" was tried on the Mersey & Irwell Navigation in may 1840. On the first trip she ran from Manchester to Barton-on-Irwell and back at an average speed of around six miles per hour (the I&WN packet "*Jack Sharp*" which had a 12hp engine and stern paddle wheel was unable to keep up with her). A few days later the "*Experiment*" steamed down to Runcorn along the river and Old Quay Canal, continuing to Liverpool on the following morning's tide. Her pilot and steersman on these trips, Isaac Taylor, one of the M&IN Co's experienced masters, said that the "Boat answers her helm readily, turns well and is very manageable"; moreover the wash from her "propellers had very little effect on the banks of the Navigation".<sup>2</sup> This favourable report - along with several others - probably encouraged his employers to fit the power plant of the "*Experiment*" in one their swift packets for more trials on the Runcorn & Latchford Canal.

They didn't adopt the scheme, however. "An application from Peter Taylor & Co on the subject of the supply of a new locomotive engine was considered, but it appeared inexpedient to enter in to any arrangement with them at present".<sup>1</sup>

Another steamer appeared in the area shortly afterwards. This was the "*Daedalus*" a small wooden yacht of 15½ tons burden which made her first experimental trip on the Mersey in March 1843. The vessel had been designed and built by her owner, a Mr. McArdle, foreman carpenter of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Co. Her 4hp oscillating engines had two pairs of inclined cylinders driving a propeller placed in a recess or gap "in the dead wood of the stern". The screw could "be altered and modified, so as to be more peculiarly suitable either for canal craft, or sea-going vessels", according to the "*Liverpool Albion*".<sup>4</sup> But there is no evidence to suggest the idea being taken up.

The last steamer we will consider is, to many people, the most interesting examined here. The iron-hulled "*Liverpool Screw*" had a four-bladed propeller. Built by Mather, Dixon & Grantham of Liverpool, she was 65'bp by 12'6" with a mean draft of 3'9"; tonnage unknown. The 20hp high-pressure engine consisted of two cylinders of 13"diam by 18" stroke. when light the engine attained about 85 rpm. Steam came at 50lbs psi from a locomotive-type boiler, which consumed only 1¼ cwt fuel per hour.

It is not clear when exactly she was launched, but on 11th May 1843, Gore's "*Liverpool Advertiser*" informed its readers that:

"This extraordinary little vessel continues to excite great curiosity and surprise on the river (Mersey), twisting and turning as she does amongst the numerous craft off Georges Pier, with a perfect snake-like facility. A few days ago her capabilities in towing were tested, and with as much success as the previous experiments on her speed, which is known to be superior to any of the <sup>ferry</sup> boats on the river. Three flats, each containing 50 tons, were attached to her, and taken up to Runcorn in two hours and eight minutes, against a strong breeze from the SW which is fully equal to what is usually done by steamers of 50hp; and, subsequently, she drew three heavily laden barges on the Old Quay Canal, at the rate of 3½



mph; whereas it takes three horses to tow one barge only 2mph, in the same Canal.”<sup>6</sup>

The next trial trip, from the Duke's Dock, Liverpool to Runcorn saw the "*Liverpool Screw*" contrasted with one of the best paddle tugs on the Mersey for her power, the 34hp "*Duke of Bridgewater*". The former had five flats, the latter had seven, and they reached their destination within minutes of each other, the advantage going to the screw steamer, which completed the task in 1 hour 47 minutes. After leaving Runcorn, the "*Liverpool Screw*", with her engine working slowly, towed a flat half the length of the Weaver Navigation's Weston Canal at the rate of about 7 mph and without damaging the banks. She then steamed at full speed up the River Weaver to Northwich, there to collect a large number of passengers for a trip to Winsford. The following morning the "*Liverpool Screw*" returned to Weston Point and thence Liverpool:

only  
sic  
A  
"the wind blowing very strongly against her, and the river very rough (the "CHESTER CHRONICLE" reported). Shortly after she overtook the (Bridgewater-70hp) tow-boat "*Alice*" with three flats in tow, Our little steamer took the loaded flat in tow and now commenced a struggle. The short and angry sea continually breaking over the flats and almost hiding them from the crew of the steamers; and here, more than ever, the triumphant superiority of the screw was shewn. In spite of the disturbed water and plunging of the vessels, it maintained its usual uniform speed and soon left "*Alice*" in the distance".<sup>7</sup>

At the end of June 1843 the "*Liverpool Screw*" visited Chester creating a great sensation among observers, she being the first "Archimedean screw" steamer seen at that port.<sup>8</sup> "The rapidity with which she glided through the watery element is truly astonishing" the "CHESTER CHRONICLE" declared. "On Friday last, the manager, Mr John Payne, kindly invited as many of the citizens as chose to witness her extraordinary powers, with a trip to Flint and back, a feat which she performed against a strong tide both ways, in the short

space of three hours and 10 minutes".<sup>8</sup> What happened to her after that remains a mystery. (She may have been the steam packet ordered from Mather & Co in July 1843 by the Mersey & Irwell Co. they having advised the builders some three months previously that the - same ? - vessel built "on spec" for the main line navigation was too heavy of draft.). In any case the "*Liverpool Screw*" had done enough already to earn herself a place in the history of screw propulsion.

#### REFERENCES

1. Patent No 7884 (1838) Peter Taylor described himself as a merchant and ropemaker of Chadderton when he took out his patent: Later he moved to Hollinshead and became a "machinist".
2. "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN" quoted in "CHESTER CHRONICLE" 5th June 1840
3. Mersey & Irwell Co, Minute Book 8th July 1840
4. "LIVERPOOL ALBION", quoted in "Ch. Chronicle" 31st March 1843
5. "Gore's LIVERPOOL ADVERTISER", 11th May 1843 quoted in "CHESTER CHRONICLE" 19th May 1843
6. "CHESTER CHRONICLE" 26th May 1843
7. Trials of screw tugs were underway on the Birmingham & L'pool Junction Canal, but didn't reach Chester until three months later. See "CHESTER CHRONICLE" 7th July 1843; and my article in "Report" (newsletter of NWMIN Ellis Pt Boat Museum" no 82, March 1988 pp11-13.
8. "CHESTER CHRONICLE" 7th July 1843. The "manager", John Payne, was probably the L'pool master mariner of that name in "Gore's LIVERPOOL DIRECTORY" of 1844
9. Mersey & Irwell Navigatin Co, Minute Book 5th July 1843; 9th March 1843 and 28th September 1842

Almost every navigating officer sailing out of Liverpool over the past 100 years is familiar with the name J Sewill & Co. They bought their sextants, had their compasses corrected and ordered their charts from Sewill's. Shipping companies ordered chronometers from them. However the reduction in fleets and new methods of position-finding means the firm now sells only goods which are associated with the sea.

## JOSEPH SEWILL & Co *Nautical Instrument Makers*

An abridged version of an article  
*by Joseph Wolfman*

Joseph Sewill claimed, in 1853, that his name was known in all parts of the World. It was no an empty boast. He was a highly successful maker of watches, chronometers and nautical instruments in Liverpool, carrying his name on those products wherever British ships and travellers went. Customers in New York, Boston and Portland (Maine), corresponded with him about the importation of his goods.

"I believe," he wrote to a firm in Boston, "that work bearing my name is now pretty well known in the States as a good article". In Australia, too, he said his name was a good selling point. We know there is justification in these claims.

A Sewill barometer, of the 1860's, is in the Museum of Natural History and Science in Leyden, Holland. The firm won an award at the Philidelphia Exhibition in 1876, and there is a chronometer with the name Sewill in the watchmaker's shop at the Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut. In 1874, a Sewill chronometer came first in the Royal Observatory trials and was later used in the seven year survey of Western Australia in 1880/7 and remained in service until 1928. A Sewill chronometer was installed in the "*Cutty Sark*" and can be seen in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich.

Here on Merseyside a Sewill chronometer may be seen in the Watch Museum at Prescott, and a Sewill clock is installed in the Piermaster's House at the Albert Dock.

Today there is a shop in the Albert Dock selling watches and other marine paraphenalia, under the name J. Sewill & Co. The new owner of the firm has an account book which was also a company letter book of the last century and from which we can deduce much of the history of the firm.

In March 1804 an advertisement appeared in the CUMBERLAND PAQUET stating that "Mr. Sewill .... has commenced the business in every branch of the BLACK LEAD PENCIL LINE, at their manufactory, No 36 Gulson Street, Whitechapel, London". A list of his agents in Cumberland, Lancashire and Yorkshire followed: there were six agents in Liverpool. Up to 1795 black lead was the graphite found only in Cumberland. In France that year, Conte discovered a way of making artificial graphite. Sewill was probably using this new development. His advertisement stated that his lead was "much larger and tempered by a chemical process".

This Sewill appears to be the Abraham Sewill who turns up in 1809 as a quill and feather merchant of Whitechapel, Liverpool. His name disappears from the records three years later. However a Joseph Sewill took over the business of Abraham Sewill as we see by entries in two commercial directories as Sewill, Joseph, 28 Mersey Street, under the trade section "Quill, Wax, etc, dealers, covering the years 1816-20. In Gore's Liverpool Directories he appears as "Blacklead pencil maker, 30, Mersey Street". He died in 1827, his widow, Frances, maintaining the blacklead pencil business, but Gore's directories during the 1830's state "pawnbrokers, slop-sellers and silver-smith" - indicate her main line of activity at 12 Pool Lane (later renamed South Castle Street), one of the busier shopping thoroughfares. ("Slops" was a term for seamen's clothes.)

Her son, Joseph Sewill appears in Gores 1835 as watch and clock maker and blacklead pencil manufacturer of 12 Pool Lane and 15 Canning Place. In 1837 his shop was at 35 South Castle Street and two years later he had moved to no 61 of the same street where it remained to the end of the century and beyond. Joseph's firm was

listed also as chronometer makers to the Royal Navy. The hop carried the legend 'Established 1800: the only truth in the statement was that a Sewill may have started a shop in London at that date like so many other Jewish businesses, selling watches and jewellery - and probably slops.

Joseph married Phoebe Moss (daughter of Moses Moses, tailor) in 1837. In 1848 Phoebe's sister, Caroline, married Wolf Saber who immediately discussed with Joseph the possibility of expanding the business in Australia. Saber emigrated to Sydney in 1852.

The account/letter book maintained by Joseph Sewill contains some 67 letters written between 1853 and 1856. 48 were written to Wolf Saber in Sydney, 16 to importers of watches in the USA and 2 to tenants of a house he had just bought in London. One letter concerned goods despatched the New Zealand for which payment was very much delayed.

Sewill letters explain his methods of buying goods and the way he expected Saber, as his agent, to pay for them. He paid cash for goods thereby obtaining them more cheaply, sending them to Saber at cost price to which freight charges and insurance had to added. He left it to Saber to send an unspecified share of the profit made - he expected at least 10%. Saber was to pay by cash, gold or bills of exchange.

During the Australian gold rush, Saber often sent payments in gold-dust; however gold prices in London were unstable. Unrefined gold at one time was 80 shilling per ounce - two months later it was 78 shillings/ounce, for refined gold.

Bills of exchange were cheques. It is startling today to read that Saber did not pass his bills through banks but through merchant houses. Sewill urged him to open a bank account. In these letters there is an example of the frailty of merchant houses: Benjamin Elkin & Co the great West Indian merchants, also engaged in the Australian trades, had collapsed. Noteworthy letters sent overseas:

4 Jan 1855: I received your certificate for damage on clocks but cannot recover anything for this reason - you cannot insure clocks unless that are warranted free from average, unless the ship

is stranded or lost, they will not insure such goods subject to damage by leaking or stress of weather unless as I before observed that the ship goes on shore or it is a complete wreck. Therefore you will know in future. Jewellery and watches that are packed in zink(sic), they will insure with particular average. Your surveyors ought to have told you that - they must have known.

I have engaged the freight payable in Sydney at 50/- per, which is much lower than anything I have set sent you.

27 Nov. 1856: To Lowell & Senter, Portland ( Maine).

Re the chronometer taken by Capt Storer of the Harpswell, I have not insured the chronometers, they ask so much here to do it. You had therefore better insure as you receive this [letter].

In the book we learn much about ships. The names of over 40 ships appear: with average passages to Australia taking 125 days. There were two ways of transporting letters and goods to Australia: completely by sea or by the Overland Mail which meant that goods were taken by ship through the Mediterranean to Port Said, then overland to Suez and thence by ship to Australia. The latter was quicker, with mail arriving from Sydney in two months. There was a further refinement on the journey home. At Marseilles letters and parcels could be taken off a ship and sent overland through France whilst the heavier goods continued by sea. The letters through France arrived eight days before the mail left aboard with the heavier goods. However for a period the faster route was interrupted because vessels were requisitioned for the Crimean War hostilities.

A variety of goods were shipped out by Sewill. He bought goods from London, Birmingham and Coventry for export. Naturally as a watchmaker he sent out all sorts of watches and watch materials eg watch-glasses and chains. There were also clothing materials for making-up eg velvet remnants and a 'piece of England fine blue cloth' and 'ready-made clothes, women's stocking, boy's and men's caps, lamb's-wool shirts, blankets and quilts, tea and coffee pots'. More surprising, there were bottled ales and firkins of butter, though each of the latter was a one-off. Sewill was particularly proud of 230

dozen bottles of port wine which he had bought after bargaining for 16 shillings a dozen - there had been a poor grape harvest in Portugal and he hoped that Saber would make a very handsome profit. By June 1854 Saber had a shop in Sydney and he and Sewill concentrated on watches and jewellery, though not exclusively.

The list of vessels used included "*Donald McKay*", "Great Britain", "James Baines", "Lightning", "Marco Polo", "Schomberg", "Sarah Sands", and for the USA, "Canada", "Baltic", "Atlantic" and "Persia". Up to 1856 p.s. "Pacific" often carried Sewill's mail. Brown Shipley, the agents for the ill-fated Collins Lines' vessels "Pacific", and "Atlantic" are mentioned in one letter:

21 June 1856 to Lowell & Senter of Portland per Canada

"I have been favoured by our mutual friend Capt Albert Narwick with a small order for silver watches . . . . Should you require my goods sent out through the steamers, my terms are a four month bill on Brown Shipley or any other house. My New York customers pay me in this way on delivering the parcel to the firm they advise me to draw upon, or if you prefer it payment such as I am getting now through your Captain friends.

It is noticeable that mail for North America was carried in steamers. Bunkering problems on the run to Australia and New Zealand did not enable a full service by steamships until the 1870's when ports such as Suez, Aden, Ceylon etc, could be used to store and provide bunker coal.

## Needles, Haystacks and Passenger Lists

*by Mrs D. Beavis*

SOMETIME in the 1890's, a girl was born to a family whose name I do not know, somewhere in England. All I know about her identity is that she did exist - by 1920 she had emigrated to Australia where she assumed an identity befitting the lifestyle to which she successfully aspired. She married my grandfather, and for a few years she was a household name before a devastating incident in the operating theatre robbed her of her money, her celebrity status and ultimately, of life itself.

I have chased flocks of wild geese up many garden paths over the years in my attempts to find out just who she was, and, therefore, just who *I* am. All to no avail, for she apparently neither leaves the UK nor arrives in Australia. In the early (naive) days of the search for her I turned to the BT27's - the Board of Trade outward-bound passenger lists at the PRO, Kew. Here, I felt sure, she would at last reveal her true identity.

Armed with anything less than the full name of the passenger, the ship on which they travelled, the exact date and the port from which they left, prepare yourself for a long and tedious search. The BoT kept records of all inbound and outbound passengers for many years and the lists from 1890 to 1960 are available for examination in classes BT26 and BT27 respectively. They are gathered together in large boxes containing a month or so from each port in turn: some smaller ports will be sharing a box with larger, busier ports. If you have enough information to allow you to order the correct box straight away, you are home and dry.

Later lists, which means the 1930's or so may be typed. Anything earlier - just hope that your relative did not sail by Cunard from Southampton; for years, the lists are written in a unique flowery and indecipherable style: or that it is not Union Castle whose combination of thick-nibbed pen and purple ink renders the lists



almost illegible. Pray that it is not Canadian Pacific, so flimsy and almost impossible to turn, with page after page of faint spidery scrawl. With a bit of luck it will be one of the smaller forms: the larger ones are torn and ragged and your ancestor's name is, I can positively guarantee it, on the missing bit. If by some fluke it is not, it will certainly be lurking under the ink-stain, the cat's paw-print or the ring made by a cup of 1900's Typhoo. But either way, if you know the name of the ship and date of sailing, you stand a mere 50p or so away from a successful photocopy.

I began the search for my grandmother with no certain name, no date, no port and no ship. A person of lesser moral fibre might have given up at this point, but this to me was a challenge of the first order! I eagerly made a start, convinced that I should find her: surely my own grandmother would have the compassion to show herself by five o'clock that afternoon?

Many five o'clocks have passed and she still lurks there somewhere, hidden amongst the tea stains of London or the flowery twiddles of Southampton. I have gradually resigned myself to the fact that I may never find her, but that thought now lies easier than it did for years. I still spend a lot of my time searching the lists, though more often for someone else's grandmother than my own these days. A certain familiarity exists now, between me and 'them'. 'They' are not so daunting, so tedious and so frustrating. There are short cuts, and I have begun to compile my own indexes and make my own references which help to make the job simpler.

There is much to be said for the method of one's first approach. I wish I had been given some advice when I first began. That would have been to assume, in the absence of any part of the essential information, that you are *not* going to find your passenger. Then the hours you may well spend searching will not seem to have been such a frustrating failure if you are unfortunate enough not to find the name you are looking for. With persistence, you could well find them, and the odds shorten in your favour as the date gets more recent. From this you will also understand that the odds will lengthen

the further back in time you go. Too far and you may well have to resign yourself to that depressing statement and "230 passengers steerage".

Go prepared! Work out from all other information, the most likely month for Uncle Fred/Auntie Gertie to have left this green and pleasant land and you will at least be narrowing the odds. Having done this, do not underestimate the scale of what you are hoping to achieve. There are hundreds of boxes (about 1800) and thousands of ships. To the unaccustomed eye the writing is often hard to decipher and it will take longer than you think it will. Early lists are all handwritten, most are not alphabetical, and the amount of information can be scant: if you hope to find a common name, be prepared to have a difficult, if not impossible, task to distinguish between two Mr. J Smiths travelling on the same route at similar times. Set yourself a realistic target of the number of boxes you will search each day, and don't let your eyes become too tired - that way an entry may easily be missed; regular breaks are an essential part of passenger list searching.

One of two things will happen. You will find them, or you will not. Either way, set out to make the most of your time: this is supposed to be fun - a pleasurable pastime! Spare a few moments to relax and read the document you have in front of you. It is not a collection of boring pieces of paper. It is an illustration of that strange and remarkable phenomenon of the other man's grass always being greener. Page after page of people who fervently believed that they were buying a better life for themselves and their children. A catalogue of tradesmen striking deals in foreign countries, of the rich and famous travelling the World.

In recent weeks I have found Mr & Mrs Lewis Jordan travelling from America to Liverpool in 1909 with their children, Jennie, Nellie, Josephine, Lillie, Oscar, Georgie, and John. All gave their profession as 'trapeze artists', bound for London. The same year, and again in 1910, a party of Red Indians, complete with amazing names (Henry Struck By A Crow, for example) arrived in Southampton

booked to appear at an Earls Court Exhibition. The RMS "*Atrato*", sailing from New York to Southampton, numbered amongst its First Class passengers five sugar boilers and a dentist, who had boarded in the West Indies. Nothing like being prepared for trouble, I suppose! One of the larger passenger lines employed a Captain named Silperman. I first saw the name, badly written, at the end of a lengthy search session and for a while was convinced it read "Superman".

In a political vein I spotted on 10 July 1957, on the "*Badagry Palm*", from Liverpool to Takoradi, Dr Kwame Nkrumah. Helen Keller travelled to America on 25th September 1930, and I spotted William Beaverbrook on the "*Aquitania*" 14 August 1920. Noel Coward and Evelyn Waugh travelled to New York in 1949 on the "*Queen Mary*", but why was Stanley Holloway going to Buenos Aires in 1935? If I don't find the real stars, I sometimes find the next best thing - three passengers on almost adjacent lines of the list of the "*Kaiserin Auguste Victoria*", 8 June 1906 from Dover to New York: Mr George, Mr Bernard and Mr Shaw. Was it the real Harry Houdini and his wife Beatrice on the "*Imperator*", 3 July 1920?

I found on 23 July 1932, arriving on the "*Aquitania*" from New York to Southampton, Laurel and Hardy; on 30 August 1939 travelling on the "*Queen Mary*" Southampton to New York, Bob Hope. And Cary Grant (Archibald Leach) emigrated to the USA on the "*Olympic*" from Southampton to New York on 21 July 1920. Charles Chaplin and Stanley Jefferson (alias Stan Laurel) can be found leaving the UK from Southampton aboard the "*Cairnrona*" bound for Canada on 20 September 1910.

There are the births and the deaths; the babies inevitably had the unlikely and surely unplanned circumstances of the births recorded in middle names such as 'Cunard' and 'Pacifica', whilst there were the tragedies of death at sea recorded on the back page columns of the BT26 (inbound) lists.

The quote which has probably given me the biggest smile was in BT27/1848, outward lists from Liverpool, June 1958. Stapled to the back of the list was a letter from the British India head office to the

Collector, Customs & Excise: 'We enclose new Passenger Manifest which we would ask you to kindly substitute for that Manifest lodged when the "*Chindware*" was cleared on 24th inst. You will note from the new Manifest that Mrs Baldwin is an alien'. This was, I rush to point out, in the pre-Steven Spielberg days - the poor lady was actually an American !

This is just a selection from a growing and endless list of snips which add sparkle to what could otherwise be a tiresome job. Any other quotes would be gratefully received. Meanwhile, next time you are in the Map Room at the Public Record Office, look around you. That woman hidden behind a mountain of paper and smiling inanely to herself is probably me, having fun with my BT's !

PRO material quoted in this article:

BT26/384, 448, 1001

BT27/ 1643, 1549, 931, 688, 1827, 1439, 1296

## NOTICE

### THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE STEAM PACKET

The first historical account of the IoMSP Co to be written in diary format: a chronological order of events from 1830 to 1994.

Another production by our hon Treasurer with over 200 illustrations in 128pp, several in colour. A4 format.

*by John Shepherd*, Ferry Publications 1995

Hard-back ISBN 1 871947 25 1 £17.95

Soft-back ISBN 1 871947 27 8 £11.95

## LARRINAGA SS COMPANY LIMITED (1931-75)

*by David Eccles*

On November 3rd 1931 the Larrinaga Steamship Company Ltd was registered after the amalgamation of all Larrinaga family business into one company. With a paid up capital of £60,000 divided into £100 shares, each side of the family owned one third, and was represented by a managing director, Miguel, Dominic and Ramon de Larrinaga, all of equal standing. Miguel, the eldest, living at 'Buenaventura', Greenbank Drive, Liverpool, was elected Chairman of the Company. The Company owned a fleet of seventeen cargo steamers, and were in business as shipowners, agents, merchants and shipstore dealers, from their head office at 30, James St Liverpool. Don Dominic de Larrinaga, the merchant in the family business, was also Vice-Consul in Liverpool for Uruguay, living with his family at 'Boa Vista', Livingstone Drive. The youngest director, Ramon, lived at 'Laund House' North Mossley Hill Rd.

From its earliest days the trading pattern of the Company was based on the cotton trade to Manchester from the U.S. Gulf, but due to world-wide trade depression, only three steamers were required on this service. The company were fortunate however, to find employment throughout the depth of the depression for another five steamers trading from the River Plate to Europe. All the Company steamers spent periods in 'lay up', some for a few weeks between voyages, but others for years. The cost to the owner to 'lay up' a vessel in 1932 was £20/week, ie £7 wages each to the master and engineer, £5 wages allowed for local watchmen, and £1 harbour dues. No heating, lighting or food was supplied to those on board, but there was coal in the bunkers for the galley stove.

Larrinaga & Company had been British agents for the owners of the Spanish Royal Mail Lines since the two companies had been founded in 1882. During 1932 this 50 year association was terminated when the Spanish Royal Mail service from Liverpool to the Far East was suspended due to lack of trade, and the Spanish steamers on the trade were laid up in Spain.

In 1933 it was decided to dispose of the oldest tonnage. The 1908-built sisters "*Gloria de Larrinaga*" and "*Ventura de Larrinaga*" were sold to shipbreakers in June after 12 months in lay up, and the following year the two ex-Prince Line steamers "*Anselma de Larrinaga*" (bt 1914), laid up since April 1930, and "*Lucille de Larrinaga*" (bt 1911) were also sold to shipbreakers. With these disposals the company was left with a fleet of thirteen steamers, and as trading prospects showed signs of improvement, the Company decided to place their surplus vessels onto the world-wide tramping market. During 1935 four of the five steamers laid up were drydocked and recommissioned, and in August 1936 the "*Pilar de Larrinaga*", which had been laid up at Dartmouth since February 1930 was drydocked in Hull, then loaded coal for Montevideo.

All thirteen steamers traded continuously from 1936, mainly with coal from South Wales to the River Plate, returning with grain from the River Plate to Antwerp or Bremen. Then tragedy struck; on 8th February 1939 the "*Maria da Larrinaga*" (bt 1929), on passage from Houston to Queenstown f.o. with a cargo of wheat, sent out a distress call from a position 500 miles east of Cape Race, reporting that No.1 hatch was stove in by heavy seas. Rescue ships reaching that position found only wreckage; the vessel had sunk with all hands.

With the declaration of War with Germany in September 1939, movement of all merchant shipping came under the newly-formed Ministry of Shipping, controlling cargo, voyage arrangements and replacement of vessels lost by enemy action.

The Company owned 12 coal-fired steamers at the opening of hostilities, and were to lose nine of them - those lost being replaced by bare-boat management of vessels owned by the Min/War Transport, which took over from the MoS in 1941.

The Company's first war loss was "*Domingo de Larrinaga*" (bt 1929), on passage from Bahia Blanca with a cargo of grain for Belfast and Hull, and under orders to call at Freetown to join a convoy. She was captured and scuttled on 31st July 1940 by the German raider HK33 '*PINGUIN*', after a gun battle in which 8 crew were killed. Earlier the same month the Company were appointed managers of the 9,500dwt steamer "*Empire Blanda*" (ex Panamanian "*Rio Grande*" bt 1919) bought by the MoS when she called at Liverpool to discharge cargo. In December 1940 the "*Minnie de Larrinaga*" (bt 1914), discharging a cargo of grain at London, was set on fire during an air raid. Completely burnt out and declared a total loss, she was towed to Dover and scuttled there as a 'blockship' two months later.

On 7th February 1941, the "*Ramon de Larrinaga*" (bt 1920) sailed from Philadelphia with 8,000 tons of pig iron. The cargo shifted in a storm off the Delaware coast, the vessel was abandoned, but towed by US Coast Guard tugs and beached. However she rolled on her side and was declared a total loss. Later salvaged she was sold to the MoWT and renamed "*Empire Mersey*" and returned to company management. On 5th April 1941 "*Ena de Larrinaga*" (bt 1925) bound from Hull to Buenos Aires with a cargo of coal was torpedoed and sunk with the loss of 5 of crew. On 12th May the "*Richard de Larrinaga*" (bt 1929) was attacked by enemy aircraft shortly after sailing from the Tyne in ballast. Seriously damaged in the engine-room, she was taken in tow and beached, but her back was broken and she was abandoned.

Meanwhile in Liverpool the Company office at 30 James Street had been bombed during the heavy enemy air attacks in the

first week of May: all Company records were destroyed by fire. Later that month a new Company office was established at 11, Rumford Street a short distance away. On 14th July the "*Rupert de Larrinaga*" (bt 1930) in convoy with a cargo of coal for Las Palmas, was torpedoed and sunk without loss of life by an Italian submarine. On the 22nd September the "*Niceto de Larrinaga*" (bt 1916) after loading on the West African coast for London, and sailing in convoy, was torpedoed and sunk with the loss of three lives. To make up for war losses the Company were allocated the management of five 10,000dwt steamers by the MoWT: the new British-built "*Empire Hail*" and "*Empire Bruce*", the new US-built "*Ocean Voice*" and "*Ocean Venture*", and the 1920 US-built "*Empire Elk*". The latter, however, was sold to Norwegian owners in March 1942 who gave the management to J.Harrison & Co.

1942 was a tragic year for Larrinaga's with the loss of seven of its managed steamers and one of its own. Three steamers were lost in February. First, on 8th, was "*Ocean Venture*" on her maiden voyage from Vancouver with war supplies to the UK and steaming independently to join an Atlantic convoy at Halifax NS, was torpedoed and sunk off the Virginia coast with the loss of 31 lives. Eleven days later the 1919-built "*Empire Blanda*" on passage from Halifax to Grangemouth, and which had dropped out of convoy the previous day, was torpedoed and lost with all hands. Three days later on February 23rd the 1941-built "*Empire Hail*", in convoy from Lock Ewe to Baltimore, in ballast, was likewise torpedoed lost with all her crew.

In March the new "*Empire Story*" sailed from her Sunderland builders in ballast to join a convoy for Halifax. After loading a full cargo for India at St John.N.B. and sailing May 3rd, she ran ashore on a reef in the Bay of Fundy the following morning. Refloated later that day, she sank whilst under tow on May 4th.

"*Empire Clough*" sailed from her builders at South Shields in ballast on May 22nd to join a convoy at Loch Ewe. The convoy



left Loch Ewe on 2nd June for Boston and New York, and on June 10th the "*Empire Clough*" was torpedoed and sunk with the loss of 5 men. On 14th August the "*Sylvia de Larrinaga*" (bt 1925) sailing independently on passage from Cape Town to Baltimore with a cargo of manganese ore, was torpedoed by an Italian submarine, and sunk with the loss of 3 lives. On 22nd September the "*Ocean Voice*" in convoy QP14 from North Russia to U.K. loaded with timber and with 20 passengers on board, was torpedoed and sunk without any loss of life. She was returning from her maiden voyage after delivering U.S. war supplies to Russia, having left her Californian builders yard in December 1941. On 14th October the (1920 bt) "*Empire Mersey*" (ex "*Ramon de Larrinaga*") loaded with war supplies and on passage in convoy from New York to Liverpool was torpedoed and sank with the loss with 16 men. The Company was given, on 10th November, the management of a new 10,000dwt steamer building in Canada, the "*Fort Concord*".

During 1943 two managed steamers were lost. On 18th April the "*Empire Bruce*" steaming independently on passage from Buenos Aires with a cargo of linseed, towards Freetown to join a convoy, was torpedoed and sunk without loss of life. On May 12th, "*Fort Concord*" on her second trans-Atlantic voyage from Canada to the UK was torpedoed and sank with the loss of 37 men; the last steamer to be lost by the company during the war. Replacing war losses the Company was given the management of a further eight new 10,000dwt steamers by the MoWT during 1943. In January the "*Ocean Courier*" and "*Ocean Rider*" were taken over at Portland, Maine, and loaded with army supplies for the North African campaign, and the Canadian built "*Fort Walsh*" loaded war supplies in Vancouver for the UK. In March the "*Empire Trumpet*" was delivered from her Glasgow builders, and in June the "*Fort Capot River*" was taken over from her North Vancouver builders. In October the "*Empire Symbol*" was

delivered at Glasgow, and in November two Canadian built steamers, "*Fort Moose*" and "*Fort Machault*", came under Larrinaga control. All these steamers were put into government war service.

In February 1944 the "*Telesfora de Larrinaga*" (bt 1920) loaded with army supplies ran aground off Naples, and lost her rudder. After her cargo had been discharged, she was towed to Bari on the Adriatic coast, and for over two years was used as a coal hulk. In June 1944 the "*Empire Symbol*" and "*Ocean Courier*" were used as supply ships for the Normandy landings. The "*Ocean Courier*" was torpedoed by an E.Boat attack on a supply convoy to Normandy on July 31st. Severely damaged, she was towed to Middlesbrough for repairs which were not completed until March 1945. When she returned to service, the management of the "*Empire Trumpet*" was transferred to the Harrison Line.

During the war years the Company directors had been Miguel and Domingo de Larrinaga, assisted by Mr Clark and Mr Hunter all (all then over sixty) - the younger directors had volunteered for military service, and were in the army. For a period Captain Ramon de Larrinaga (Royal Engineers), was stationed at Hull Docks supervising the loading of the invasion force for 'D-Day'

When the war ended in August 1945, the fleet consisted of three steamers, "*Pilar de Larrinaga*" (bt 1919), the rudderless "*Telesfora de Larrinaga*" in use as a coal hulk in Italy, and the (1924 Danzig-bt) ss. "*Miguel de Larrinaga*". They also managed, for the MoWT, eight modern steamers, including the new building "*Empire Honduras*", which they would manage until the "*Telesfora de Larrinaga*" was released after repair and returned to service in July 1946. The Company received compensation in cash for the 1939 insurance value of the nine steamers lost through enemy action, and the managed war built coal fired steamers were offered for sale by the government at a price of £115,000 each. However with no established trade, and depressed about the

prospects for British shipping, the directors began to re-assess their trading prospects before investing in any other vessels.

On release from military service, the younger directors took over control of the Company, and decided to remain in shipping. When freight rates and selling prices were low they would modernise the fleet.

In 1947 the Company purchased, from the US Government, the oil-burning 'Liberty' steamer "*Samadre*", which was renamed "*Maria de Larrinaga*". Dubbed floating warehouses and considered by many to have no commercial value against modern cargo vessels, the Company were very pleased with her, and the following year purchased two further 'Liberty' ships from British owners, "*Sea Triumph*" (ex "*Samoland*") and "*Skipsea*" (ex "*Samconstant*"), renaming them "*Asuncion de Larrinaga*" and "*Ramon de Larrinaga*".

During 1948 Company Chairman Don Miguel de Larrinaga, died in Liverpool aged 75, and the Company came under control of the third generation of the family, when his 46 year-old nephew Ramon Miguel de Larrinaga, became Chairman. Under the Ramon Miguel it was decided to employ the fleet in the Tramp Time-Charter market (at that time the 'Liberty' vessels were ideal for the purpose). In 1949 with the sale of the "*Pilar de Larrinaga*" to Italians, and the "*Telesfora de Larrinaga*" to Hong Kong owners, the British owned 'Liberty' "*Stanthorpe*" (ex "*Samskern*") was purchased and renamed "*Domingo de Larrinaga*". The last coal fired steamer owned by the company, the "*Miguel de Larrinaga*", was sold to German owners in March 1950, to be replaced by the British owned 'Liberty' "*Jersey May*" (ex "*Samluzon*") in July 1950, which was renamed "*Miguel de Larrinaga*".

In December 1950 the "*Domingo de Larrinaga*" was seriously damaged when she ran onto rocks at the mouth of the River Tees, and under repair for ten months. The Company considered, in

1951, that three ships were sufficient to cover their business needs, and later that year sold "*Asuncion de Larrinaga*" to Panamanian flag owners and "*Ramon de Larrinaga*" to Liberian flag owners. The three 'Liberty' ships traded very successfully on voyage charters to cargo liner companies. Very good cargo carriers, their only drawback was a speed of 11 knots in ideal conditions, quickly reduced to 9 knots against a head sea. The "*Maria de Larrinaga*" proved how strongly built they were when, fully loaded with iron ore from Peru, she struck a pinnacle of rock in the Caribbean. With her bow and stern in deep water she was six days on the rock in September 1953, before she was pulled off with extensive bottom damage, requiring a month's dry-docking at Mobile, Texas.

In 1953 the Company ordered its first motor vessel, "*Ramon de Larrinaga*", from Austin & Pickersgill, Sunderland. Delivered in March 1954, the 10,000dwt vessel was driven by a 6-cylinder 4-stroke engine at a service speed of 12 knots. She was followed by a sister ship delivered in March 1955, the "*Richard de Larrinaga*". With the two motor vessels in service, two 'Liberty' steamers were sold; "*Domingo de Larrinaga*" to Costa Rica in August 1955 and "*Miguel de Larrinaga*" to Panamanian owners in October 1956.

In 1955, the Liverpool office moved to the Corn Exchange Building, Brunswick Street, and a chartering and shipbroking subsidiary company, Larrinaga (London) Ltd, was established at the Baltic Exchange in London. Richard de Larrinaga, the son of Don Domingo de Larrinaga, Director of Income, took charge of the London office.

In 1958 an order was placed with the Pallion Yard of Short Bros, at Sunderland, for a general cargo motor vessel of 11,800dwt, with a fully loaded service speed of 15½ knots. Built to a high standard, and fitted with the largest Sulzer engine that had been

manufactured to date by George Clark at Southwick, the "*Niceto de Larrinaga*" was delivered in March 1959.

In May 1964, after seventeen years service, the last steamship to be owned by Larrinagas, the 'Liberty' "*Maria de Larrinaga*", was sold to Greek owners. Later in the year the cargo capacity of the "*Niceto de Larrinaga*" was increased by 2,000 tons, when a 67ft section was inserted into her hull at Harland & Wolff's Belfast shipyard.

During the post war period, vessels in the Company had mostly been employed successfully on voyage charters in the cargo liner trades. With the introduction of containerisation in 1967, groups of major British cargo liner companies amalgamated to purchase large purpose-built container ships, and the general cargo liner rapidly became redundant. It was at this time that the Sunderland shipbuilders Austin & Pickersgill, introduced the SD14-type general cargo vessel, an economical motor-vessel carrying 14,000 tons of cargo at 14 knots on 20 tons fuel-oil per day. SD14 replacements were proving very popular with Greek owners, and in 1969 Larrinagas sold "*Ramon de Larrinaga*"(bt 1954) to Panamanian-flag owners, and placed the first British order for two SD14s. Named "*Rupert de Larrinaga*" and "*Miguel de Larrinaga*", with their entry into service "*Richard de Larrinaga*"(bt 1955) was sold to Greek owners. A third SD14 was ordered and delivered from the Southwick Yard of Austin & Pickersgill. Entering service in April 1972 named "*Ramon de Larrinaga*", she remained with the company for a mere eight months before being sold to the London-Greek shipowner George Vergottis, who renamed her "*Jade Bay*" for service under the Greek flag.

Competition for British shipowners had become intense from the late 1960's. With western governments subsidising their own shipyards thus causing a surplus of ships and at the same time the Soviet Block countries building ships hoping to drive western

shipping from the high seas by undercutting. Soviet shipping did not need to make a trading profit, it mattered not what the Soviet shipbuilding costs were; they were largely manned by comparatively low-paid seamen. These measures forced many western shipowners to register their ships under flags of convenience. The British merchant fleet became uncompetitive. The British Government did little or nothing at all for our Merchant Navy and did not seem to understand that there was a problem that they had partially created.

In this setting Larrinaga's would have around five poor trading years for every two reasonable ones. The Company survived mainly by the Directors reading the market correctly and buying and selling ships to make capital profits, ie by shipbroking. So successful was the shipbroking, a capital distribution £60,000 (100%) could be made each year to the family shareholders, each side of the family receiving one third. A yearly dividend, although small, was never missed but often paid from profit reserves built up previous years.

On the 23rd February 1973, the 14-year-old "*Niceto de Larrinaga*" was sold to Greek owners, renamed "*Aegis Bounty*" and registered at Piraeus. Later in the year the then Labour Government forbade the distribution of capital profits even though they would be taxed, causing consternation amongst some of the shareholders, this being their only income, and dividends from trading were so small. As a trading concern it became harder and harder to justify the firm's existence.

Another factor was that of the three Managing Directors, who each had the power under the articles of association to appoint a son to succeed themselves, only Rupert had a son.

In 1974 the price of oil rose 500% and, as freight rates were good, it was considered the time was right to sell the Company and bids were invited. Two bids arrived on the same day for £3,000,000, from the Bolton Steamship Company and from

Vergocean (owned by the Greek Vergottis shipping family). Vergocean improved their offer by £50,000 and bought the firm, (including its London subsidiary) in November 1974. A condition of sale was that the name be changed. The Company was renamed Oceanverg Shipping Company Ltd, registered at Greenchurch House, Greenchurch Lane London.

The two SD14's continued to trade under their original names until August 1975 when the "*Rupert de Larrinaga*" was renamed "*Vergray*", and the "*Miguel de Larrinaga*" renamed "*Vergstar*". Both vessels retained Liverpool registry until November 1978, when they were both renamed and registered in Greece.

#### FLEET LIST.

1/ *Gloria de Larrinaga* 4649grt bt 1908 Russell & Co Pt Glasgow (service 1908-33) b/u *Savona*, 7/33.

2/ *Ventura de Larrinaga* 4648grt bt 1908 Russell & Co.(service 1908-33) b/u Pt Glasgow 7/33.

3/ *Minnie de Larrinaga* 5046grt bt 1914 Russell & Co.(service 1914-40). Bombed London Docks. 11/9/40. Blockship at Dover 5/2/41.

4/ *Niceto de Larrinaga* 5569grt bt 1916 Russell & Co.(service 1916-41), torp'd/sunk 22/9/41 by U103 in Atlantic Convoy SL87.

5/ *Pilar de Larrinaga* 7352grt bt 1918 Mitsubishi Zosen Kaisha, Nagasaki (ex-War *Nymph*) service '19-49. Sold 31/8/49, r/n *Delia*, -52. *Honestas*-56. *Russula* until b/u *Spezia* '57

6/ *Ramon de Larrinaga* 5791grt bt R.Duncan Co. Pt Glasgow. service 1920-41, wrecked 13/2/41 - salvaged r/n *Empire Mersey*.

7/ *Telesfora de Larrinaga*.(5780.gt).Built R.Duncan Co.Ltd.Port Glasgow.(service 20-49).sold 12/11/49 r/n *Oritrin* (Hong Kong)-51 *Fuzan Maru*(Jap.)-56. *Shoei Maru* until b/u *Yokosuka* '60.

8/ *Miguel de Larrinaga* 5231grt bt 1924 F.Schichau Danzig (service 24-50) sold 3/3/50 r/n *Bernd-Leonhardt*(German)-54. *Capetan Georgis* (Costa Rica) until b/u *Osaka* '559.

9/ *Ena de Larrinaga* 5200grt bt 1925 F.Schichau Danzig (service 25-41), torp'd/sunk by U105 in Atlantic 5/4/41.

10/ *Sylvia de Larrinaga* 5218grt bt 1925 F.Schichau Danzig (service 25-42). Torp'd/sunk by It. sub *Giulianin* Atlantic 14/8/42.

- 11/ *Anselma de Larrinaga* 5955grt bt 1914 Short Bros Sund'l'd (ex-*Moorish Prince*) (service 27-34) b/u Clyde 5/34.
- 12/ *Lucille de Larrinaga* 4825grt bt 1911 Short Bros (ex *Burmese Prine*) (service 27-34) b/u Blyth 6/34.
- 13/ *Jose de Larrinaga* 5303grt Built Canadian Vickers, Montreal (ex Norwegian *Loch Tay*) (service 27-40) torpedoed and sunk by U.47 in Atlantic convoy SC2 7/9/40.
- 14/ *Maria de Larrinaga* 4988grt bt 1929 R.Duncan Co Pt Glasgow (service 29-39) foundered in N. Atlantic 8/2/39.
- 15/ *Domingo de Larrinaga* 5358grt bt Lithgows, Pt Glasgow (service 29-40) scuttled by Raider HK33 '*PINGUIN*' 31/7/40.
- 16/ *Richard de Larrinaga* 5358grt bt 1929 Lithgows, Pt Glasgow ( service 29-41) bombed and wrecked off Tyne 12/5/41.
- 17/ *Rupert de Larrinaga* 5358grt bt 1930 Lithgows, Pt Glasgow (service 30-42) torpedoed and sunk by Ital sub '*MOROSINI*' in Atlantic convoy OG67 10/1/42.
- 18/ *Maria de Larrinaga* (ex *Samadre*) 7277grt bt 1944 New England S.B.Corp. Portland Me (service 47-64) sold 8/5/64 r/n *Meletios* (Greek) until scrapped at Sakaida Japan 1969.
- 19/ *Asuncion de Larrinaga* (ex *Samoland* -47 *Sea Triumph*-48 7281grt bt J.A.Jones. Brunswick Ga (service 48-51) Sold 28/9/51 r/n *Kalingo*. (Panama)-55. *Virginina* G(Costa Rica)-60. *Kapetanissa* (Lebanon)-64. *National Strength*(Taiwan)-67 *Good Eddie*(USA) until scrapped Keelung 1967.
- 20/ *Ramon de Larrinaga* (ex *Samconstant* -47 *Skipsea*-48 7293grt bt 1944 Bethlehem Fairfield B'more service 48-52) sold 2/1/52 r/n *Okean-Oporus*(Liberia)-62 *Kostis A Geogilis* (Greek) until burnt out at Coco Island 1967.
- 21/ *Domingo de Larrinaga* (ex *Samskern* -47 *Stamnthorpe* -49.7242grt bt 1944 Bethlehem Fairfield B'more (service 49-55) sold 5/8/55 r/n *Vassilis*(Costa Rica)-59 *Katina*(Greek).-64 *Anastassia*(Panama) until wrecked off Constanza 1969.
- 22/ *Miguel de Larrinaga* (ex *Samluzon* -47 *Jersey May* -50 7235grt bt 1944 Bethlehem Fairfield B'more (service 50-56) sold 31/10/56 r/n *Tritonia*(Liberia) scrapped Hong Kong 1969
- 23/ *Ramon de Larrinaga* 5818grt bt 1954 Pickersgill Sund'l'd (service 54-69) Sold 5/8/69 r/n *Marrianna*(Greek) -72 *Marian*(Cyprus) until scuttled off Portugal 1976
- 24/ *Richard de Larrinaga* 5841grt bt 1955 Pickersgill Sund'l'd (service 55-70) sold 2/3/70 r/n *Adamandios* (Greek)-74 *Fong Min* (Panama) until scrapped at Kaohsiung 1975.
- 25/ *Niceto de Larrinaga* 6251grt bt 1959 Short Bros Sund'l'd (service 59-73) sold 23/2/73 r/n *Aegis Bounty*(Greek) -78 *Char Chun* (Panama)-79 *Char Cheng* until scrapped '84.



26/ Rupert de Larrinaga 9268grt bt 1969 A & P. Sund'l'd. (service 69-75). 6/8/75 r/n Vergray -78 Atheros(Greek) -87 Agia Elymia -91 Virginia(Malta) until wrecked Black Sea 11/12/91

27/ Miguel de Larrinaga 9247grt bt 1970 A&P Sund'l'd (service 70-75) 8/8/75 r/n Vergstar -78 Vardiana(Greek) -86 Atrotos -88 Nissos Kefallonia -90 Hae Gum Gang(Malta) still in service

28/ Ramon de Larrinaga 9246grt bt 1972 A&P Sund'l'd (service 172-72) sold 6/12/72 r/n Jade Bay (Greek). Still in service

### WARTIME MANAGED STEAMERS.

Empire Blanda 5696grt bt Pt Glasgow 1919 (ex Nile -33, Sokol -39, Rio Grande -40). mngd by Larrinaga from 1/7/40 until torp'd by U69 N.Atlantic Convoy HX107/S 19/2/41.

Empire Elk 4748grt bt Tacoma,USA.1920.(ex Rotarian -26, Condor -40) mngd by Larrinaga from 16/7/41 until sold Norway 17/3/42 r/n Norvarg-48, Nan Chiang (China)-50, Northern Glow (Hong Kong)-69, Hoping Ssu Shi Liu.(China) until b/u Rep/China 71.

Ocean Venture 7174grt bt Richmond.Cal 1942. mngd by Larrinaga from 28/12/42 until torp'd/ sunk by U108 E Coast USA 8/2/42.

Ocean Voice 7174grt bt Richmond, Cal 1942. mngd by Larrinaga 19/12/41 until torp'd/sunk by U435 in Arctic Convoy QP14 9/7/43.

Empire Mersey 5791grt.bt 1920 (ex Ramon de Larrinaga-42). Mngd by Larrinaga from 7/11/1941 until torp/sunk by U618 N Atlantic convoy SC104 14/10/42.

Empire Bruce, 7549grt bt 1941 Sund'l'd mngd by Larrinaga until torp'd/sunk by U123 when sailing alone mid-Atlantic 18/4/43.

Empire Hail 7005grt bt Pt Glasgow 1941 m'ged by Larrinaga until torpedoed and sunk by U.94 in N Atlantic convoy on 23/2/42.

Empire Clough 6147grt bt S. Shields 1942, m'ged by Larrinaga until torp'd/sunk by U94 N Atlantic convoy ONS 100 10/6/42.

Empire Story 7037grt bt Sund'l'd 1942, m'ged by Larrinaga until wrecked Gulf/St Lawrence 3/5/42.

Fort Walsh 7126grt bt Victoria.BC 1942, managed by Larrinaga to 12/47. r/n Monstella (Italy)-65 Tihi (Haiti) till scrapped 1967.

Fort Concord 7138grt.bt Lauzon. PQ 1942. managed by Larrinaga until torpedoed and sunk by U.403 in N.Atlantic convoy HX273 12/5/43.

Ocean Rider 7178 gr bt Portland.Me 1942 Man'g'd by Larrinaga until 12/46 r/n Nicholas K -64 Winchester King -66 Pacific Trader (Panama) -68 Karimantan until b/u Kaohsiung 8/68 ss ss Ocean Courier 7178grt bt Portland Me 1943, man'd by Larrinaga to 12/46 r/n Clan Macbean until b/u Hong Kong 60.

Empire Trumpet 7059grt bt Port Glasgow 1943 managed by Larrinaga to 3/45 r/n *Naturalist* -59 *Persian Cyrus* -65 *Hamadan* (Iran)-66 *Koula F* (Greek) until wrecked Arabian Gulf 25/7/66.

Fort Capot River 7128 gt.Built N.Vancouver.B.C.1943. Managed by Larrinaga until 5/1946. Chartered to Counties Ship Management until 1949 r/n *Haligonian Duke* (Canada)-50 *Notting Hill* -57 *Cepheus* (Liberia)-60 *Brisa Feliz* (Panama) -64 *Zakia* until sunk in collision 22/11/64.

Empire Symbol 7027grt bt Glasgow 1943 Managed by Larrinaga to 17/10/45 r/n *Professeur Emile Largarda* (France)-56.*North Baroness* (Liberia)-59 *Anadolu* (Turkey) until b/u Turkey 7/67.

Fort Moose 7130grt bt Montreal 1943. Man'g'd by Larrinaga until 4/46 Chartered to Un. Africa Coy -50.r/n *Haligonian Prince* (Canada) -66 *Tulse Hill* (London) -66 *Astronaftis* (Greek)-68.*Carlos Manuel de Cespedes*.(Cuba) until b/u Spain 5/73.

Fort MacHault 7160grt bt Vancouver BC 1943. Managed by Larrinaga until 21/7/46 r/n *L'Emerillon* (Canada) until wrecked off Algeria 18/2/49.

Empire Honduras 7320grt bt Sundl'd 1945 mngd by Larrinaga to 7/46 chartered Bank Line -48 r/n *Lockybank* -54 *Stad Haarlem* (Dutch) -63 *Union Fair* (Liberia) until b/u Taiwan 69.

## Local Notes

A new firm has taken over many of the facilities of the former Cammell Laird's shipbuilding yard. In January the firm, Coastal Industries Ltd, advertised for managers and skilled tradesmen. The dock is now seldom without at least three ocean-going vessels under repair, renovation etc. Recently a large cruise liner, SOUTHERN CROSS, was booked for repairs/refurbishment etc. However the arrival of the ship was delayed 8 days so a 14 days stay was reduced to 6 days. The vessel sailed for Southampton a mere day late carrying a couple of hundred shipyard workers hurriedly finishing off. Perhaps we have the green shoots of a recovery in the ship-repairing industries on the Mersey.

### A New Liverpool - Isle of Man Service

A large new catamaran will be carrying passenger (and cars?) to Douglas in the Summer, reducing the passage time by half.

.....

## Research Notes

The Maritime Library & Archives now have bound editions of early *LLOYDS LISTS* on the shelves.

But the most recent, and possibly even more important, news is that the Indexes of that newspaper are now available on Microfilm. Each Index covers one year arranged alphabetically by name of vessel. Masters' names, if known are given. In later indexes other information is given such as the vessels net tonnage, port of registry, nationality, type owners.

Covers period 1828 - 1916. A very useful research tool.

## REVIEWS

### THE OLD MANSIONS OF WALLASEY

Last issue included a couple paragraphs from material provided several years ago by Stewart Rebecca, and which was the basis of a talk he used to give on the large houses around Wallasey. Unfortunately due to an error by this editor some details given last month were incorrect.

Most of the homes described were built mid-19th century by Liverpool merchants and shipowners. Stewart, a former bank manager who worked in branches around Castle St, occupied his retirement years researching his subject and has provided an excellent picture of many of the eminent citizens of Liverpool and Wallasey.

THE OLD MANSIONS OF WALLASEY (vol. 1) by J. Stewart Rebecca  
1994 ISBN 0 - 9524819 - 0 - 1 private publication  
£8.50 from Wallasey Ref Library Earlstown Road, Wallasey, Merseyside

### LEADING LIGHTS

The first issue of this magazine has been published covering Pharology, Pilotage etc. The new venture has topics not covered elsewhere. The first articles include a description of the buoyage, lightships and lighthouses of the Mersey by two U S Naval Officers sent to Europe to find out why the USA equivalents were not of the same standard. Their glowing report contains a detailed description of the Mersey lights and marks and is full of praise for the Liverpool authorities. Alas the report was made in 1842!

Other articles cover Cinque Ports Pilotage, lighthouses and sea-marks elsewhere in the UK and overseas.

Obtainable from the Editor, Peter Williams, Haven Lightship, Milford Marina, Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire SA73 3AF price per issue.