

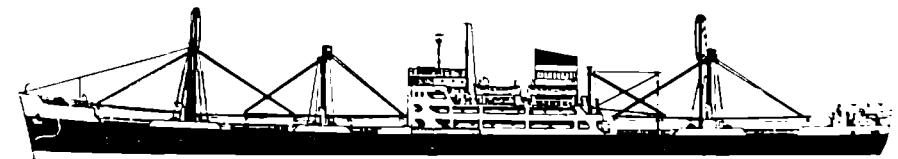
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

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THE BULLETIN

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*Front Cover: Harrisons Author of 1958 was first registered with the
Ruthin Steamship Company - see page 25.*

The next issue of 'The Bulletin' will be sent to Members in early September. Articles will include Ron Evans' account of the career of the IOMSPCo's Douglas which became the blockade runner Margaret and Jessie; Harry Hignett's account of 'The Rise of Liverpool Shipping during the 19th Century'; and Captain F.J. Thompson's recollections of the time he spent on the Umbria.

Articles for possible inclusion in 'The Bulletin' are always welcome and should be sent to the Editor at Flat 7, 'Mount Court', Mount Road, Wallasey CH45 9JS.

TWO EARLY AMERICAN WOODEN SCREW-AUXILIARY STEAMHIPS : THE "MARMORA" AND THE "MASSACHUSETTS"

by L.N.R.S. Member Terry Kavanagh

N.P.Bonsor, in the first volume of his *North Atlantic Seaway*, suggests that the American screw-assisted wooden barque **Marmora** was a twin-screw vessel. However, research shows that as in the case of the auxiliary steam packet ship **Massachusetts**, she had a single screw propeller when she crossed the Western Ocean in 1845. The 380 ton **Marmora**, Captain Page commander, measured 24½ft beam, 10½ft hold and 145ft keel; *'her rigging is that of a bark, lofty and exceedingly well trimmed, and capable of carrying her ten knots with a fair wind.'*¹ Carrying 43 passengers, she sailed from New York for Liverpool on 2nd September 1845. She arrived at Liverpool on 26th September after a lengthy passage of 23½ days. On 31st October the **Marmora** left Liverpool bound for Constantinople (where she was due to be handed over to the Turkish Government), and put in at Cork two days later with her coals on fire. The fire was soon extinguished, but the coal had to be discharged and a new supply loaded before the voyage could be resumed. She arrived at Malta on 19th December 1845 and sailed the next day for her destination. Thereafter she plied in Turkish and Greek waters and was wrecked in the Gulf of Scio on 5th February 1846 on a voyage from Smyrna to Beirut and Jaffa.

According to *Gore's* newspaper, the length of the **Marmora's** voyage to Liverpool was due to the fact that:

*'when about four days' sail from New York, in a heavy gale, one of the shafts of her engines sprung, a heavy sea struck her, and the [wrought copper] screw, then, it is supposed, partially out of the water, was dashed with immense force against the side of the vessel; the screw fans were all bent and doubled up, like paper From that time the steam power was, of course, useless and the remainder of the passage had to be completed by means of the sails alone, the screw dragging the whole of the way and naturally retarding progress.'*²

The report indicates that the **Marmora** had a single screw. And *The Times* confirms this, adding: *'Her propeller ... is on Ericsson's principle.'*³ However, Bonsor quotes an expert on early American steamers as saying he believes that she was fitted with twin screws, because the Boston shipowner R.B. Forbes, designer and part-owner of the **Massachusetts**, had a twin-screw steamer, called the **Midas**, built in 1844 and:

*'a model of her clearly shows two shafts, brackets supporting them bolted on either side of the sternpost, and Ericsson screws. Since Ericsson did design twin-screw machinery for the Midas, I think it entirely reasonable that he did so for the Marmora, a larger ship built simultaneously.'*⁴

Now Ericsson may or may not have done so, for the **Marmora** did make a coastal trip from New York to New Orleans with different steam machinery from the

two 45hp beam engines used on her voyage to Europe.⁵ Either way, John Ericsson's biographer, also quoted by Bonsor, was mistaken when he asserted that:

*'Twin screw engines were applied to the steamship **Marmora**, these consisting of two independent beam engines placed transversely in the ship, the beams operating close under the deck. This was the first practical application of the twin-screw system.'*⁶

In fact, such an arrangement was employed in a number of early single-screw vessels; the geared overhead beam engines mounted athwartships with the two cylinders standing on one side and the cogwheel on the other engaging the pinion on the propeller shaft.⁷ Moreover, the **Marmora's** screw propeller bore little or no resemblance to Captain Ericsson's contra-rotating propellers. The famous Swedish inventor abandoned the design described in his patent and reverted to a simpler type of propeller already known to his predecessors.⁸ The screw propellers on the **Marmora** and the **Massachusetts** were very similar to the six-bladed one fitted to the **Great Britain**.⁹

The 770-ton **Massachusetts**, which measured 161ft on deck, 31.9ft beam and 20ft hold, was built by Samuel Hall, East Boston. Commanded by Captain A.H. White, 'an experienced and energetic sailor', she was intended to be the first of a line of propeller packets running between New York and Liverpool.

*'Let it be distinctly understood [said R.B. Forbes] that we do not call her a steamer, or expect her to make steamboat speed, her steam power is strictly auxiliary to her canvas, and is intended, as a general rule, to be used only in calms, or against moderate head winds; occasionally when near the land and in tolerably smooth water may be very valuable in getting speedily into port, even against fresh breezes, by housing her topmasts and putting her head to wind, or while beating under canvas; it will also be of service in getting in and out of port, in keeping off a lee shore, and in making the ship comparatively safe when at anchor in any exposed situation.'*¹⁰

The **Massachusetts** embarked on her maiden voyage on 16th September 1845 and facing unfavourable winds and using her propeller for two-thirds of the passage, reached Liverpool with ten passengers in 17½ days. This creditable performance prompted one of the passengers to send a letter to the owners in which he wrote: *'As a sailing ship, I consider the **Massachusetts** as perfect for the merchant service as any one I have ever seen or had report of; going 10 knots by the log, I have never seen her wet the forecastle or the quarter deck.'*¹¹ He went on to say that:

'We have seen the advantages today of the propeller in getting to Liverpool from Holyhead; the wind (after passing Great Ormshead) was directly adverse, and vessels in company there cannot arrive today, which would have been our fate had we no means but our sails to forward us. We came up the Mersey at the rate of seven miles per hour, against a head wind of considerable strength.'

Significantly, however, she beat the packet **Yorkshire** by only a few hours, and the Cunard paddle steamer **Caledonia**, which had left Boston on the 17th September, had made a faster crossing. Returning in November, the **Massachusetts** used steam sparingly 'owing to the bad quality of the Welsh coal, which melted down

Mechanics' Magazine,

MUSEUM, REGISTER, JOURNAL, AND GAZETTE.

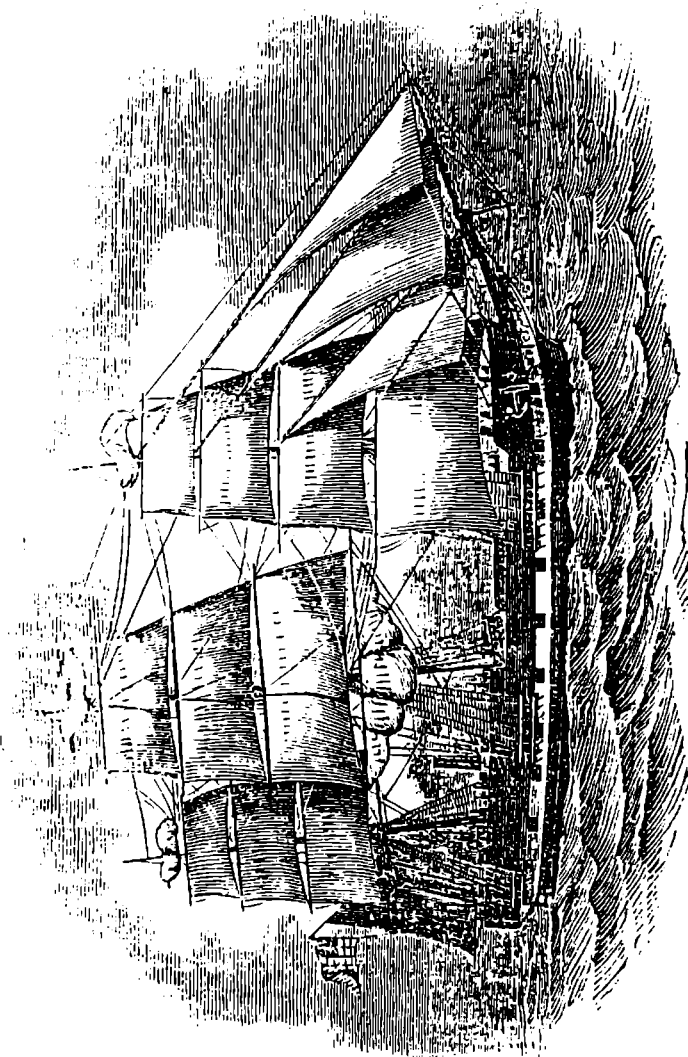
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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1845.

[Price 3d.]

Edited by J. C. Robertson, No. 166, Fleet street.

THE AUXILIARY STEAM PACKET-SHIP "MASSACHUSETTS."



*our grate bars before we were aware of it.*¹² On her second round voyage the **Massachusetts** took 42 days from Liverpool to New York with westerly gales preventing the use of steam *'almost entirely'*. Not surprisingly, her owners took the opportunity to charter her as a transport when the Mexican War broke out. After the war ended the US Government bought her for use in California. In 1870 her engines were removed and the **Massachusetts** was later wrecked off the coast of Chile.

Interestingly, the auxiliary steam packet ship **Masachusett's** sails and rigging exhibited many novel labour-saving devices for bracing yards and making and taking in sail - *'perhaps the first instance in which modern machinery has been carried aloft'* reported the *Liverpool Journal*. *'All sail has been repeatedly set in 25 minutes.'*¹³ She was full-ship rigged, with special features, the most striking being that her top masts were 'fidded' abaft the lower masts which were taller than usual, and the sails were divided into smaller, more manageable, pieces. Over the trestletrees of the lower mastheads, before and abaft the masts, were two strong iron bands with eyes in them - and opposite the centre of the masts were two other iron bands, bent in over the trestletrees, and bolted to them. The lower rigging was shackled in the eyes of these bands. There were also iron bands around the heads of the lower masts to which the stays were shackled. The topmast rigging was set up on its ends in the conventional manner. Her topgallant, royal and skysail masts were all in one spar, and the eyes of the topgallant rigging were fitted around copper cylinders. This was intended to keep the rigging in its place when the masts were sent down or housed. The **Massachusetts** had chain bobstays, bowsprit shrouds, standing and flying martingale stays, and guys or back ropes; also chain topsail sheets and ties, iron futtock rigging and patent trusses to the lower yards and iron parrels to the topsail yards.

She had two sets of topsail yards: her lower topsail yards were set on the head of the lower mast and the upper topsail yards worked on large iron rods, the lower ends of which were secured into the left bands of the lower yards around the heads of the masts, and the upper end to the caps. The upper topsail, topgallant and royal yards were parrelled around their respective masts. As a support to the lower mast heads there were two iron shrouds, one on each side, which led outside of the top rims down abaft the futtock rigging, and set up to the iron bands around the masts. All her blocks had iron straps and were covered with the wood of the shells, so that the hooks and becketts were the only parts of the straps which were visible, and the only parts which could chafe the rigging.

The lower maintopsail was the same size as the fore yard, and so on upwards, and the cross jack yard the same size as the foretopsail yard, and upwards in the same proportion. The yards and sails on the mizzen mast, also fitted on the main and fore, were in higher positions than they occupied on the mizzen. Thus, by having a spare yard and sail on the mainmast, all the way up to and including the moonsail, she had a spare sail for all other places on the foremast and mizzenmast, and, in case of necessity, the square sails on the mizzenmast could be dispensed with and used on other masts. All this meant more yards, more blocks, more ropes and more weight aloft - not to mention more expense, initially. *"But these are partially obviated by having*

all these ropes, blocks, etc., lighter; the appearance is the greatest objection to my eye, and this would be a death blow to the rig with some seamen," its inventor, R.B. Forbes admitted.

Nevertheless, Forbes had no doubts about the utility of his rig and specified some of the advantages of using it - in so doing he tells us a great deal about seamanship in the age of sail.¹⁴

'One of the great advantages which I anticipate from this rig is that the ship may be kept more steadily on her course than with the old rig, where it is very often necessary to luff and bear away a little to enable the men to reef or take in sail, or to prevent the large surfaces from being rent to ribbons; indeed no one who has crossed the Atlantic to the westward in the winter months can fail to be struck with advantages in this respect as well as in the wear and tear. Some good seamen make it a general rule never to deviate from their course to make or to take in sail; they brace the yards 'by', or put on extra force, and tear out the leeches; the ship's headway is lessened in either process, and some of the most dangerous seas ever shipped are the result of deadening the ship's headway too much in scudding before fresh gales while clewing down and bracing 'by' to reef; in the present rig the ship may be kept under better command until the time of close reefing arrives. In bending and unbending sails at sea much labour and much time is saved; for, the sails being in small pieces, and one of them may be bent without materially stopping the ship's way; so, in case of the loss of a topmast, a new one may be got up in any ordinary bad weather, the doublings of the masts being so long, and in the case of it being too rough to attempt it, the ship is still tolerably manageable, having double-reefed top sails to set. With this rig a ship may carry sail on a lee shore, or running for the land, or in squally weather, to great advantage. It not infrequently happens that a ship is near the land with a quickly increasing gale, when to clew down her whole, or her single-reefed topsails, to reef them would render her situation in a great degree perilous, and the seaman is often obliged to carry or drag his sails and spars, when to carry is safety, and to drag them is almost certain destruction.

In case of carrying away a lower yard, which, in the ordinary rig would subject the ship to great inconvenience, you have only to settle down all to the point where the lower topsail is "on the cap", or to the lift band, and you may then work your ship tolerably well by boarding the topsail sheets as courses until the damage can be repaired'.

The new rig would be of great advantage to an auxiliary steamer like the **Massachusetts** -

'for the obvious reason that all the top hamper may be quickly got down in order to combat against ordinary head winds and tolerably smooth seas, still leaving the ship (when topmasts are housed) in a state to fill away under sails, equal to double reefed topsails and courses, jib and spanker; or in the case of the ship becoming a little crank, by using up fuel, she may house her topgallant, or rather her royal masts

in fresh breezes, without lowering the yard next below. The ease, too, with which reefs may be taken in and their efficiency when done is a great improvement; in the old rig the reefs are often half-hauled out, and the sail is wearing out almost as fast as when set. The studding sails are also of manageable size, easily set and easily taken in.'

The Massachusetts's Ericsson-designed machinery was made by Hogg & Delamater of New York. It consisted of a 170hp low-pressure condensing engine with two diagonal cylinders, each 26ins diameter by 3ft stroke. There were two 'wagon' type boilers, each 14ft long, 7ft wide and 9ft high, with a furnace to each boiler. In order to raise steam quickly there was a centrifugal blowing engine and blower; there was also a heater, similar to the one in the US steam frigate Princeton (1842). Her steam power was applied to a 9½ft diameter, six-bladed 'Ericsson' propeller of wrought copper and composition metal, which was fixed abaft the rudder and could be unshipped when under canvas alone. The unshipping apparatus consisted of a shaft which passed from the engine room through the stern, above and parallel to the shaft of the propeller. The upper shaft mechanism, when activated, revolved and raised the propeller out of the water and placed it close against the flat of the stern, where it was secured with chains from either quarter. The whole process was supposed to take only a very few minutes but it proved to be unworkable in rough water because *'the great weight astern of the vessel, having the motion of the vessel and leverage of the hoisting arm to make it unruly, would be more than the crew could well manage, or machinery or stern frame of the vessel well bear.'*¹⁵

In his *Personal Reminiscences* Forbes glossed over this fact when he explained or, rather explained away, the failure of the Massachusetts:

*'The Atlantic was found to be practically too rough, even when the winds were moderate, to enable us to use our propeller to advantage; and, at that day, no one thought of running up to eighty or one hundred turns with a pressure of seventy pounds of steam. Although we beat all competitors in this, the FIRST VOYAGE OF AN AUXILIARY STEAM PROPELLER PACKET SHIP TO LIVERPOOL, the enterprise was not looked on as a success and the projectors did not feel inclined to build more ships. Besides the rough Atlantic requiring full power, we had to encounter the opposition of a large packet of interest of New York. Our competitors ignoring the patent fact that we had been badly beaten by the Cunard full-power steamer!'*¹⁶

That said, the Massachusetts deserves more than a footnote in the history of steam navigation. To quote a contemporary observer at Liverpool:

*'No one can view this ship, even casually, without being impressed with the vast amount of thought and labour which must have been applied to produce such a harmonious whole. Whatever may be her success, Mr R.B. Forbes, her designer, is entitled to great praise for his ingenuity and industry. She is an original, yet complete in every detail, and beautiful as a whole.'*¹⁷

I rest my case.

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5 *Gore's Liverpool Advertiser*, 2nd October 1845
6 Bonsor, *op. cit*, I, p. 180
7 See, for example, *Chester Courant*, 3rd September 1845
8 D.B. Tyler, *Steam Conquers the Atlantic* (New York, 1939; 1972 reprint),
9 p.132
10 *Mechanics Magazine*, Vol 43 (1845), p.224
11 *Ibid*, p. 262.
12 *Ibid*, p. 255.
13 Tyler, *op. cit*, p. 130.
14 quoted in *Chester Courant*, 8th October 1845.
15 *Mechanics Magazine*, Vol 43 (1845), pp. 260-1
16 Tyler, *op. cit*, p.130
17 *Ibid*, pp. 130-2
 Mechanics Magazine, Vol 43 (1845), p. 262

THE OPENING OF THE PANAMA CANAL

William Wheelwright's dream was the construction of a canal across the isthmus of Panama. However Wheelwright died in 1873, 41 years before his dream became a reality (see John Lingwood's article 'William Wheelwright - The Man' on page 10.)

The steamer **Ancon** was engaged in transporting the heavy cargoes of materials required by the builders of the Panama Canal, besides carrying thousands of workers to the Canal Zone from New York. As a result the **Ancon** was given the honour of being the ship chosen to officially open the Panama Canal on 15th August 1914, although her sister, the **Cristobal**, had made a 'test' voyage through the Canal on 3rd August from Cristobal to Balboa, returning the following day.

On the morning of the official opening on 15th August, the **Ancon**, carrying 300 distinguished guests, including the President of the Republic of Panama and his Cabinet Ministers, steamed from Cristobal Pier towards the open Atlantic. The inaugural transit was to be made from deep water in the Atlantic to Pacific deep water. As the **Ancon** swung in the harbour and headed for Gatun Locks, every ship in the harbour gave her blast after blast on their whistles in salute. After reaching deep water in the Pacific, the **Ancon** returned to Balboa, where she anchored at 5 pm.

Twenty five years later, on 15th August 1939, the **Ancon** repeated her historic passage in observance of the anniversary of the opening. |||||

SHIPS IN THE ALT

by Mike Stammers

The River Alt rises near Prescott, East Merseyside and flows in a north-westerly direction through Aintree and Maghull almost to Formby before turning South and entering the Mersey Estuary at Hightown (53°31'N, 3°04'W), about three miles to the south-east of Formby Point.

Before the arrival of steam railways in the 1830s, water transport was often cheaper and more reliable than land transport. The River Mersey and its tributaries provided a water highway to move large quantities of goods and passengers inland from the Port of Liverpool. By 1750 there were several ferries sailing to Runcorn, Eastham etc, and the Irwell and the Weaver were made navigable to Manchester and to Northwich. Coal and salt were the main commodities carried in Mersey flats. But it was not only the large tributaries that were used. Bromborough Pool, the outlet of the River Dibben, saw the flats going up to the Bromborough Mills to deliver corn and take away flour, and Ditton Brook near Widnes received cargoes of tanning materials for the tannery sited on its banks, and the same was true for the Alt near Formby at the mouth of the Mersey.

The harbour or quay was probably somewhere near Grange Farm on the Altcar Rifle Range, and in 1908 the remains of a 230ft long wall were found just below the farm whilst dredging operations were taking place. A grange was the name given to an 'out-station' of a monastery and in this case William Blundell gave a mill on the River Alt and fishing rights to the Abbot of Stanlow, Ellesmere Port, in 1220. It is likely that there were boats plying between the Grange and Stanlow and other places on the River Mersey to carry away the produce of the mill. This trade presumably continued after the dissolution of the monasteries and seems to have given rise to a small community of seafarers owning ships in the 16th and 17th centuries. There has been some discussion as to exactly where the harbour was. The return of shipping for Lancashire of 1626 mentions both Formby and Alt. This suggests two separate 'creeks', i.e. places where vessels were permitted to load or discharge under the supervision of customs officers.

According to a local oral tradition recorded in Edith Kelly's *Viking Village. The Story of Formby*, the port of Formby was well to the north of the present mouth of the Alt, while another in the same work suggested there was evidence of a harbour under the present Altcar Rifle Range - an area of sand reclaimed from 1797 onwards. However, the most likely quay rather than extensive harbour facilities, must have been at the Grange with its mill. To an extent this is borne out by the Fearon and Eyes' chart of the Dee and the Mersey of 1738. This includes soundings in the Alt as far as the Grange. They were local men who provided more detail of the estuary than the only pre-existing survey - Grenville Collins of 1694. It seems unlikely that they would have gone to the trouble of surveying the Alt unless it was navigable and in use. This seems

to have been the case because the Liverpool Corporation paid the overseers of the Port of Formby £3 in 1722. This appears to be the only formal reference to such a body. Another piece of local oral testimony came from Dr Sumner of Formby who died in 1883 aged 84 years. He mentions '*large sized vessels sailing up the Alt*'. This brings the use of the Alt into the 19th century and this seems quite reasonable when comparing the Alt to some of the other creeks and waterways to which Mersey flats delivered or loaded. This is not to imply there was regular traffic. It would have been occasional and probably seasonal, but this is not recorded. There is, however, one other source that shows the Alt in use for commerce. This is an oil painting by Harry Williams dated 1856 in the collection of the Walker Art Gallery. It is called 'Near Altcar' and was painted from what is now the Rifle Range (established in 1862), looking towards Crosby and the Wirral. It shows the Formby and Crosby lighthouses and the surrounding sand dunes under a dramatic sky. In the foreground there is a fishing boat about 25 feet long being repaired and another twelve masts of other boats lying on the mud at low tide. There is 'artistic licence' but in this use the whole intention is to record the drama of nature but with a great concentration on the detail.

As to the ships and mariners of the Alt; the first record is in 1577 when the Earl of Derby - Lord of the Isle of Man - was escorted from Liverpool to Douglas by a ship from Liverpool and one from 'the Aulte'. Manx records also refer to the Jonas of Formby (6 tons) in 1583, and the Margaret of Alt in 1603. The Lancashire shipping return of 1626 recorded nine ships owned at Formby and three at Alt, totalling 294 tons. Liverpool also owned twelve ships, totalling 253 tons! Later in the same century the Liverpool Port books of 1660 include a list of vessels frequenting the port of Liverpool:

Ann Gabbard of Liverpool, from Formby and Bristol
Providence of Grange, from Grange
Godspeed of Grange, from Grange
Nightingale of Grange

No tonnages are given. However, the Belfast Customs Book of 1683-87 records a **Providence** of 40 tons, Thomas Fformbe master, delivering salt from Liverpool on 26th July 1684, and a **Nightingale** of 30 tons arriving also with salt on 7th April 1683. Perhaps they are the same as the 1660-1 vessels. A survey of Irish Sea coasting vessels for the late 17th century suggests their average size was between 20 and 30 tons cargo capacity. Pictorial evidence suggests they would be carvel built with an open hold and rigged with one or two masts with square sails. This rig was replaced in the coastal trade by the sloop rig in 1700. They were the predecessors of the Mersey flats of the 18th and 19th century which played such an important role in the development of the commerce of Liverpool.

Finally, if any reader is interested in further details of the story of the 'port of Formby' and the Alt they should turn back to Volume 8 of our Society's 'Transactions', pages 36 to 46, where Cuthbert Woods and John Rees debate the evidence as to whether Formby could ever have been a rival to Liverpool for the first dock. |||||

WILLIAM WHEELWRIGHT - THE MAN

by John Lingwood

John Lingwood read his paper to the Society in January, 2000.

This article is a précis of his notes.

The revolutions for independence during the 19th century severed the South American countries from the economic shackles of Spain.

Men from Europe and the U.S.A. saw the potential of resources, and of course profits. One such man was William Wheelwright - mariner, merchant, consul and promoter of steam navigation in Andean America and Argentina.

Who was this man who was to do so much ? He was to create a British steamship company - and much more - under '*Pax Britannica*'. He was in fact an American, but

The story of William Wheelwright goes back to the early days of settlement in New England, U.S.A., at the time of Oliver Cromwell. Wheelwright's ancestors came from Lincolnshire where a certain Rev'd. John Wheelwright was a contentious puritan and during the Civil War emigrated to the Eastern seaboard of the New World with his wife Marie Hutchison, who came from a most vociferous family of puritans.

The Wheelwrights arrived in Boston in 1636 but within a year they were banished from the Massachusetts Bay colony for heresy. They were allowed to return in 1644 as New England was still a hotbed of puritanism. The Wheelwrights settled in Salisbury and John died there in 1679 just across the river from Newburyport, to the north of Boston, which was to be the birthplace of our hero, William Wheelwright. This background of religious observance, strict morality and later service to the community was to influence strongly the character of William. There could be confusion over the use of English place names, but look at a map of New England and you will realise why it is so called.

William Wheelwright's grandfather, Jeremiah junior, was a schoolmaster at Ipswich before he married Mary Davis of Gloucester. During the Revolutionary War, he assisted in organising the Commissary Dept. for Benedict Arnold's expedition against Quebec. An important decision, for our story, was made. An encampment was set up at Newburyport before the advance. A plaque in the High Street records these facts and both Jeremiah Wheelwright's sons and grandsons were destined to own homes near this camping ground after his death. His wife moved her family, including sons Ebenezer and Abraham from Gloucester to Newburyport. It was these two brothers who were to shape the life of William Wheelwright and prepare him in the years to come.

Ebenezer was William's father and he became a shipmaster owning several sailing vessels. Into his life came another man whose partnership was to make the Wheelwrights and himself powerful families in the area.

In 1789 a William Coombs registered a sloop of 72 tons, the **Three Friends**, listing Captain Ebenezer Wheelwright as master. Later this young mariner was to marry Coombs' daughter, Anna. Another ship was registered which was acquired by Ebenezer. Then, in 1794, Abraham Wheelwright enrolled his brother as master in the **Betsy**. Still owning vessels, the Wheelwright brothers retired from active sea life, going into partnership as A. & E. Wheelwright engaged in developing the West Indies trade. In those days a captain was entrusted with the sale and purchase of cargo and so the brothers had made many personal contacts both at home and abroad.

In May 1791 a company had been formed to construct the Essex Merrimac bridge. Ebenezer subscribed several shares and his father-in-law William Coombs built the bridge. Ebenezer then founded the Newbury Woollen Mill in 1794, possibly the first in the U.S.A. William's father set the pattern - Mariner to Merchant to Manufacturer - which would be repeated by William on a grand scale in Latin America.

The Wheelwright family were now prominent in society. William Coombs built a house near the corner of Lime Street, Newburyport, where our William was born in 1798 - just 202 years ago. Coombs became the largest importer of foreign goods in Massachusetts and was a founding member of the 'Venerable Marine Society of Newburyport'. He improved navigational aids to harbours on the eastern seaboard of the U.S.A., a task William was to continue in the ports of the West Coast of South America.

So William Wheelwright comes into the picture, with a background of shipping and trading of the highest quality. He came from a family who thought ahead to 'what was needed' and then did it. His younger brother Ebenezer was born in 1800, followed by two more brothers and three sisters.

The Wheelwright family were part builders of the famous Merrimac bridge to counteract the French Naval action. With the coming of peace, Newburyport became prosperous as did the Wheelwright family. The city was called 'The City of Captains' Houses' and there is a house on the High Street which is still named 'Wheelwright House' today.

Young William had a view of the port from his bedroom window and preferred listening to tales of seafaring from his elders rather than studying at his expensive schools. He heard talk of trade and cargoes and far-off ports at dinner every evening and all this whetted his appetite. As a boy of nine he witnessed Robert Fulton's first steamboat trials on the Hudson River in 1807.

The infamous 'Jefferson Embargo' on trade of 1807 was quickly followed by a devastating fire which raged through the Newburyport in 1811 and the Wheelwrights were badly affected by the inferno. Hard work and the war against Great Britain in 1812 helped them to recover something and at least they still had the ships. Even here fate lent a hand and shifting currents blocked the south of the Merrimac River with silt. Most trade was transferred to Boston and Salem.

William Wheelwright completed his formal schooling in the class of 1814, the same year as the Treaty of Ghent and the end of the Napoleonic War. William's

life had reached a turning point - in 1815 he decided to go to sea as a cabin boy in one of his father's ships trading to the West Indies. This step was to change his life and bring a dream to fulfilment in a manner no one could have foretold.

However on the return voyage William's ship stranded on a sand spit off the Caicos Islands in the Bahamas and the cargo of lime caught fire. The crew finally reached a plantation after struggling through marsh grass along the shore. William contracted tropical fever and was dangerously ill for weeks. It was a long time before he regained his strength and he was then anxious to be off again on the **Pilgrim** but his family dissuaded him. This was fortunate for William as the **Pilgrim** was lost without trace. *'There but for the Grace of God go I'!*

William was soon back at sea and by dint of hard work became a captain by the time he was 19. In 1822, aged 24, he took command of the **Rising Empire**, reaching Buenos Aires successfully where he waited three months for a cargo. Like other South American countries, Argentina was in the throes of political upheaval at that time. However William was successful in meeting the president at a party at the American Embassy, an incident he referred to in 1872 at the inauguration of the Buenos Aires - Ensenada Railway, his last public work before he died in 1873.

William sailed for home on 9th September 1822 but was soon stranded off the Argentine coast. As his ship settled into the sand the crew was able to get away and rowed for 24 hours before reaching the shore, losing only one man. William was offered another ship to command but declined. William decided to stay in South America and 'to conquer its soil not by arms but by steam'. And so a mariner from Massachusetts, a major pioneer of the industrial revolution, had reached South America to stay. He now committed his life to the economic development of the continent. William sought employment and obtained work as a supercargo in an American vessel heading into the Pacific Ocean. The ship rounded Cape Horn reaching Valparaiso some four months later. It was probably this and memories of Robert Fulton and his steam boat experiments which really began the dream of creating a shorter and safer route via the isthmus of Panama. Wheelwright saw the first part of his dream come true through his own efforts and saw the second part initiated in the minds of the men who would make it a reality after his death. He saw the two oceans connected by a steam railroad with which his own Pacific Steam Navigation Company would be involved.

I was a member of that Company and I worked at the Panama Canal as the Company's agent, and in this article I am describing one of the heroes of my life.

In 1823 Valparaiso was little more than a landing place with some 1,500 inhabitants. Even the Custom House was inland in the Chilean capital, Santiago. The country had the disadvantages of an extended coast line with an impassable desert to the north and the Andes mountains cutting it off from the East. Along the coast efficient communication was only possible by ship.

During these years there were great upheavals and changes to the political scene in all the countries from Venezuela to Chile. Envoys from the U.S.A. and

Europe were sent to watch developments and to report to their governments on how future trade might be effected. Wheelwright became such an envoy for the U.S.A.

In the midst of this maelstrom Wheelwright decided to explore and travelled through all these countries checking navigation, ports and mercantile opportunities. Two years later he sent his family a letter about his findings.

In the mid 1820s Panama was still part of New Granada (now Colombia) and the emphasis for trade was south via the Horn. Naturally the U.S.A. encouraged the independence of these South American countries. On 9th June 1824 President Munro appointed William Wheelwright as the first American Consul in Guayaquil. Four weeks later the Americans celebrated Independence Day at Lima, Peru and the new British Consul and Wheelwright both attended.

Not much is known about Wheelwright's early business activities except that he formed the firm of Robinett and Wheelwright in November 1823. This was soon wound up, however, but in 1826 he became a partner with D. Bouilly.

Wheelwright's first survey of the Panama crossing confirmed his opinion that the isthmus would become the 'high road' between the Atlantic and the Pacific. The vision of his dream grew firmer. First the rail road along the Chagres River would be constructed, followed by a canal along a course confirmed by his own first captain - one Captain Peacock. This canal was commenced by De Lesseps and completed by the Americans. Wheelwright's explorations were not easy as he was attacked and injured by bandits, but he pressed on. He soon constructed a steam-driven saw mill in Ecuador which produced much of his income. He returned to Newburyport in 1828 at a time when his business was worth \$US 100,000 a year. Wheelwright was soon a wealthy man.

Religious foreign missions interested Wheelwright, arising out of his New England background. His own brother, Isaac Watts Wheelwright, a preacher and teacher from the Bible Society of America, arrived to join William in South America and established a school. The family influence was spreading.

The British Consul was forced to leave Guayaquil due to ill health and thus William Wheelwright became the only accredited foreign official resident at the port. He reported all the political and commercial proceedings direct to Henry Clay, the Secretary of State (later President) of the U.S.A. This strengthened William's status and his acumen as a statesman and entrepreneur.

Surprisingly, William reported 'against' the great revolutionary Simon Bolivar who he considered the evil behind all the uprisings along the coast. It was William's opinion that Bolivar was trying to become the dictator of the West Coast of South America, but in the event Bolivar was soon to be disgraced and left the political scene.

It was seen as important for Panama to gain independence from Gran Colombiana if anything was to be achieved on the isthmus. That, however, would only happen in the future.

Wheelwright's house became a hospital and a haven for refugee leaders who later became influential in Government and were able to help him substantially in

establishing steam navigation and constructing roads and railways to provide efficient communication between Panama and Chile.

On returning to Newburyport for leave, William found the town basically unchanged. Unfortunately, family affairs were rather different. His father had sold the family home and his sister had purchased the adjacent estate. William bought this house in his name and called it 'the Wheelwright House' which it remains to this day.

Brother Isaac had returned home to complete his theology studies before returning to South America. William's cousin John went and settled in Valparaiso and established a private academy on English Hill. It was John who may well have persuaded William to move to Valparaiso.

On 10th February 1829, and now 30 years old, William married Martha Bartlett, the 25 year old daughter of William Bartlett, a prominent figure in Newburyport; another 'Mariner, Merchant, Manufacturer, Entrepreneur, Civil Benefactor and Charitable Philanthropist' - a pattern William was to follow. The Wheelwrights' honeymoon voyage back to South America was not plain sailing and the food on board was only salt provisions and hardtack owing to ill-management. On arrival in New Granada they immediately sailed to Panama and poled up the River Chagres in stifling heat and tropical downpours. The second half of the journey across the isthmus to Panama City was by mule back. Fifty miles of 'hell' - just like Francis Drake's experience of 300 years earlier, and more recently by P.S.N.C. passengers connecting with the R.M.S.P. A blockade of Panama left the Wheelwrights stranded there for several months.

To occupy his time - Wheelwright was not given to idleness - he explored this strategic isthmus once again in the stifling heat. It must have been the rainy season - I know, I've experienced it! His interest in a feasible route was further activated by meeting one John Augustus Lloyd, a British engineer who had been commissioned by New Granada to survey a route for a road or canal from Limon Bay on the Caribbean side to Panama City on the Pacific coast. This was the exact route of Wheelwright's and Captain Peacock's survey which had taken place several years earlier.

Wheelwright could see his dream coming closer. He and his wife Martha eventually carried on to Guayaquil in a leaky boat with a mutinous crew, making William vow to improve services along this coast - the genesis of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company which he was to found.

On arrival at Guayaquil Wheelwright found his business and property ravaged. Dejected he re-assessed his situation now that he had a wife to support. He decided to return to active seafaring. William moved to Valparaiso, as his cousin had suggested in 1829, just at a turning point in South American politics and history. His vision was a fleet of steamships ploughing the Pacific and servicing the industrial revolution, providing fast reliable services from Panama to Chile. The dream was developong and starting to take shape.

Wheelwright started with a fleet of swift sailing ships and established for himself a reputation for record runs up and down the coast, acquiring the monopoly of transporting bullion along the Chilean coast.

Between 1830 and 1835 William engineered a water supply for Valparaiso and proposed harbour works and a lighthouse. He improved the straggling streets of the town and introduced the manufacture of bricks for houses. His upbringing and instruction in trade was now coming to the forefront. William extended his activities further up the coast, bringing water to desert towns and ports. He ventured into the Atacama desert and discovered sources of nitrates, borax and lime, plus other industrial minerals to provide future cargoes. He resembled a juggler, keeping all the balls in the air at once. It was remarkable that during this time he was already formulating his new steamship company. Truly a remarkable entrepreneur.

Whilst Wheelwright was not interested in looking for silver as there were already well-established silver mines, but he did obtain the rights to transport it. He always made sure he had Government permission for any new venture such as providing postal services - the Pacific Steam Navigation Company provided the first postal service in Peru and printed its own stamps. For his steamship line William obtained the royal charter from Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

Wheelwright's most important discovery was that of coal, known as 'black gold', as this was to be the key to developing plans for steam navigation, for which he was already seeking backers. Whilst many others had experimented with steam navigation in the Pacific, William was the first to introduce this boon to sea travel on a regular service basis. It was as early as 1827 that the name of the service was proposed and in 1836 the name of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company was formerly adopted and incorporated in 1838. The first voyage took place in 1840.

I have talked before on the development of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company, and it is interesting to consider this and the other activities which Wheelwright was active in for his adopted country. He only conducted P.S.N.C. affairs for 15 years until 1852 when the P.S.N.C. was becoming the largest steamship company in the world. From 1852, William was consultant director resident on the West Coast. However he did see his new service extend as a regular service to and from the U.K. in 1869, in addition to the coastal service.

In 1850 the Chilean Government struck a gold medal in Wheelwright's honour. That same year William introduced the first telegraph service in South America and he was also involved in the construction of railroads up and down Chile and across to Argentina. These culminated in the famous Buenos Aires to Ensenada railway in 1872. William co-operated in all these rail projects with British engineers Richard Trevithick and Henry Meiggs.

William Wheelwright left Chile for London in 1873 and it was there, at the age of 75, that he died. His remains were taken back to Newburyport where they were interred. He left a widow and daughter. His life had ended, but his achievements remained.

Wheelwright had been variously described as '*vigorous*', '*ubiquitous*', '*stockily built*', '*strong featured with flashing eyes yet of amiable disposition*', '*tactful*', '*patient*', '*friendly*', '*no personal animosities*' - quite a character in fact!

Even when on his highest income William lived simply but was generous to his family and friends and contributed to many good causes - a family tradition. He once said: "*Riches are only good in contributing to the wants of others, and unless that be the first desire of the heart, they become a curse*". William's inflexible honesty and culture was outstanding as was proved in his dealings with the principal men of the Republics and others, such as Lord Abinger when the Pacific Steam Navigation Company was being formed.

In 1877 Chile paid William Wheelwright the highest compliment when a statue was erected in Valparaiso. A service is held at this statute on the anniversary of his death, and he has become to be regarded almost as a saint in Chile. The eulogies were expansive and some 5,000 citizens attended and sang '*A Hymn to Wheelwright*'. On the 90th anniversary of the formation of the P.S.N.C. the Chilean Navy disguised a naval tug as the p.s. Chile and re-enacted the arrival of the first P.S.N.C. vessel in 1840.

A railroad and surface road had been constructed across the isthmus of Panama by 1877 and plans were afoot for the construction of a canal, based initially on Wheelwright's own survey, supported by Captain Peacock's survey. It was with the aid of these survey that Ferdinand de Lesseps started excavating the canal, but the politics of New Granada defeated him. President 'Teddy' Roosevelt of the U.S.A. promised Panama its independence if America was given the right to construct the canal. Whereas de Lesseps acknowledged Wheelwright and Peacock for their work, the U.S.A. never did so.

As we have seen, William Wheelwright's character developed as he adapted himself to the conditions of life as he met them, not forgetting his basic Christian upbringing and family training. "*Is there a need? What can I do? I shall do it*" - William did not wait for that 'Mr Someone Else' to do anything. He dragged the West Coast of South America countries into the modern age. The Pacific Steam Navigation Company was always known as the 'English Company' - *Compañía Inglesa de Vapores* - and it incorporated many 'firsts' - the first steamships, the first postal service and the first electric light on ships etc.

England became a special friend of Chile. I have been there. This friendship was proved in two world wars and the Falklands War. By way of conclusion, my grandfather was a seafarer sailing out of Manchester, Massachusetts, quite near to Newburyport. His family would have known of the Wheelwrights. No wonder I am interested in William Wheelwright. And so I say: "*William Wheelwright - you were a man*". |||||

THE 'MONDAY FACILITY'

Members' access to the Archives and Library at the Maritime Museum on Mondays will continue as follows:

JUNE : 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th

JULY : 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st

AUGUST : 7th, 14th and 21st

SEPTEMBER : 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th

THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

This being my first Annual Report as Chairman of the Society, I am glad to see that there is a large number of important aspects to cover.

Once again there has been an extremely full LECTURE PROGRAMME with seven very interesting speakers talking on a variety of related subjects from the history of local ship-owning companies to the early development of ports on the Mersey and the ships involved. We heard about ocean weather, about the work of a marine commercial artist as well as the lives of outstanding seafarers. The Society is very grateful to all those who come to talk to us and of course all this has been due to the hard work of our Meetings Secretary Ron Dennis to whom we give our thanks for producing such an interesting and absorbing programme.

During the year the MONDAY FACILITY, when Members have the exclusive use of the Archives and Library at the Merseyside Maritime Museum on many Mondays during the year, has again proved to be of great benefit not only to individual Members, but to the Society itself as it makes it possible for Members to assist with requests on questions of research received from other parts of the country and from overseas. It also permits Members to work together and exchange ideas about particular research projects.

The Society is very grateful for all the work of John Shepherd, the Editor of THE BULLETIN. This journal not only keeps the Members in contact, but enables the works of research to be appreciated by the full membership. Six issues of '*The Bulletin*' in one year is a considerable achievement and John has our thanks.

Once again, modern COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY has played a large part in the activities of the Society, in particular e-mail and the Internet, with many contacts being made and maintained worldwide. Recently it was possible to entertain a visitor in Liverpool from the middle of the United States who had originally been contacted by electronic mail. There is a number of Members who are 'on-line' and while their websites spread the work and name of the Society, we may soon reach the position where the Society should have its own web address.

This year there has been an emphasis on getting the work of the Society better known on Merseyside and elsewhere, and at the same time endeavouring to attract NEW MEMBERSHIP from the younger generations. Work has been carried out to produce notices for distribution in universities and other places of learning, as well as attempting to reach the general public.

The Society participated in the LOCAL HISTORY EXHIBITION at St. George's Hall in Liverpool in March. The Society exhibited a number of documents and artefacts which were plainly of interest to the large number of people who attended the exhibition. There were many volunteers from amongst the membership to assist at the exhibition and due to its great success the Society will attend a similar event during the coming year.

During the year the Society also became involved with RADIO MERSEYSIDE on the programme '*All At Sea*'. Michael McClory and myself talked

about Liverpool ship-owners, and Hon. Secretary John Tebay about the Society itself. Once again this may become a medium to enable the name of the Society to become better known.

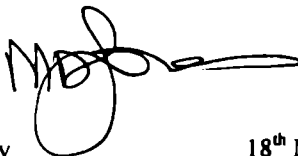
We are indeed fortunate to have the MERSEYSIDE MARITIME MUSEUM here in Liverpool as the hub of our main activities. The Museum is a splendid setting for our work and the kindness and assistance of the Curator and his staff are very much appreciated.

There have been a number of very pleasant SOCIAL GATHERINGS within the Society during the year including an enjoyable Christmas Lunch held in a local hotel with some forty persons present, and the Annual Christmas Social and Quiz is always great fun. Our thanks to those who organise these events and to Gordon Wright and others for looking after our catering needs throughout the year.

Talking of THANKS, we are indebted to Hon. Secretary John Tebay for all his work; to the Hon. Treasurer Sandy Williamson and to our President and all the Council Members for guiding our course so well. I wish also to thank Vice-Chairman David Eccles for his support.

The MEMBERSHIP continues to increase and now stands at 155, plus 14 corporate members. I would like to thank the Membership for being so helpful to me in this my first year of office as it is their contributions which make the Liverpool Nautical Research Society what it is, and has fashioned it into such a unique body for nautical research.

Captain M.D.R. Jones,
Chairman,
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society



18th May, 2000

JUST FANCY THAT !!!

A TIDAL AMPHIDROME

Whilst planning a holiday on the Hebridean islands of Islay, Jura and Colonsay, I came across the following in the *'West Coast of Scotland Pilot : Clyde to Colonsay'*:

Between Islay and Kintyre and through the Sound of Jura as far as Fladda the rise and fall of tides is related to a phenomenon known as an amphidrome which is a tidal pivot point where the range is nil. This occurs about halfway between Port Ellen (south Islay) and the Mull of Kintyre, but its exact location moves during the tidal cycle; there is less range of tide on the south-east coast of Islay at the time of spring tides because the amphidrome is nearer to Islay at that time. This (rather simplified) is the reason for the curious observation in the Admiralty *Tide Tables* that *'it is neaps at Port Ellen when it is springs at Machrihanish'* (about 25 miles away on the south-west tip of the Kintyre peninsula). Just thought you'd like to know !!! - j.s.

THREE EARLY STEAMERS

by L.N.R.S. Member Charles Dawson

1 - p.s. ST PATRICK

Wooden paddle steamer, launched by Mottershead & Hayes on 22nd April 1822 ¹. Builder's registration 27th April 1822. 173 tons, 130' x 22' 1" x 13' 8", double engine of 55 HP by Fawcett, Preston & Co., Liverpool.

The **St. Patrick** was first registered BT107/129, Liverpool, 1822/33, 29th April 1822 to T. Lance, K. Pringle, J. Watson and others, Liverpool ², and was running for the St. Patrick Steam Packet Company, in effect an element of the St. George Steam Packet Company, in conjunction with its Dublin-Liverpool service. Her owners had competition against the War Office Steam Packet Company in mind, together with ps **Hibernia**, q.v. An example of the type of snide comment, not untypical at the time: *'These superb packets do not carry troops for the War Office, nor are they more than one night out.'* ³ The **Hibernia** turned out to be *'a bit of a flop'* says Farr ⁴, but her problems seem to have resulted more from misfortune plus perhaps a poor crew.

The **St. Patrick** opened a Bristol-Dublin service in May 1822 under the command of J.P. Phillips, RN in conjunction with the Dublin-Liverpool service. She arrived in Bristol on 10th May and commenced a series of sailings on a Bristol-Dublin-Liverpool-Bristol circuit, with calls at Tenby in each direction, the round voyage taking between nine and ten days. The **St. Patrick** recorded 23½ hours for the 219 mile Dublin-Bristol passage in August 1822, and bettered this to 23 hours in September.

On 27th June 1823, when about three miles off Milford, the **St. Patrick** ran foul of the **Hibernia** and the **Emerald Isle** when wishing to hail. One passenger on the **Emerald Isle** was fatally crushed, and the vessel herself lost rails, bulwarks, waterways and thirty-feet of her starboard planking. The **St. Patrick** lost part of her head and cutwater.

Said to have been influenced by *'powerful interests in the south of Ireland'*, the **St. Patrick's** proprietors started a Cork-Bristol service on 19th August until some time in September 1823, plying in opposition to the vessels of the War Office Steam Packet Company already running on this route from Bristol. However the new service was not profitable.

In the Spring of 1824 the **St. Patrick** was bought for Portuguese owners by Antonio da Costa, the Portuguese Consul at Liverpool and the founder of a local firm which flourished into the 20th century. The **St. Patrick** left Liverpool on 1st or 2nd March, having been renamed **Restaurador Lusitano**. She called at Lisbon to pick up 30 passengers and arrived at Oporto about 24 hours later. She ran on this service for some years, and on her second voyage she sailed the 186 miles from Oporto to off Belem in 17 hours. However, on two occasions in bad weather, the voyage took 40 and

43 hours. The **Restaurador Lusitano** returned to Liverpool for repairs in the early summer of 1828 and then resumed her regular run. Civil War broke out in Portugal and in 1832 she was hired as a transport to accompany the Absolutist fleet under Admiral Campos. Heavily laden with siege guns and troops, she left Lisbon in September for the north of Portugal. In heavy weather one of the gun-brigs named **Audaz** lost her fore topmast and the **Restaurador Lusitano** was ordered to take her in tow. The strain proved too great, almost pulling off her stern section, and she leaked so badly that she foundered during the morning of 12th September 1832 off Aveiro in sight of the contending fleets.⁵

SOURCES

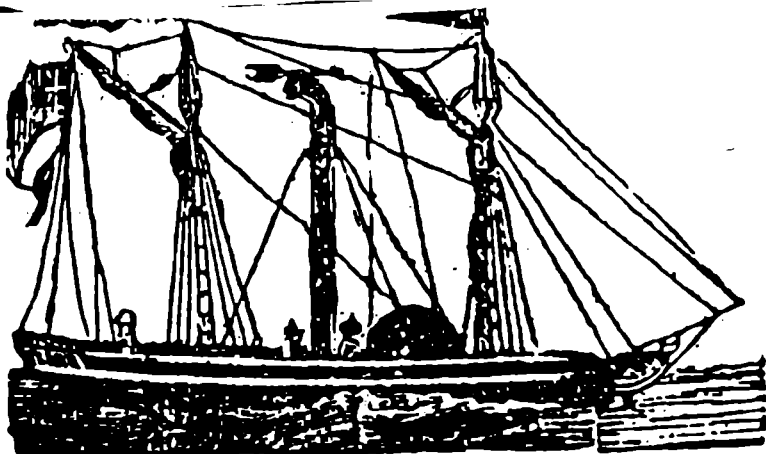
- ¹ *Sea Breezes*, Volume 3, (Liverpool, 1947), but note that John Kennedy, *The History of Steam Navigation* (Liverpool, 1903), 37, says 21st April at 10.30.
 - ² Public Record Office, Kew Gardens, London, *Transcripts & Transactions*, BT 107/129 Liverpool 1822/33
 - ³ Grahame Farr, *West Country Passenger Steamers* (Prescot, 1967), 12. Farr recounts the riposte from the competitor and a new attack on page 29.
 - ⁴ Farr, 29
 - ⁵ Farr, 13
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2 - p.s. **ALBION**

*Wooden paddle steamer **Albion**. Registration by her builders, Mottershead & Hayes, Liverpool was dated 24th May 1822. Dimensions 103' 6" x 18' 1" x 9' 3". 103.2 tons burthen. She had 'two engines' of 60 HP.¹*

The **Albion** was registered at Liverpool on 6th June 1822² to J. Jackson, T. Mather, S. Parkes and others. They were presumably the owners who operated the service between Liverpool and 'all parts of North Wales' with John Emerson, RN, as commander. The **Albion** was described on an amended sailing bill headed 'DAILY COMMUNICATION'³ in the usual high-flown style of the day as the 'ORIGINAL North Wales Steam Packet', and also, presumably to catch those not yet attuned to the new propulsion system 'THE NEW AND REMARKABLY FAST SAILING PACKET'.

In 1826 the **Albion** was sold to the London, Yarmouth & Norwich Steam Packet Company with her depth shown as reduced to 8' 4".⁴ In 1827 she was bought by H.W. Atkinson and R.J. Brapsey of London.⁵ It seems likely that these were the gentlemen who arranged her sale to Poland, since her register was closed in January 1829, annotated 'Sold to Polish owners'. It is always a pity to read such words; we



DAILY COMMUNICATION

BETWEEN

Liverpool and all Parts of North Wales.

ORIGINAL

North Wales Steam Packet.

THE NEW AND REMARKABLY FAST-
SAILING PACKET

ALBION,

John Emerson, R. N. Commander,

LEAVES Bangor Ferry at Eight o'Clock in the morning, every Monday, Thursday, and Saturday, calling at Garth Ferry and Beaumaris, whence she proceeds direct to Liverpool, without stopping off any intermediate place, as heretofore.

She sails from Liverpool on the mornings of Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday, at such hours as to afford an opportunity to passengers for Carnarvon, Holyhead, and other distant places to arrive before dark.

would so much like to know more of the history of the vessels that went abroad. The search for more information on these is a challenging and long drawn out task.

SOURCES

- ¹ Nigel Kennedy, *Records of the Early British Steamships* (Liverpool, 1933)
 - ² Public Record Office (PRO), *Transcripts & Transactions of the Custom House Records*, BT 107/129, Liverpool, 1822/46.
 - ³ *North Wales Gazette*, 15th August 1822
 - ⁴ Public Record Office (PRO), *Transcripts & Transactions*, being copies of Customs House registers from all British ports, ref. BT 107/46, London 1826/49
 - ⁵ *ibid*, 5th March 1827.
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3 - p.s. CAMBRIA

The wooden paddle steamer **Cambria** was probably the first steamship built in Liverpool to leave the port on a regular British service, sailing, as her name implies, to Wales. She was launched by Mottershead & Hayes on 17th May 1821, ¹ having been registered by her builders five days previously ² as being 91' 2" x 17' 6" x 8' 6" and of 86 tons burthen. ³ She had 50 HP ⁴ engines by Fawcett & Lidderdale. ⁵

Her first owners, J. Jackson, S. Parkes and J. Ewar registered her in Liverpool on 18th May 1821. ⁶ From 4th June she ran a service between Liverpool and Bagillt on the River Dee. ⁷ Later it was announced that '*in consequence of urgent applications the Cambrian Steam Packet would in future leave Liverpool every morning, returning from North Wales the same afternoon.*' ⁸ Her owners re-registered her in Liverpool on 7th July 1821, ⁹ possibly at the time when they wished to increase their service. Conveyances to and from Holywell, Denbigh and St. Asaph met the packet at Bagillt. Fares were Liverpool-Bagillt 3s 6d (18p) best cabin, 2/- (10p) steerage; children under 14 half-price; horse 3/- (15p); gig 7s 6d (37½p); four-wheelers 21/- (£1-05p). Breakfast and refreshments were available on board. The illustration of her ¹⁰ on her last sailing bills exaggerates her size somewhat. This is not at all surprising since owners quickly learned to openly exaggerate the qualities of their vessels and to make rude remarks about their competitors. The **Cambria** was undoubtedly a reliable vessel with a competent captain and crew, for she sailed all winter and was very seldom prevented from putting to sea even in the worst weather, when no sailing vessel would have attempted to face it. ¹¹

The **Cambria** was sold to the London, Yarmouth and Norwich Steam Packet Co. of London, her sale being registered there on 9th January 1826 with her length and depth altered, giving her new dimensions as 90' 8" x 17' 6" x 8' 8". ¹² An amendment was made to her register on 20th June 1826 showing her owners as H.W. Atkinson and

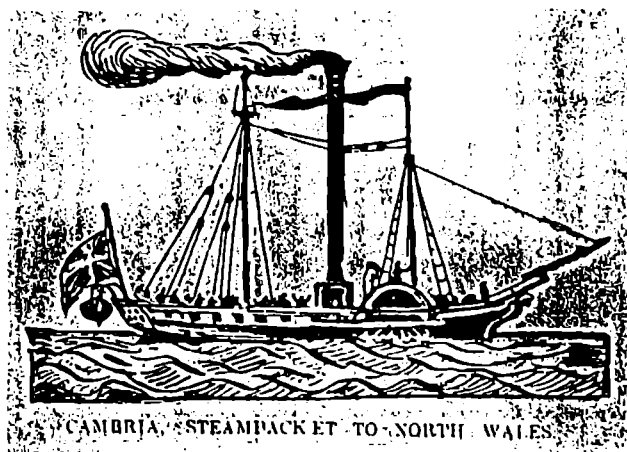
R.J. Brapsey. She was re-registered to R. Somersale of London on 25th August 1826 with her depth deepened to 8' 10", and other shareholders joined her new owner on 29th August.

The **Cambria** was sold abroad in 1827, her sale to the Demerary (*sic* - apparently the spelling at that time) and Essequibo Steam Boat Association being registered in Demerary on 19th April,¹³ her depth now shown again as 8' 8". These small steamships would, of course, have been sailed across the Atlantic with their paddle wheels dismantled.

The **Cambria's** register was closed in 1832 showing that she had by then been broken up. Another, even smaller, British steamer - the Clyde-built ps **Woodford**, 76'x 16', 6 HP, built by Wm. Denny at Dumbarton in 1818, had been sold to the Caribbean in 1822.¹⁴

SOURCES

- 1 F. Burt, *Cross-Channel & Coastal Paddle Steamers* (London, 1937)
- 2 PRO BT 107/127, Liverpool 1821/45
- 3 86³¹/₉₄ says Parliamentary Report 1822, 229
- 4 *Ibid*
- 5 David Bell (Editor) *David Napier*, (Glasgow, 1912) 67
- 6 PRO BT 107/127, Liverpool
- 7 Burt
- 8 George Chandler, *Liverpool Shipping* (London, 1960) 50
- 9 PRO BT 107/127, Liverpool 1821/63
- 10 Plate 9, from Chandler, above
- 11 Parliamentary Report 1822, 229
- 12 PRO BT 107/46, London, 1826/689
- 13 PRO BT 107/493, Demerary. 1827/2
- 14 Bell, 52



PELTON AND RUTHIN - TWO SMALL INLAND TOWNS WITH THEIR OWN STEAMSHIP COMPANIES

THE PELTON STEAMSHIP COMPANY

by Alan McClelland

Pelton is situated on the East Coast Main Line about six miles to the north of Durham.

Basing themselves in the Pelton Colliery offices, Messrs R.B. Fenwick and J. Reay became shipowners in 1876 when they took delivery of the new steamer **Pelton** from C. Mitchell of Newcastle.

Typical of the colliers of her day, the **Pelton** carried quite an extensive sail plan. Another prominent feature was the compass placed on a pole just forward of the bridge to reduce the magnetic influence of the iron hull.

By 1885 Fenwick and Reay had built up a fleet of five ships and had adopted a system of naming them which made use of words, and in particular musical terms, ending in 'o' - such as Spero, Presto, Tempo and Vivo.

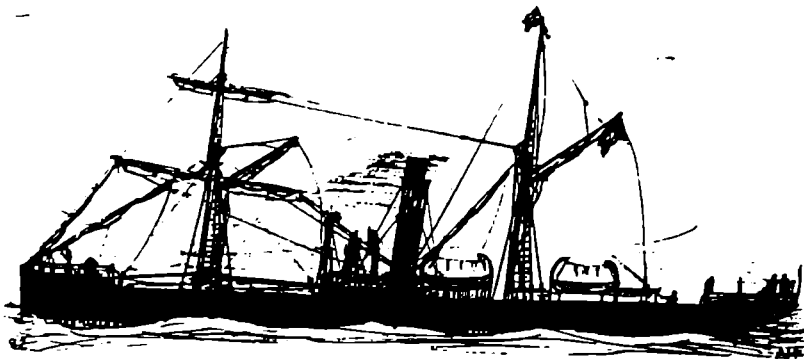
In 1899 Fenwick sold his interest in the business to H.S. Gardiner and the new partnership registered the Pelton Steamship Company with offices in Lombard Street, Newcastle.

The concern prospered and gained a reputation for commissioning vessels of a high standard which were employed not only in the coastal coal trade but also on voyages to Baltic, Mediterranean and Northern European ports.

Most of the employment of the Pelton Steamship Company's steamers was of a humdrum nature - coal out and home in ballast, or with cargoes of grain, ores or pit props.

However the Company's **Zelo** played a most unusual and sad role in the summer of 1939 when, specially equipped with a cradle of stout wires, she was used to raise the submarine HMS **Thetis** and bring her to shallow water where she could be salvaged.

The Pelton Steamship Company ceased trading in 1961. |||||



SS *Pelton* delivered in 1876 by Messers C Mitchell & Co. Sketch: A McClelland

THE RUTHIN STEAMSHIP COMPANY

by Graeme Cubbin

*Ruthin is a small market town in Denbighshire, North Wales,
twenty miles from the nearest coast at Rhyl.*

Shortly after the end of the Second World War, at a time when British and foreign shipping industries were rebuilding their war ravaged fleets and seeking out old trading patterns which had been sadly neglected during six years of war service, the maritime Trade Unions began flexing their muscles, growing in strength and influence. Their demands, so modest and uncontroversial at first, became more strident until shipowners, already beset by rising costs and demonstrably unfair taxation by Governments, began searching for means of escape from a situation which was rapidly becoming intolerable. Like so many commercial initiatives, it began in America, where shipowners shrugged off 'Old Glory' and began registering their ships in third world countries such as Panama and Liberia. The Canadian foreign-going fleet disappeared completely, while in the United Kingdom owners began registering their ships in outposts of Empire such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Gibraltar and Bermuda.

Harrisons were rather late in following this 'Flagging-out' trend, but in 1958 it was decided to give the process a trial. In that year two splendid new motor-ships were launched from Doxford yards on the River Wear, the **Administrator** and the **Author**, but instead of being delivered to the Charente Steamship Company (Thos. & Jas. Harrison Ltd., Mgrs.) in the normal way, they were handed over to the newly established Ruthin Steamship Company, a wholly owned subsidiary Company with an office registered at Hamilton, Bermuda.

Immediately after delivery, both vessels were bareboat chartered to the Charente Steamship Company, which means they were handed over to the Charterers to be managed and operated just as they wished, at a monthly rate, in this case, of between £7,000 and £13,500. It became customary for a Director to visit Hamilton and the Ruthin Steamship Company's office once or twice a year to 'check things over', and it is assumed that this was a much sought after line of duty!

But why choose 'Ruthin', a name far removed from anything nautical? Well, it seems that the Hughes family (the Harrisons' partners and successors in management: Sir T. Harrison Hughes was the Chairman at the time) had an affinity with that part of the country, owning land and property in the region, and in fact Ruthin Castle became the residence of one of the Hughes. It was even said that in order to preserve a discreet anonymity and to comply with regulations requiring publication of financial results, it was arranged to publish these results in the local Ruthin newspaper (the '*Denbighshire Free Press*'), which was read chiefly by a small coterie of farmers and livestock producers, and hence the figures were unlikely to become a serious topic at dinner parties!

Meanwhile, Harrisons, with that sense of caution for which they were justly renowned, had no wish to offend Trade Union susceptibilities, real or imagined, and to ensure that there would be no outward signs of apostasy, registered the ships at Liverpool, continued to fly the familiar red Maltese cross (although a unique Ruthin SS Co. house-flag was believed to exist), painted the famous 'two-of-fat-and-one-of-lean' pattern on the funnel and hoisted the Red Duster! Thus to all outward appearances, the ships remained dyed-in-the-wool Harrison ships, and certainly there was never any perceptible relaxing of standards as far as conditions for the crew were concerned. They were always highly popular ships. Whether the Company ever achieved any substantial fiscal or taxation relief is a closely guarded secret, but by 1966 both the **Administrator** and the **Author** had reverted to the parent Charente Steamship Company, and the Ruthin Steamship Company became another folk-lore memory. |||||



The Alaska Steamship Company's steamer **Victoria**, ex-**Parthia** clearing Seattle on one of her last passages.

'O PUT NOT YOUR TRUST IN PRINCES' !!!

Commodore Sir James Bissett was Master of the **Queen Elizabeth** on one of the occasions when the Duke and Duchess of Windsor were crossing to New York. The Duke and Duchess attended the Divine Service in the First Class Main Lounge which was traditionally taken by the Master. Too late, Commodore Bissett noticed the text of Psalm 146 and it was an embarrassed shipmaster who exhorted his congregation to "*put not your trust in princes, for there is no help in them*" !!!

THE ALASKA STEAMSHIP COMPANY'S *VICTORIA*, ex *PARTHIA* OF 1870

The amazing 86 year career of the Cunard liner Parthia of 1870 was described in 'The Bulletin' Volume 42, No.3, page 106. The Seattle Historical Society has contacted the L.N.R.S. and provided more details about the old ship.

The old *Victoria* (ex *Parthia*) answered to the command of Alaska Line masters for over 44 years, from 1908. She had by then already established her reputation as the 'Gold Ship' by carrying thousands of gold seekers north and bringing out millions of dollars' worth of gold bullion, often stacked in sacks on the deck of the purser's office for lack of room in the safe.

For thirty years the *Victoria* was the first ship into Nome when the ice broke up in the Spring and the last out when the ice formed in the Autumn. Her heavy hand-wrought iron plates withstood well the crush of Arctic ice through which she often forced a passage when entering and leaving the roadstead at Nome. Once, however, she split several plates after striking an iceberg there, flooding No.2 lower hold to within a few inches of the main deck. But her bulkhead held. She was unloaded, temporary repairs made and she steamed home to Seattle under her own power.

The *Victoria* began her fabled career as the passenger liner *Parthia*, built for the Cunard Line in 1870 at Dumbarton by Wm. Denny and Company. Flush decked and barque rigged, the *Parthia* began her career with a compound engine attached to a shaft which could be disconnected, allowing the propeller to idle when the wind was favourable.

For her first ten years she maintained the Liverpool-New York and Boston passenger links with one notable diversion. In 1879 she was despatched to rescue the survivors of the Jeannette-De-Long Polar expedition, whose ship was locked in the ice some 700 miles from the Lena River. In 1881 the *Parthia* took troops to North Africa to relieve General Gordon, embattled at Khartoum. Later, as the *Victoria*, she carried United States men and mules to the Philippines in the Spanish-American War.

When she was 15 years old the Cunard Company sold the *Parthia* to John Elder and Company as part-payment for the new *Etruria* and *Umbria*. She was overhauled, re-engined and then operated by the Guion Line, running to South America, Australia, the New Hebrides and the Straits of Sunda.

The *Parthia* made her first appearance on the North Pacific in 1887 when she inaugurated the Canadian Pacific Railway service between Vancouver, B.C. and the Orient. Four years later the new *Empress of India* took over for C.P.R. and the *Parthia* returned to Britain for overhaul. Back in the North West in 1892 she began a new career as the *Victoria*, serving the Orient out of Tacoma, Washington. Except for three voyages to Manila and a voyage to Nome, she remained on this run until 1904, when she was again extensively rebuilt. She was transferred to United States registry in 1898 and bought from her British owners in 1901 by the Northern Pacific Steamship

Company, a subsidiary of the Northern Pacific Railway, who in 1904 sold her to the Northwestern Steamship Company.

Meanwhile the Alaska Steamship Company was established on 26th January 1895 and its announced service, to begin on 3rd March, precipitated one of the keenest rate wars in West Coast shipping history. To Juneau (south-east Alaska), freight rates dropped from \$11 to \$3 a ton and the price of a first-class passage was cut to \$11. But the Alaska Steamship Company persisted and its little 136-ft 450-ton steamship **Willipa** sailed as scheduled from Schwabacher's Wharf to Ketchikan, Juneau and Dyea, loaded to capacity with passengers and cargo. Despite the strong competition, the line managed to survive until the Klondyke strike which banished the rate war. A quarter of a million men rushed to the goldfields in 1898, creating a demand for transport which far exceeded the supply.

Nevertheless, the Alaska Line's growth was not rapid and by 1907 its fleet included only four small vessels - the **Jefferson**, **Dolphin**, **Farallon** and **Dirigo**. On 1st January 1908 the Northwestern Steamship Company was merged with the Alaska Line, bringing the **Victoria** and twelve other ships into the combine. This infusion expanded the Alaska Company's operations from the pioneer south-eastern service to all Alaska routes.

The **Victoria** quickly gained the reputation as *the* ship to catch for the 'outside' or far north. She outstripped her consort, the **Ohio**, in a race from Seattle to Nome, and the following year outdistanced the **Senator** of a rival line over the same route. The **Victoria** survived a stranding on the south side of Hinchinbrook Island in 1910. Except for a grounding in fog near St. Michael she was never in trouble again, despite the lack of modern aids to navigation on the rugged Alaskan coast.

The aged **Victoria** was one of 80 ships operated by the Alaska company for the War Shipping Administration during the Second World War. She had been laid up in 1937 in Lake Union, but with the demand for tonnage to help lift 'defence' cargo to Alaska, the old ship was returned to service. Her passenger accommodation and public rooms were removed and in 1941 she emerged as an armed cargo vessel and made 46 voyages to Alaska during the war, lifting in all about 150,000 tons of cargo.

The **Victoria** ended her Alaska Line career in 1952. The company's first container service on the Pacific was inaugurated in 1953 and sealed the old ship's fate because of her small hatches. She was sold later in 1953 and used as a barge, but her famous bass whistle and 260-lb brass bell were removed. The **Victoria's** whistle was transferred to another Alaska Line ship - the **Iliamna**.

The Alaska Line returned the **Victoria's** bell to the Cunard Steamship Company and it was prominently displayed on the promenade deck of the new **Parthia** launched in 1948. When Cunard disposed of the **Parthia** in 1961 the bell was returned to the Alaska Steamship Company. The clapper was missing but was restored, and the bell of the old **Parthia** of 1870 was given to the Seattle Historical Society on 26th January 1962, the 67th anniversary of the incorporation of the Alaska Line. The bell is now in the Seattle Museum of History and Industry. |||||

READERS' LETTERS

from Leslie Leigh of Aberdyfi:

THE 'LIGHT OF THE AGE' AND THE 'DOVER CASTLE'

In Cam Ford's concluding episode ('*The Bulletin*', Vol.43, No.6) of the fascinating and well researched account of the **Light of the Age's** voyages, he refers to the **Dover Castle** (Captain Richard King Deacon). I have a copy of the Official Log Book etc for this voyage (my great-uncle Arthur Leigh was 5th Officer) which gives her departure off Gravesend on 8th October 1867, four days before Captain Porter left Liverpool. Allowing time for suitable winds to negotiate the Downs and take a westerly course through the English Channel, it is conceivable that the ships may have sighted each other c. 14th/15th October and exchanged signals issuing a 'challenge'.

The **Dover Castle's** Official Log Book is a bit sparing on 'occurrences' giving noon fixes (a well-disciplined Blackwall frigate!) but it shows her at 46°00'S, 91°00'E on 31st December 1867, and at 44°36'S, 113°45'E on 4th January 1868. If this rate of progress had been maintained she should have arrived in Port Phillip Bay c. 12th January. Whatever the reason for the delay, it seems that she signalled for a pilot at about 04.30 on 16th January according to Cam's account. This in fact ties in suitably with the first crew discharges on 20th January - presumably when they finally got alongside. Captain Porter, who should have won, lost his ship and, as a consequence, his bet (if it had been placed?)

from Ron Evans of Darrington, Pontefract:

THE 'LIGHT OF THE AGE' / THE BAR LIGHTSHIP 'PLANET'

I have read with interest the story of the **Light of the Age** in recent issues of '*The Bulletin*' and further to Cam Ford's request for information, the following may be of interest:

'*The Passage Makers*' (1978) by Michael K. Stammers makes a number of references to the **Light of the Age** on pages 102, 192, 281 and 467, and gives the following particulars under 'Ships Owned by T.M. MacKay':

1. Year of Purchase : 1862
2. Tonnage etc : 1,287 gross tons; Wooden ship; Builders unknown;
Boston, Mass. 1851
3. Services : 1862 London to Queensland
1865 Glasgow to Queensland
1866 Sold

These dates seem to fall within 1855 - 1868 in the various articles, and the tonnage given as 1,287; therefore the above references would appear to be to the same vessel.

'Bulletin' readers may be interested in the new publication *'The American-Built Clipper Ship' 1850-1856* by William M. Crothers (softback version published in February, 2000) which details some 152 clippers built in Boston and Massachusetts yards; an invaluable resource for historians, model makers and maritime artists, the product of 35 years of research, and one of the best books on this subject I have ever seen.

Whilst no reference is made to the **Light of the Age / Beacon Light**, many other vessels of similar tonnage and dimensions are fully described with plans etc., creating a unique description of these ships.

'*The Bulletin*', April 2000, states that the former Liverpool Bar lightship **Planet** was withdrawn from station in September 1971 - should this not be 4th September 1972? '*Sea Breezes*' December 1973, p.756 refers; also '*Sea Breezes*' April, 2000, p.135 which reports her return to the Mersey. Sorry I don't know where she has been in the meantime.

'*Sea Breezes*' December 1973 '*The Mersey Lighthouses*' is an interesting account of the lighthouses and lightships of the Mersey, but I wonder if a chronological list exists, detailing when lightships came on station and when taken off? As an artist interested in historical accuracy for my paintings, I should be pleased if you could help.

From Mr S. Kennedy of Hightown:

I have just received my first copy of '*The Bulletin*' and found it a fascinating read, both in the breadth of subjects and the depth of individual topics.

The article on '*The Loss of the Munster*' in particular caught my eye because of a family story with a World War I connection.

On 10th October 1918, the ss **Leinster** was sunk by a submarine while sailing from Dublin to Holyhead : one hundred and seventy lives were lost.

My mother should have been a passenger but the train from Cork arrived late at Dublin and the **Leinster** sailed without her. She always claimed the lateness was due to the difference between '*God's Time*', which the Irish railways followed, and '*Lloyd George's Time*' which regulated the sailings! My mother was returning from a holiday at home to her work as a nanny to the family of the licensee of a public house on Scotland Road called '*The Munster Arms*'.

Thank you for a splendid magazine.

From Terry Kavanagh of Chester:

THE 'LIVERPOOL SCREW'

Mike Stammers' letter ('*The Bulletin*', Vol.43, No.6, p.49) refers to the iron-hulled steamer **Liverpool Screw**. This 42-ton tug (65ft x 12.5ft beam x 3.75ft mean draft) was built '*on spec*' in 1842 by John Grantham of Mather, Dixon & Co.

Liverpool, for the Mersey & Irwell Co's line of navigation between Manchester and Runcorn ('*Gores Advertiser*', 2nd March 1843). Her 20nhp high-pressure oscillating engine, with steam coming at 56psi from a locomotive-type boiler, was constructed after his patent. It consisted of two diagonal cylinders of 13-in diameter by 18-in stroke, swinging on trunnions, and driving an overhead crankshaft coupled direct to a four-bladed Woodcroft increasing-pitch screw propeller that made 95rpm (Mins. Proc. Inst. Civil Engrs., 3, 1844, p.72). Grantham had offered to build her for the Old Quay Company at a contract price of £1,300, with a proviso that he would take her back if she proved unsatisfactory. And although they implemented the escape clause in February 1843 because she drew too much water, it is quite possible that the **Liverpool Screw** - after further trials and with less ballast - was the steam packet ordered by them from Mather & Co in July of that year. Certainly, as Mike points out, this vessel plied on the Irwell in September 1843.

Two years later, however, the **Liverpool Screw**, renamed the **Clara** (Mins. Proc. Inst. Civil Engrs., 6, 1847, p.284) was running between Gloucester and Chepstow under the ownership of Henry Southan and William Henry Evans, carriers of Gloucester, who operated a fleet of tugs, trows and barges. In the early part of 1846 the **Clara** was lengthened by 20ft, making her 51 tons measurement. Afterwards she usually plied between Gloucester and Bristol - and there are two interesting newspaper reports about her. One dates from February 1847 when her engineer was charged with damaging her engine by jamming a piece of iron in the cylinder. He had also been heard to threaten to blow up the vessel. In December 1849, bound for Gloucester, she was run down by the Carmarthen packet **Phoenix**, inward bound, at the mouth of the Avon. The incident demonstrated that iron construction with watertight bulkheads was superior to wood, for the **Clara**, cut down to the water's edge and with her fore compartment flooded, floated long enough to be towed back to Bristol. A few years later, between 1853-55, the **Clara** relinquished her passenger carrying certificate and went to ply between Dublin and Liverpool as a cargo steamer. She was hulked at Waterford about 1870 (Graham E. Farr, *West Country Passenger Steamers*, London, 1956, pp.154-155.)

from Mrs Cath Davies of Childwall:

THE 'VIKING'

I was particularly interested in the article on the **Viking**, as my great-grandfather, John Fletcher-Kelley, appears in a photograph with a number of other people, which shows a lifebelt bearing the words "Viking - Douglas". I've yet to find out whether they were the crew of the **Viking** or just working on the vessel. One of my grandfather's sisters was a Sylvia Spray Kelley and I've just found a small vessel called 'Sprey' in Peel in the 1881 Census on CDRom. Could be she was named after the ship?! There is supposed to be a connection with Peel and the kipper-curing industry, according to a great uncle who died in 1997. No concrete facts though ! So much to research!

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L.N.R.S. 'BULLETINS' AND 'TRANSACTIONS' CATALOGUED

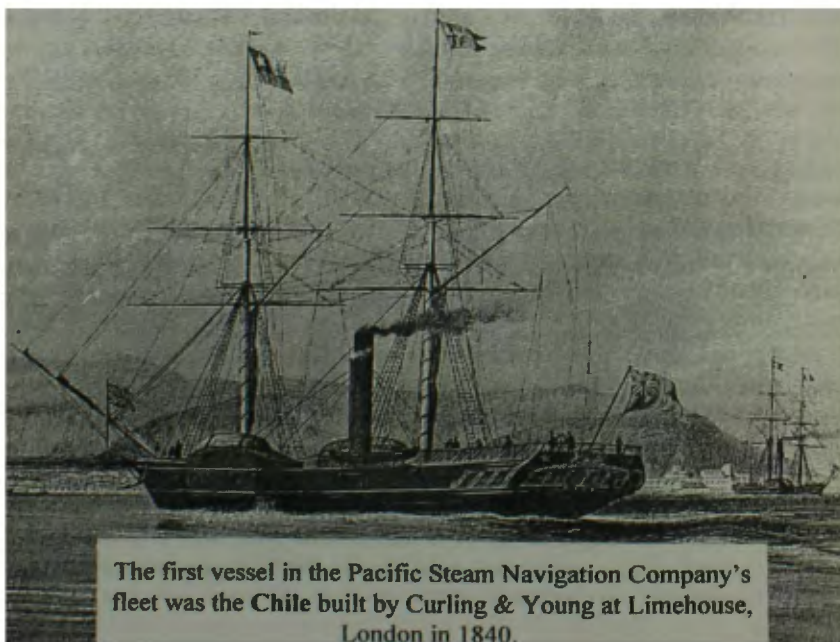
L.N.R.S. Member Gordon Bodey is doing a fine job listing all the 'News, Notes & Queries', 'Bulletin' and 'Transactions' articles which he has access to. A copy of this up-to-date index has been placed in the Archives and Library of the Merseyside Maritime Museum. Some issues of past publications are not available and their contents are not included in the index. The missing publications include:

N.N.Q.-Apr./Jun.1967 / N.N.Q.-Oct./Dec.1968 / N.N.Q.-Jul./Sep.1969 / N.N.Q.-Apr./Jun.1970 / N.N.Q.-July/Sep.1972 / 'Bulletin'-Oct/Dec.1974 / 'Bulletin'-Oct/Dec.1979 / 'Bulletin'-Apr/June,1980 / 'Bulletin'-July/Sep,1984 / 'Bulletin'-Jan. & Sept.,1987 / 'Bulletin'-Spring,1988 / 'Bulletin'-Winter,1988 / Transactions 1949 - 1952 (Vols. V, VI & VII) and any after Vol.X (1961-1971).

INFORMATION WANTED

Rhoda Grieve of the United States has e-mailed the Society and would be grateful for any information about the loss of the **Pennsylvania** in the Rock Channel on the night of 6th-7th January, 1839.

If any readers can assist with these queries, please contact the Editor.



FAST FERRIES - HAS THE 'BUBBLE' BURST ?

by the Editor

Sea Containers has announced that it will be withdrawing the **SuperSeaCat Three** from the Liverpool-Dublin service and the **SuperSeaCat Two** from the Heysham-Belfast service at the beginning of November. The smaller **SeaCat Isle of Man** will be withdrawn from Manx routes at the end of October and the 1976-built **Lady of Mann** will operate the Liverpool-Douglas sailings this winter.

This follows two winters of massive disruption to services due to the fact that the SeaCats are not permitted to operate in wave heights in excess of three metres. In the three months of October, November and December 1998 **SuperSeaCat Two** cancelled 36% of her sailings because of the weather, and in December 1999 on 21 out of 24 consecutive days **SuperSeaCat Three** was unable to put to sea. The ever reliable **Lady of Mann** was brought out to deputise.

It is not just in the Irish Sea that fast craft are having problems. The government of British Columbia is officially bailing out its troubled fast-ferry programme by selling off the vessels and absorbing the huge debt of the B.C. Ferry Corporation. "*The fast-ferry programme was a failed experiment and we now need to move on,*" said Joy MacPhail, the minister in charge. "*The Pacificats will be put up for sale immediately.*"

The three catamaran ferries so far completed are hundreds of millions of dollars over cost and have added half a billion dollars to the ferry corporation's debt. Initially the cost of building the ferries was projected to be \$210 million, but this escalated to \$470 million. The British Columbian government is offering them for sale at \$40 million each and writing off the loss of \$350 million.

The first ferry, the **Explorer**, was launched in July 1999 and entered service on the Vancouver to Nanaimo route. Island residents complained about the huge wash generated by the ferry and said the seats weren't even comfortable. To add insult to injury the ferry broke down frequently and proved to be unreliable.

Last January the British Columbian government was forced to admit that the fast-ferries were providing a much poorer service and immediately replaced one of them with a slower but more dependable conventional ferry.

Meanwhile, across the Pacific, there are similar problems on the Bass Strait between mainland Australia and the island state of Tasmania. The summer-only fast catamaran **Devil Cat** has been losing A\$3million annually since its late 1990s start-up to supplement the conventional ferry on the route, the **Spirit of Tasmania**. Both services are state-subsidized. The **Devil Cat** carried just 32,000 passengers and 12,785 vehicles during the summer just ended in the southern hemisphere, with many Bass Strait crossings being cancelled because of mechanical problems or poor weather. These figures represent a fall of 40% on the previous summer. The Tasmanian head of the Tourist Council of Australia says it is time to axe the cat because it is not giving the travelling public adequate service. *Haven't I heard this somewhere before ? - j.s.*

THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS : SEPTEMBER 2000 - MAY 2001

Thursday, 21st September

GLOBAL MARITIME DISTRESS AND SAFETY SYSTEMS (GMDSS)

Mr W. Williamson

Thursday, 19th October

THE MODERN MASTER

Captain P. Woods

Thursday, 16th November

THE BALTIC LIGHTHOUSES. A VOYAGE FROM KIEL TO
ST PETERSBURG ON ss 'PHILATELY'

Captain R. Flamman

Thursday, 14th December

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SOCIAL AND QUIZ

2001

Thursday, 18th January

A RATHER THIN WHITE LINE. THE HISTORY OF
BROCKLEBANKS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Mr J. Siokoe



Thursday, 15th February

THE LOG OF THE SHIP 'HAROLD'
CONGO VOYAGE, 1869

David Eccles

Thursday, 15th March

WARTIME TURN-ROUND OF SHIPS IN PORT:
LIVERPOOL'S KEY RÔLE

Mr H. Hignett

Thursday, 19th April

A YEAR WITH THE 'CARINTHIA'

John Shepherd

Thursday, 17th May - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

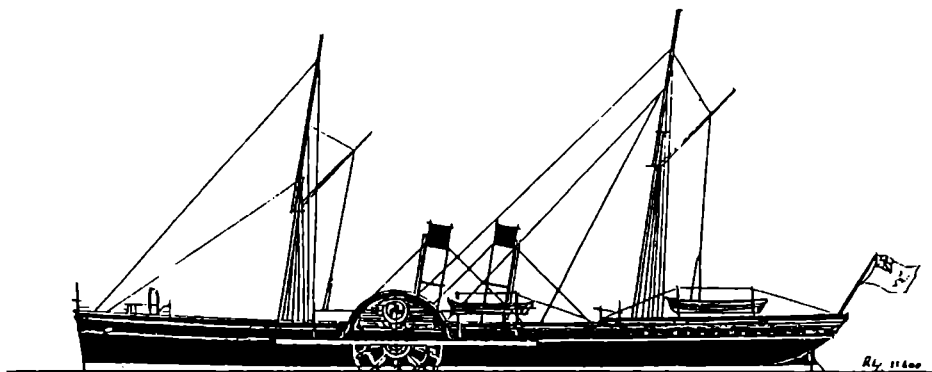
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

THE BULLETIN

Editor : John Shepherd

Volume 44, Number 2, September 2000



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My Time in the Umbria (Captain F.J. Thompson)	page 12
The Rise of Liverpool Shipping during the 19th Century (H.M.Hignett)	page 16
The Stranding of the Ulster Queen at Maughold Head, Isle of Man on 28th February, 1940	page 27
The Anselma de Larrinaga at War	page 30
The Oceanic 'Mutiny' of 1905 (David Eccles)	page 32

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Mr A.S. Davidson

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Albert Dock,
Liverpool, L3 4AA, U.K.

(e-mail: < kingorry@globalnet.co.uk >)

*Front Cover: The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company's **Douglas** (1)
of 1858, from an original drawing by Ron Evans*

Articles for possible inclusion in '*The Bulletin*' are always welcome and should be sent to the Editor at Flat 7, 'Mount Court', Mount Road, Wallasey CH45 9JS.

A good length for an article is about four close-typed A.4 pages.

Experience has shown that the best type of article for '*The Bulletin*' covers a specific ship or specific incident - ambitious articles such as shipping company histories tend to be too long for '*The Bulletin*'.

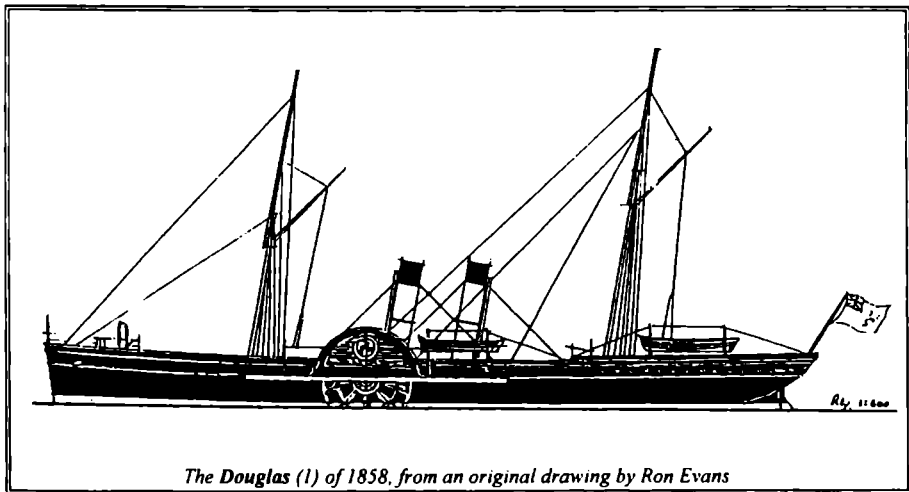
In the interests of accuracy, a draft copy will be sent to the author for proof-reading before the article appears in '*The Bulletin*'. - j.s.

FROM SHORT SEA LINER TO BLOCKADE RUNNER

*A History of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company's Paddle Steamer
'Douglas' (1) of 1858, as the Confederate Blockade Runner 'Margaret and Jessie',
and as the
Union Navy Warship U.S.S. 'Gettysburg'.*

by L.N.R.S. Member Ron Evans

DOUGLAS (1) Official Number: 20683 Signal Letters: H C F T
Iron paddle steamer with side-lever engines
Tonnage: 700 gross. Yard No: 87
Built in 1858 by Robert Napier at Glasgow
Dimensions: Length: 210-0' Breadth: 26-0' Depth: 14-0'
Two side-lever paddle engines, 260nhp : speed 17 knots
Owners: The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company



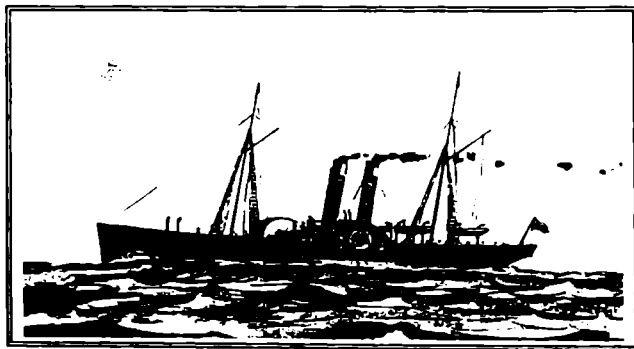
The **Douglas (1)** was a very interesting vessel in the history of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company. The writing of her story, bringing together previously published reports from many sources, with unpublished information and the author's reconstruction of her drawings, makes for a unique overall picture which has not been collated in this detail before.

In the early part of the 1850s passenger traffic between the mainland and the Isle of Man was increasing, assisted by the opening of the Prince's Landing Stage in Liverpool on 1st September 1851. The Company, which had only four paddle steamers

at the beginning of 1858, decided that a larger and faster steamer was required. An order was placed with Robert Napier for the new vessel, with the **King Orry (1)** being taken in part payment. Robert Napier had built and provided engines for two previous vessels, the **Ben-my-Chree (1)** of 1845 and the **Tynwald (1)** of 1846, and had provided engines only for the **King Orry (1)** of 1842.

THE STEAM PACKET FLEET IN 1858						
Fleet List	Name	Type	Launch	Age	Gross Tonnage	Speed Knots
04	<i>King Orry (1)</i>	Wood/P.S.	10.02.1842	16	433	9.5
05	<i>Ben-my-Chree (1)</i>	Iron/P.S.	03.05.1845	13	399(458reg.)	9.5
06	<i>Tynwald (1)</i>	Iron/P.S.	28.04.1846	12	700	14
07	<i>Mona's Queen (1)</i>	Iron/P.S.	27.11.1852	7	600	13

The **Douglas (1)** was the eighth vessel in the fleet and was the first paddle steamer to have a straight stem, instead of the clipper or fiddle bow and figurehead of her predecessors. In other respects also she marked a change of design and appearance, being constructed with two masts and funnels rather than the single funnel aft of the paddle boxes more usually associated with paddle steamers with single lever engines. She was the first two-funnelled vessel in the fleet and from a reconstruction and perspective analysis of the painting in the Manx Museum and a drawing by John Nicholson, both funnels seem to have been positioned aft of the paddle shaft but either side of the after sponson beam.



The Douglas (1) from a drawing by John Nicholson.

The **Douglas (1)** had a ratio of beam to length much less than her predecessors as illustrated in the following table, resulting in one of the fastest paddle steamers of her day. It was reported that slightly over 17 knots had been achieved on trials and the passage between Liverpool and Douglas was brought down to 4 hours 20 minutes.

Fleet List	Name	Built	Gross Tons	Length BP (feet)	Breadth B (feet)	Ratio B/L	NHP	Speed Knots
04	<i>King Orry (1)</i>	1842	433	140.0	23.3	0.17	180	9.5
05	<i>Ben-my-Chree (1)</i>	1845	399/458	151.9	23.0	0.15	140	9.5
06	<i>Tynwald (1)</i>	1846	700	188.0	27.0	0.14	280	14
07	<i>Mona's Queen (1)</i>	1852	600	186.0	27.0	0.14	220	13
08	<i>Douglas (1)</i>	1858	700	205.0	26.0	0.12	260	17

The **Douglas (1)** was the last Company vessel to have side-lever engines and marked the transition from side lever engines to oscillating engines. The **Mona's Isle (2)** was the first vessel in the fleet to have oscillating engines as described by the author in L.N.R.S. *Bulletin* Vol.43, No.4.

Robert Napier's original quotation in the amount of £7,653.14s.0d as included in the total cost of the vessel detailed in the attached particulars, was in fact for oscillating engines of 245 nhp. No reason can be found as to why side lever engines were installed. Perhaps the design with two funnels was a result of a proposal for oscillating engines. Certainly the **Tynwald (2)** of 1866 was one of three vessels driven by two-cylinder oscillating engines of 240 nhp., abandoning the original Napier side-lever design. The **Tynwald (2)** also had two funnels aft of the paddle boxes but these seemed to be further aft, well clear of the sponson and paddle box supports.

Boiler pressures were of course increasing during this time and boilers were becoming more efficient requiring more draught, before the development of forced draught in later vessels, and this may have accounted for the finalisation of the design with two funnels.

The **Douglas (1)** was reported in the Manx press as being handsomely fitted out. The main cabin or saloon aft had paintings of Peel Castle and Cathedral, Bishop's Court, the Cathedral on Iona, Kirk Braddan, Douglas Town and Bay, and various views of Castletown, Ramsey and Liverpool.

A brass rail was fitted round the hull which was retained throughout her life.

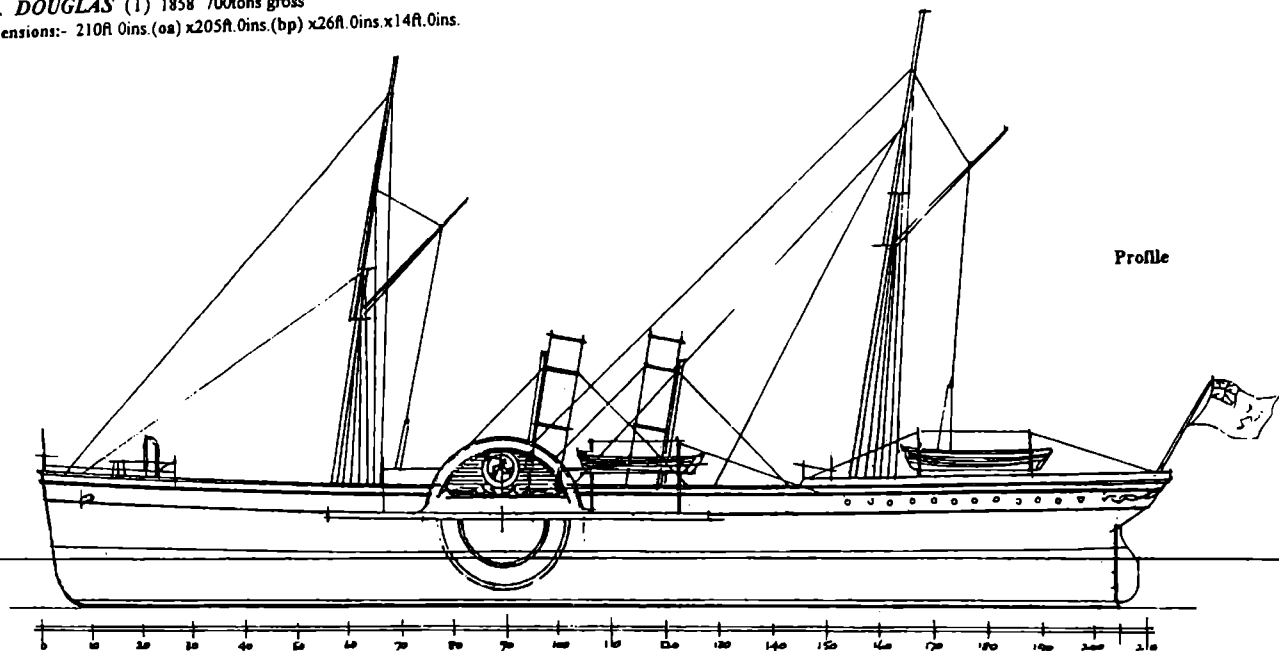
Robert Napier & Sons' Govan drawing office register of vessels built between 1843-1925 includes the following details of vessels built for the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company:-

Yard no.	Name	Type	Length	Breadth	Depth	Gross	HP	Launch
13	<i>Ben-my-Chree</i>	P.S.	150.0	21.0	13.0	343	80	03.05.1845
19	<i>Tynwald</i>	P.S.	180.0	26.0	16.6	591	240	28.04.1846
87	<i>Douglas</i>	P.S.	210.0	26.0	14.0	751	250	28.04.1858

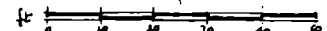
It is not unusual for some discrepancy to occur between shipbuilders' yard details and final details.

P.S. DOUGLAS (1) 1858 700tons gross
 Dimensions:- 210ft. 0ins.(oa) x205ft. 0ins.(bp) x26ft. 0ins. x14ft. 0ins.

Profile



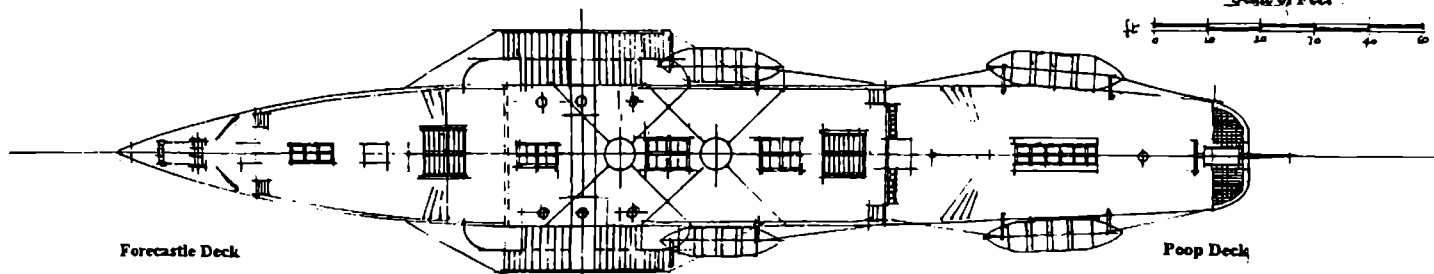
Scale of Feet



Forecastle Deck

Main Deck

Poop Deck



DRG No:- 08/98
 Drawn by: J. J. C.

FROM SHORT SEA LINER TO BLOCKADE RUNNER

FROM SHORT SEA LINER TO BLOCKADE RUNNER



Fleet List Ref: 08. **Name:** *DOUGLAS* (1)
Type: Iron paddle steamer, side lever.
Official No: 20683. **Signal Letters:** HCFT.
Builders: Robert Napier, Glasgow.
Launched: 28.04.1858. **Yard No:** 87.
Tonnage: 700 tons gross. **Cost:** £22,500. (less £5,000 allowed for *King Orry* (1).
Dimensions: **Loa:** 210ft.0ins. **Lbp:** 205ft.0ins. **B:** 26ft.0ins. **D:** 14ft.0ins.
Machinery: 2/side lever paddle engines, 260nhp. 17kts.

History: Whilst in the ownership of the Company collided with the brig *Dido*. Damages £400 awarded against the Company.

Attained 17.25kts. on trials and then crossed from Liverpool to Douglas in 4hrs 20mins.

1862: Sold to Confederate Agents, Fraser Trenholm & Co. for £24,000. Painted grey and renamed the *Margaret and Jessie*. and used as a blockade runner in the American Civil War.

1863 June 1: Driven ashore near Nassau by a Union gunboat, U.S.S. *Rhode Island*.

1863 Nov 5: Captured as a blockade runner by Union forces and bought by the Navy from the New York Prize Court.

1864 May 2: Commissioned into the Union Navy as the U.S.S. *Getsy Shore*. Forward funnel removed.

1879 May 6: Decommissioned and sold two days later for breaking up at Naples.

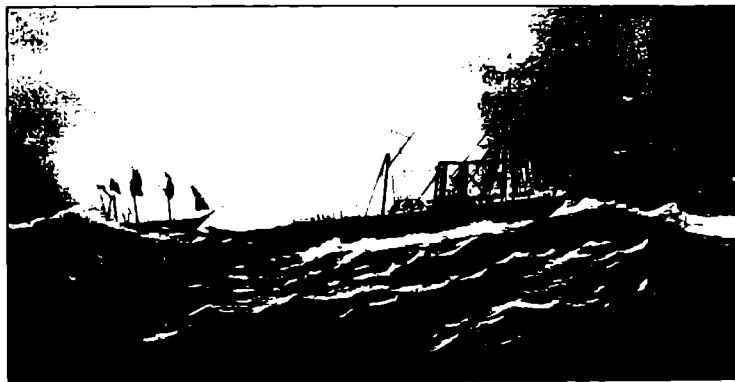
Model Notes: The first IOMSP steamer with a straight stem, and the first with two funnels. The main cabin was reported to be superb with fine illustrations of Manx views.

Further Particulars: Detailed breakdown of cost from Robert Napier's records:-

Cost of hull including 7.5%	£6615.14.9	
Ironwork including 12.5%	£1169.07.0	
Fitting out.	£3184.15.0	£10,970 Rate per ton B.M.=£15.45
Engines.	£7653.14.0	
Boilers.	£3480.07.4	£11,134. Total building cost £22,500.

Plans: Reconstructed by the author from paintings and photographs, courtesy of the Manx Museum.

Photographs: Courtesy of the Manx Museum.



The '**MARGARET AND JESSIE**' (ex '**Douglas**' 1)

With the outbreak of Civil War in 1861 between the Confederate States and the Union the supply of cotton to Liverpool merchants was greatly reduced.

With cotton at four pence per pound in Wilmington and two shillings per pound in England, blockade running became an opportunity not to be missed. A plan of transshipment was adopted and two vessels were employed specially fitted out for its particular service.

One vessel was required for the long ocean passages from Liverpool to Nassau, Bermuda or Havana and the other for the short passage to a blockaded but illegal port. Bases were set up in Nassau, Bermuda and Havana with coaling facilities, warehouses for goods and offices for gathering intelligence. British and other neutral ships sailed first to these ports, then the blockade runners carried their cargoes the last few hundred miles to a confederate port, frequently to Wilmington, N.C., or Charleston, S.C.

By using the neutral distribution ports of Nassau, Bermuda and Havana, much shorter distances were involved and blockade runners could carry more cargo instead of the large quantities of coal required to cross the Atlantic. The inward cargoes consisted of all kinds of manufactured goods including munitions of war, and the sale of these brought in from five hundred to one thousand per cent profits.

The return cargo was always cotton and the steam presses at Wilmington or Charleston could reduce it to the smallest possible bulk.

With an increasing demand for fast vessels, the Agents for the Confederate States, Fraser Trenholm & Company, purchased the **Douglas** (1) in November 1862 for £24,000, through Cunard, Wilson & Company. Sailing at first under the name **Douglas**, she was bought by the Charleston Import and Export Company and renamed **Margaret and Jessie**. As a blockade runner she remained virtually unchanged from her days as the **Douglas**, except that she was painted grey and her funnels black or yellow.

The Liverpool firm of Fraser, Trenholm & Company was a branch of the Charleston House of John Fraser & Company, the head of which, George Alfred Trenholm, was for some time the Confederate Secretary of the Treasury. The Liverpool house was the authorised depository of Confederate funds in Europe.

There were many other agents: James Carlin of Carrickfergus was the British Agent of the Importing and Exporting Company of South Carolina and was a close associate of Peter Denny of Denny Bros., shipbuilders of Dumbarton.

Many ships were built by Denny Bros. as blockade-runners, including the paddle steamers **Ella** and **Caroline** of 1864 which were similar to the **Margaret and Jessie**, except that they had oscillating engines by R. Napier & Sons and two funnels in a normal profile fore and aft of the paddle boxes. A web of agents was created which was very well able to provide many vessels as blockade-runners. Between two hundred

and two hundred and fifty ships were engaged during the war in running the blockade from Charleston and Georgetown, S.C., Wilmington, N.C., and Galveston, Texas.

Captain Robert Lockwood was one of Charleston's most successful blockade-running captains. He commanded the **Margaret and Jessie** on several successful runs until her capture off Wilmington. Exchanged, he proceeded to England, and it was there that he was supervising the construction of the last class of blockade-runners when the war ended.

Whenever a blockade-runner was hard pressed by the blockading squadron it was common practice for the captain to run the vessel ashore, trusting to favourable conditions to save some of the cargo. The beach at Nassau would have been most suitable as it offered the safety of the British flag.

Early in 1863 John Fraser and Company assembled several runners at Nassau including the **Margaret and Jessie** which had just been purchased and which had become one of the finest vessels to be used in the trade. She made four voyages to Charleston under Captain William Wilson, and a famous pilot associated with the **Margaret and Jessie's** voyages to Wilmington was Charles W. Craig.

On 1st June 1863, the **Margaret and Jessie**, under Captain Wilson, was intercepted off Abaco Island, Bahamas, by the Federal gun boat **Rhode Island**. She was fired upon and received a shot through the boiler and another through the bows and was driven ashore at Jennes Point on the island of Eleuthra.

Some records maintain that after being driven ashore and escaping to Nassau, she took no further part as a blockade-runner in the American Civil War, and that her engines were reported to be seen rusting on a Nassau beach as late as July 1926. In fact the **Margaret and Jessie** continued to run the blockade and she completed eighteen voyages in all before being captured as a blockade-runner on 5th November 1863 by the **Fulton**, **Keystone State** and **Nansemond**, off Wilmington, N.C. and taken as a prize to New York.

U.S.S. 'GETTYSBURG' (ex 'Douglas', ex 'Margaret and Jessie')

(Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships)

The **Margaret and Jessie** was purchased from the New York Prize Court by the Navy for \$90,000 and commissioned as the **Gettysburg** at New York Navy Yard on 2nd May 1864, Lieutenant Roswell H. Lamson commanding.

She was modernised and refitted at Philadelphia, lengthened by 16 feet and had one funnel removed. She was armed with one 30-pdr. Parrott, two 12-pdr., rifled, and four 24-pdr howitzers.

A fast, strong paddle steamer, the **Gettysburg** was assigned to blockading duty with the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron and departed from New York on 7th May 1864. She arrived at Beaufort, N.C. on 14th May and from there took station at the entrance to the Cape Fear River.

U.S.S. GETTYSBURG (ex Margaret and Jessie ex Douglas I) 1858.

Particulars after modification as U.S.S. Gettysburg 1864 950tons gross.

Dimensions:- 226ft.0ins. (oa)x 221ft.0ins.(bp)x26ft.3ins.x13ft.6ins.

Flags for Shipyarders:

United States of America: Union Navy 1863-1890

The development of the flag over the career of the U.S.S. Gettysburg was as follows:

13 stripes (7 red, 6 white) standardized in 1818.

1863: 35 white stars on blue field (5 rows of 7).

1865: 36 (8.6.8.6.8.).

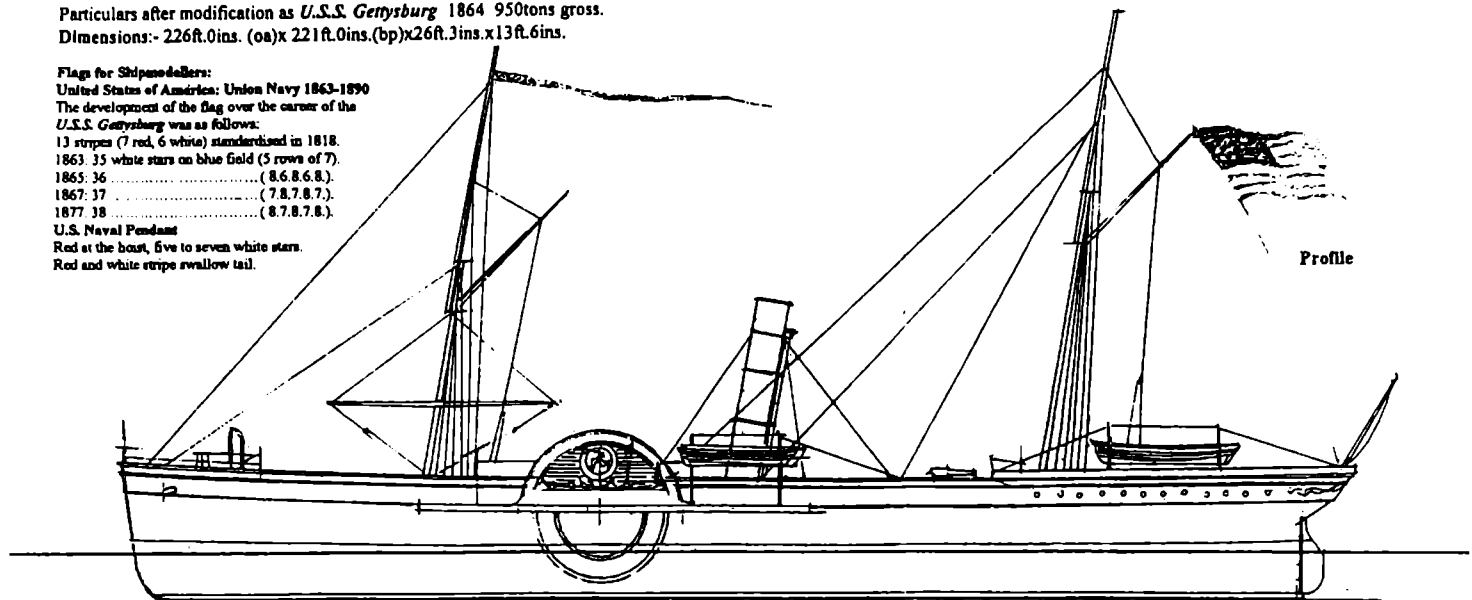
1867: 37 (7.8.7.8.7.).

1877: 38 (8.7.8.7.8.).

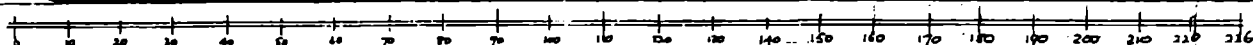
U.S. Naval Pendant

Red at the hoist, five to seven white stars.

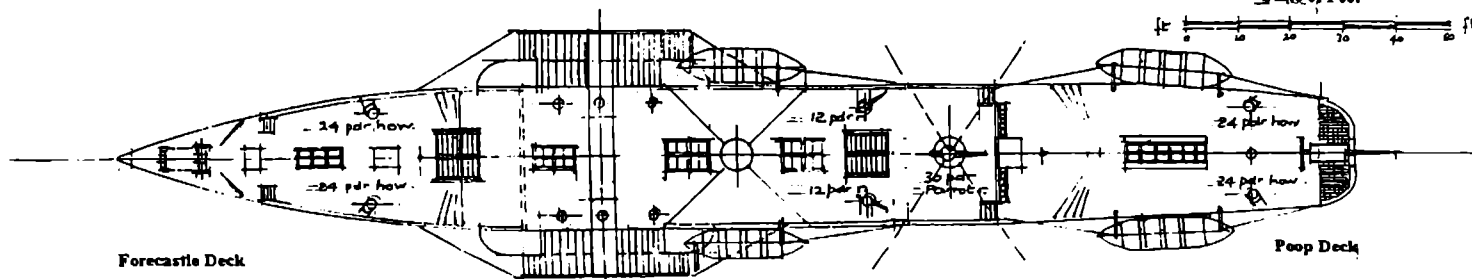
Red and white stripes swallow tail.



Profile



Scale of Feet



Forecabin Deck

Main Deck

Poop Deck

DRG No:- 08/2/98
Drawn by:- R. Evans

FROM SHORT SEA LINER TO BLOCKADE RUNNER

FROM SHORT SEA LINER TO BLOCKADE RUNNER



Name: *U.S.S. GETTYSBURG (ex Douglas (1) ex Margaret and Jessie)*

Type: Iron paddle steamer, side lever.

Builders: Robert Napier, Glasgow. **Launched:** 28.04.1858. **Yard No:** 87.

Built as *Douglas (1)* for the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company.

1862: Sold to Confederate Agents, Fraser Trenholm & Co. renamed *Margaret and Jessie*, captured as a blockade-runner by *Fulton* and units of the Federal Navy off Wilmington N.C. 05.11.1863.

Modified: Commissioned into the Federal Navy as the *U.S.S. Gettysburg* 02.05.1864. Forward funnel removed, vessel lengthened by 16feet.

Particulars after modification:-

Tonnage: 950 tons gross.

Cost: \$90,000 from the New York Prize Court.

Dimensions: **Loa:** 226ft.0ins. **Lbp:** 221ft.0ins. **B:** 26ft.3ins. **D:** 13ft.6ins.

Machinery: 2/side lever paddle engines, 260nhp. 15kts., new boilers and engine modifications.

Armament: 1 30-pdr. Parrott, rifled., 2 12-pdr., rifled, 4 24-pdr., howitzers.

History: As the *U.S.S. Gettysburg* (Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships).

1864-1865: North Atlantic Blockading Squadron Union Navy.

1864 Dec 24-25: First attack on Fort Fisher.

1865 Jan 15: Second attack on Fort Fisher.

1866-1869: Cruises to the Caribbean, surveying duties and courtesy visits to the islands and ports.

1869-1873: New York Navy Yard, refit and repairs. Laid up in ordinary.

1873-1875: Transport for Navy Yards on the Atlantic Coast and survey duties, Panama and Nicaragua.

1875-1876: Assisted in Hydrographic Office expeditions to the Caribbean, charting the West Indies.

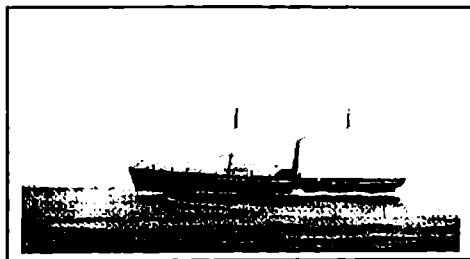
1876-1879: Special duties in the Mediterranean, charting the coasts and islands of the area including the southern coast of France, the entire coastline of Italy, and the Adriatic Islands. Continued to the coast of Turkey, and made soundings on the coast of Egypt, North Africa, Sicily and Sardinia.

1879 May 6: Decommissioned and sold two days later for breaking up in Naples.

Model Notes: Modifications as the *U.S.S. Gettysburg*, a perspective analysis of the lithograph and original painting as *Douglas I*, suggest the forward funnel was removed, the after funnel was retained in the existing position but increased in height by about 10feet. This would have been consistent with providing improved draught to new boilers. The increase in length of 16feet seems to have taken place between the boiler room and main saloon. This extra space could have provided ammunition storage and a strengthened deck support for the 30-pdr Parrott rifled gun. Other 12-pdr rifled guns and 24-pdr howitzers could have been positioned as suggested on the drawings to provide a clear arc of fire.

Plans: Reconstructed by the author from paintings and lithograph, courtesy of the Marx Museum and Peabody Museum, Salem, Mass.

Lithograph: Courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Salem, Mass.



For the next seven months the **Gettysburg** was engaged in the vital business of capturing blockade-runners carrying supplies to the strangling South. She captured several ships and occasionally performed other duties. On 8th October, for instance, she rescued six survivors from the schooner **Horne** which had capsized in a squall.

The **Gettysburg** took part in the attack on Fort Fisher between 24th-26th December 1864 and assisted with the devastating bombardment prior to landing troops, and during the actual landings she stood in close to shore to furnish cover for the assault. The **Gettysburg's** boats were used to help transport troops to the beaches. With the failure of the first attack on the Confederate fortress, a second attack on Fort Fisher was carried out, under the command of Rear Admiral D.D. Porter, on 15th January 1865 with 48 ships of the Union Navy deployed within a three mile radius of the fort. The **Gettysburg** was in the 2nd Division of the Reserve Fleet on the perimeter of the Fleet, together with the **Eolus** and the **Moccasin**. All were used as occasion required in landing troops, covering the landing and carrying dispatches.

Lieutenant Lamson commanding the **Gettysburg** and a group of officers from the **Wilderness** towed the powder-boat **Louisiana** to the beach, close to the walls of the fortress, in preparation for the attack. Although failing to take the sea face of Fort Fisher, the attack by the Navy diverted enough defenders to make the Army assault successful and to ensure victory. The **Gettysburg** suffered two men killed and six wounded in the assault.

The **Gettysburg** spent the remaining months of the war on blockade duty off Wilmington and with the **Boston**, **Detroit** and **Keystone State** captured the blockade-runner **Lilian** (Captain Martin). The **Gettysburg** decommissioned on 23rd June 1865 at the New York Navy Yard.

The **Gettysburg** went back into commission on 3rd December 1866 for a short cruise to the Caribbean, returning to Washington on 18th February, where she was decommissioned again on 1st March 1867. She was again commissioned on 3rd March 1868 at Norfolk and put to sea on 28th March on special service in the Caribbean. Until July 1868 she visited various ports in the area protecting American interests, among them Kingston, Jamaica; Havana, Cuba and ports in Haiti. Between 3rd July and 13th August 1868 the **Gettysburg** assisted in the laying of the telegraph cable from Key West to Havana, and determined the longitude of West Indian points using the electric telegraph.

After decommissioning at New York Navy Yard on 8th October 1869, the **Gettysburg** was repaired and then laid up until re-commissioning at Washington Navy Yard on 6th November 1873. She then spent several months transporting men and supplies to the various Navy Yards on the Atlantic coast, and on 25th February 1874 anchored in Pensacola harbour to embark a survey team to seek routes for the inter-oceanic canal across Nicaragua. The **Gettysburg** transported the engineers to Aspinwall, Panama and Greystone, Nicaragua and returned them to Norfolk on 10th May 1874. After several more voyages along the Atlantic coast with passengers and supplies, the ship was decommissioned on 9th April 1875 at Washington Navy Yard.

Recommissioned on 21st September 1875, the **Gettysburg** left Washington for Norfolk where she arrived on 14th October. She was assigned to assist with important hydrographic office expeditions in the Caribbean and she left Norfolk on 7th November. During the next few months she contributed markedly to safe navigation in the West Indies by taking part in surveys which led to precise charts. She returned to Washington with a scientific team on 14th June and decommissioned on 26th June.

The **Gettysburg** next re-commissioned on 20th September 1878 and left Norfolk for Europe on 17th October. During the next two years she visited almost every port in the Mediterranean, taking soundings and making observations on the southern coast of France, the entire coastline of Italy, and the Adriatic islands. She continued to the coast of Turkey and took soundings off the coasts of Egypt, North Africa, Sicily and Sardinia. When visiting Genoa on 22nd April 1879, the **Gettysburg** rescued the crew of a small vessel which had run on the rocks outside the breakwater.

The **Gettysburg's** iron plates had corroded after 21 years of almost uninterrupted service and her machinery had weakened. She was finally decommissioned on 6th May 1879 and was sold two days later for breaking up in Naples after a career of action packed history.

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Charleston's Maritime Heritage 1670-1875 - P.C. Coker

Blockade Running during the Civil War - Francis B.C. Bradlee

Blockade Runners of the Confederacy - Hamilton Cochran

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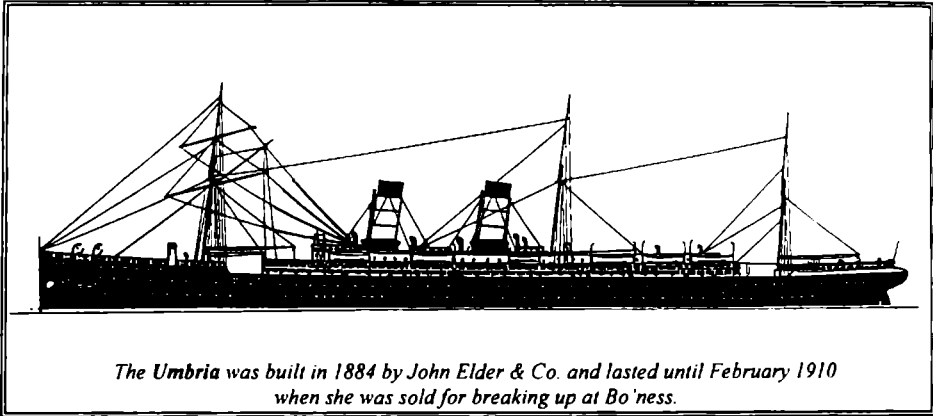
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MY TIME IN THE 'UMBRIA'

by Captain F.J. Thompson, OBE, RD, RNR.

*This year marks two significant Cunard anniversaries. One hundred and sixty years ago on 4th July 1840 the **Britannia** left Liverpool for Halifax on her maiden voyage, inaugurating the first trans-Atlantic mail service. Seventy years ago, on 27th December 1930, the keel of the **Queen Mary** was laid. In this article, Captain Thompson recalls the time he spent in the **Umbria**.*



The Extra-Master's Examination was my first objective, and after intensive study at Cleaver's Nautical School, I successfully passed it. This was followed by some R.N.R. drill at HMS **Eaglet** at Liverpool. I then sought another interview with the Cunard Company. This time I met the newly appointed marine superintendent (the late Captain G.H. Dodd) and in due course I was appointed fourth officer of the **Umbria** on the Liverpool - New York run.

At this time (1904) all the mail ships carried six officers - chief, first, two seconds, third and fourth, so that the fourth was really sixth. The three seniors kept three watches, the extra second (mail officer) was on duty all day, and the third and fourth kept watch and watch. In the winter on the North Atlantic, watch and watch was no joke; all the ships had open bridges and in the case of the **Umbria** and the **Etruria** the bridge had brass rails which carried canvas screens on sailing days. As they were driven very hard, these liners were submersible when heading into a westerly gale and covered in spray from bow to stern and over the tops of the funnels. Coming off watch it usually took me over fifteen minutes to rid myself of oilskins and sea-boots and to thaw out; I got little more than three hours' sleep in my watch below.

Captain Thomas Stephens was master, a grand old seaman who had been in command of clipper ships before joining the Cunard. He was, however, a confirmed pessimist and known to all in an affectionate way as '**Dismal Jimmy**'. In serving with him as bridge officer I learned a great deal about ship handling for he knocked the

Umbria about like a picket boat. She was a single-screw ship of 8,128 tons with compound engines, revolving at 63 revolutions per minute, and she had the largest propeller of her time. When going into a head sea the engines would race badly, and the engineer on watch was constantly at the throttle to nurse the engine and shaft.

Captain Stephens was in command of the **Etruria** when she fractured her tail-end shaft in heavy weather and was towed to Fayal in the Azores. After anchoring, a launch came out to take the captain ashore, and as it moved away from the **Etruria's** side, the propeller came off and could be seen spinning around in the clear water as it sank!

Fortunately, promotion in Cunard was fairly rapid at this time and after making four voyages as fourth officer I was promoted to third, and a further six voyages and a lay-up in the **Umbria** found me as extra-second officer, clear of the drudgery of junior officer. The majority of officers in the Cunard ships held commissions in the R.N.R. The rank of Lieutenant was the highest attainable at that time and several experienced liner captains, particularly in the White Star Line, were lieutenants, R.N.R. The officers with whom I served were a pleasant crowd and included Edgar T. Britten who became the first captain of the **Queen Mary**, and Robert Irvine who succeeded him in that ship. We made good friends in New York and in spite of the tough going in the winter months, the Western Ocean was a fine service to be in; three weeks away and one week in a home port.

One one occasion during my service as a junior officer in the **Umbria** I was walking aft along the saloon deck and noticed a familiar stocky figure on the second cabin portion of the deck. I asked the assistant purser who looked after the second cabin if there was a Captain Elliot on board. He looked through his list and said there was a Mr Elliot, a D.B.S. (distressed British seaman), who was being sent home from San Francisco as a steerage passenger; the captain had ordered him to be transferred to second cabin. This was in the days before live-wire officers' protection societies. Next day, seeing him on deck, I hailed "*Captain Elliot*" and he at once turned round. He remembered me as a first voyage apprentice in the **Santiago** and we adjourned to my cabin where he told me his story. After the **Santiago** had been sold he was out of a job for some time - he could only get second-mate in steam - but eventually he went away as first mate in sail for one voyage and then he took command again. His ship was again sold and following a further period of unemployment he accepted a job as chief mate of a four-masted barque bound for San Francisco. On the voyage he broke his leg and was put into hospital in San Francisco from where he was sent home by the consul as a D.B.S.

In port the **Umbria's** junior officers kept 24-hours on and 24-hours off, the other officers coming down from 9.am to 5.pm each day except for one day off. No meals were served on board and there was no electric light - except for the night before sailing.

Many stories could be told about Captain Stephens illustrating his character. One experience I recall was racing up the Irish Sea from Queenstown for Liverpool; it was a close call if we could do it and reach the Landing Stage before 9pm. Watches on

the bridge were kept by the senior officer, weather side, and junior officer, lee side; they were not supposed to yarn. Captain Stephens was in the habit of coming over to talk to the junior officer and on this occasion he spoke to me. *"Do you think the little ship will do it, Thompson? I'd like to see her catch the tide so that the poor firemen can get home to their wives."* Passengers and mails were evidently a secondary consideration.

However, we raced up on a 32-ft flood tide in the Mersey and instead of rounding off the Rock Light and dropping up-river, we carried on until Egremont and then began to swing. The captain and the pilot (who had boarded at Quenstown) had previously ascertained from the Cunard tender **Skirmisher**, which had our tow rope, that the river was clear of ships at anchor. The **Umbria** drifted up broadside in the act of turning and was nearly abreast of Laird's shipyard before heading down river. As we drew abreast of the stage where the **Celtic** was lying, one or two of her ropes carried away like pistol shots and we were ordered by a stentorian voice with a megaphone to *'go off to an anchor'*.

The **Umbria's** chief officer, 'Mac', was another great character and a prime seaman who had been first officer in the Inman liner **City of Paris** when that company was taken over by American interests. The officers were given the option of remaining if they became American citizens but 'Mac' refused to do this and consequently was compelled to resign. He then went away in a cargo liner to India as chief officer, but the lure of the Western Ocean was too great and he joined Cunard, starting at the bottom as everyone did. On account of this, when I first reported to him in the **Umbria**, he was older than the average chief officer. His one weakness was the Scotsman's taste for the dram - a taste which, unfortunately, was most pronounced on sailing days.

When 'Mac' was serving in the **Campania**, having been promoted from the **Umbria**, the ship had come out of dock and anchored in the Mersey before going alongside the landing stage. The chief officer went to the fo'c'sle head with his men to heave up the anchor. Right in the eyes of the ship was a small triangular platform known as the 'pulpit', with a low rail on each side. It was used by the chief officer when heaving up anchor or going alongside as it gave him a clear view on both bows. On this occasion 'Mac' was standing in the pulpit and looking over the side as the cable shackles came in. Unfortunately he overbalanced and fell head first into the Mersey. This was seen from the bridge and the seaboard called away, the men on the fo'c'sle dashing to man the boat, leaving the carpenter on the fo'c'sle head. A Wallasey ferry was close and launched a small boat. The attention of everyone was attracted to the launching of these boats and to 'Mac's' expected appearance in the water. Before many seconds had passed, however, the carpenter was astonished to see 'Mac' climb over the rail above the hawse pipe, dripping wet (like Neptune coming aboard when crossing the 'Line') and shouting: *"Heave away, damn it! Heave away!"* He had come to the surface, reached for the cable, and climbed up until he could grasp the rope hanging over the side for the purpose of canting the fluke of the anchor if necessary.

The cause of the accident was obvious to those who knew 'Mac', but an investigation was called for. After heaving up the anchor he went to his cabin and changed. On arrival at the landing stage a party made up of one of the directors, the general manager and the marine superintendent came on board as was customary. The captain reported what had happened and the director asked to see the scene of the accident. After inspecting the platform, both he and the general manager agreed that it was 'a very dangerous position from which anyone might fall overboard.' 'Mac's' reputation was clear!

To return to the **Umbria**, it was after Captain Stephens had retired that we were on one occasion making the Fastnet in thick misty weather. The new master had eased down, kept the sounding machine going regularly and hauled to the southward to be on the safe side. After judging by the line of soundings and by dead reckoning that we had passed the Fastnet, course was set for the Old Head of Kinsale. It was about 6.am and the chief officer was on the bridge with the captain when a stentorian voice was heard from above. Looking up from the wing of the bridge, they saw a man with a megaphone shouting from the gallery of the Fastnet lighthouse!

The chief officer told me about this incident when I went to relieve him. He then left the bridge and while walking along the boat deck saw a passenger taking an early 'constitutional'. The passenger hailed him: "*Say, officer, was that the Fastnet lighthouse, the place we've been making for ?*" When the chief officer agreed the passenger could only express his admiration at what he termed 'a wonderful piece of navigation!'

It was after I had served for some 15 months in the **Umbria** that I applied for leave to do my training in the Royal Navy. This was in due course approved. |||||

This article originally appeared in "Sea Breezes", August 1960, and is reproduced by kind permission of the editor, Captain Andrew Douglas.

THE WORLD SHIP SOCIETY (MERSEYSIDE BRANCH)

PROGRAMME FOR 2000/2001 SEASON

The Meetings are held at SAM'S BAR Function Room, corner of Old Hall Street and Tithebarn Street, adjacent to Moorfields Station and commence at 19.00hrs.

12.September	CAMELL LAIRD (Part 5: 1967-1993)	John Taylor
10.October	MARITIME MERSEYSIDE	Bert Novelli
14.November	FERRIES AROUND DENMARK	Bill Mayes
12.December	CAMELL LAIRD (Part 6: The Camel Returns - Full Circle)	
9.January, 2001	SHIPPING ON THE NEW WATERWAY	Les Hodder
13.February	THETIS - A Submarine Accident	Gerry Dooley
13.March	TILBURY SHIPPING SCENE	Ian Wells
10.April	A LIFETIME OF SHIPS (Part 1: 1960s-2000)	Ron Baker
8.May	A VIDEO NIGHT	Graham Cooke
12.June	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Followed by Members' Slides	

THE RISE OF LIVERPOOL SHIPPING DURING THE 19th CENTURY

by H.M. Hignett

Ralph C. Davis in his book *The Rise of English Shipping in the 17th/18th Centuries* measures the efficiency of English vessels against those of other countries. He found that Dutch shipping carried 10 tons per crew/man, whereas the English vessels managed only a mere 8 tons per crew/man, taking for his data the tonnages of ships involved in litigation. However I recall reading that in the mid 1920s, when the large transatlantic passenger vessels were converted to oil-burning, the crews were reduced by as many as 240 men! I then became convinced that a tons/man comparative measure could be a worth-while study. The Customs Bills of Entry offered the best (and easiest) source of data. Every vessel entering the Mersey was listed with the name of the master, net tonnage, cargo and number of crew, together with the port of origin and port of registration or nationality. Studying the data available I found that using the earliest decade year that would carry through for nearly a century was 1827 and crew numbers were not given. Listing the number of crew did not appear until about 1830. The format of research had to be modified.

The data should have run from 1827 to 1927 but World War I substantially distorted the figures, so the study ends with 1907. The material used here applies only to Liverpool ships entering the Mersey. All other registries, British or foreign, have been ignored: the first entry into the port for the respective years is the only one used and any subsequent entry has been ignored. The aims therefore were modified to note the effect the development of Liverpool shipping had on the trades and the people who sailed on the vessels.

THE DEVELOPMENT of the importance of Liverpool can be said to have its origins in the 17th century. Before that Liverpool's importance, based on its trade, was not great compared to London, Bristol, Hull etc. In fact politico-geographic events and situations brought major maritime commerce to the Mersey. Although Liverpool as a port is noted as early as 1150, and by 1565 twelve vessels were listed at Liverpool (one of 100 tons; others from 20 to 40 tons), there were other factors bringing a greater amount of shipping into the Mersey such as conflict, hostilities and war.

After the Spanish Armada of 1588, the Netherlands gradually gained considerable freedom from Spain and began an expansion of its maritime commerce intruding into customary English trading areas. English maritime merchants did not welcome the competition. One reaction to such enterprise was a restriction on trade by aliens to English ports. As early as 1496 the Pilots at Dover issued threats against Dutchmen and others who plied for pilotage off the port. The First Dutch War in the mid 1600s brought about the Navigation Acts passed by Cromwell's Parliament which decreed that all cargoes passing in or out of English ports must be carried by English ships or a ship of the country of origin or destination. This First Dutch War drove some shipping away from the Channel as did the Second and Third Dutch Wars

between 1655 and 1678. The Humber and the Bristol Channel seem to have benefited most, but the Mersey also acquired extra trade.

A major disaster occurred in London in 1665 - the serious and widespread outbreak of the 'Black Death' which resulted in the deaths of some 70,000 people living in and around the capital. The outflow of people included commercial and government interests. Then, if that was not enough, in the following year the Great Fire of London seriously damaged trade and commerce. Furthermore, a year later a hostile Dutch fleet sailed up the Medway causing consternation in the London shipping community. Liverpool gained a significant amount of London maritime commerce and a decade later the Mersey was used to ship troops to Londonderry during the uprising against William of Orange. Bryan Blundell noted in his journal that his ship carried troops to Londonderry and had them on board for two months whilst lying at anchor off the town.

In 1710 Queen Anne's War with France drove British shipping from the Channel and the approaches to the Bristol and St. George's Channels. A fleet commanded by Admiral du Cass was active in the area and traffic from North America sailed around the Northern Irish coast and made for the nearest (and safest) haven to London - the Mersey. Again, during the War of Austrian Succession from 1753 to 1760, Liverpool profited and afterwards retained much of the traffic. Inland the industries of Lancashire and Yorkshire were using the new technologies of the Industrial Revolution. At the time of the outbreak of the U.S. War of Independence, canals already linked Liverpool to the textile industries of East Lancashire and Yorkshire and even further south to Staffordshire and the Potteries.

The war on the east coast of North America did not really stop trade from there for Canada remained in business. For a time also, trade with Iberia, the Mediterranean and Africa was unaffected. In 1781 the French entered the hostilities in North America, supporting the rebels, and as they withdrew, the British annexed many of the (French) West Indian islands, simultaneously battling with the French in India which in turn led to the open warfare we now term the Napoleonic Wars. This generated a further increase in shipping at Liverpool coupled with the tremendous demand for textiles for the military. The canals became a very important part of the economic development of Britain in general and to the north west region in particular. The Mersey and Irwell Navigation and the Bridgewater Canal facilitated the carriage of goods across mainland Britain, providing a safe route to the south and east of the country.

Now let us consider the developments from the perspective of the other side of the Atlantic.

By the 1770s one third of the British merchant fleet consisted of ships built on the North American mainland. After the War of Independence the English flag disappeared from all U.S. vessels and with it the privilege of those ships to trade freely with British controlled countries such as the West Indies, Canada etc. Furthermore the British Navigation Acts barred foreign-built vessels from British registry and this lasted until 1849. The U.S.A. was not seriously affected as its waterborne coastal trade

was carried in U.S.-built wooden sailing vessels. Similar to the British Navigation Act, the U.S. Act of 1792 decreed that only locally built ships could be entered on the U.S. registry, and further legislation excluded foreign ships from the U.S. coastal trade. This Act gave U.S. shipbuilders an advantage by forcing owners to use U.S.-built tonnage, and there were few objections because the U.S. domestic shipbuilders were the cheapest in the known world. The local carriers had a virtual monopoly of coastwise and river trades; also U.S. vessels were no longer constrained by the monopoly held by the East India Company in respect of the China trade, and the merchants of New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia took advantage at once.

War between Britain and France was declared in 1803 and spread around the Mediterranean, across the Atlantic and even as far as the Bay of Bengal. Whilst in Berlin, Napoleon issued a decree placing an embargo on all trade between Europe and Britain. A retaliatory British naval blockade hindered and delayed a number of U.S. vessels leading to hostilities between the U.S.A. and Britain in 1812. The Jefferson Government of 1807 had closed the nation's export trade for two years but this does not appear to have been rigidly enforced or effective, and the coastal trade absorbed the surplus ships: in fact Boston's coastwise trade more than doubled between 1808 and 1810 from 1,021 to 2,459 ships. However, during the War of Independence, New York merchants had maintained their links with their British (mainly Liverpool) business partners, and there was an immense post-war boom linked to British textile manufacturing. A young man with the backing of his family came across from New York to open a business in Liverpool and became a member of the American Chamber of Commerce formed by James Maury at the beginning of the 19th century. This man was William (later Sir William) Brown who entered into a partnership with a Mr Shipley. The cotton trade with England represented more than half of all U.S. exports after the end of the Napoleonic War, a large part of it handled by the Brown Brothers of New York with family links. New York shipowners built and operated large cargo carriers for this trade with the Southern cotton plantations until the outbreak of the Civil War in the 1860s. Most of these vessels were built in New England which remained the most important shipbuilding region in North America. The British timber resources had been used up during the wars and the cost of new timber was to be a factor in new building, but not until redundant naval vessels had been sold into the commercial fleet and perhaps scavenged for sound timber.

At the turn of the century the U.S. maritime economy was affected by the tendency of investors financing mining, banking, canals and railroads. Money made in the China trades by American enterprise was used in this way. Philadelphia as an industrial centre was reluctant to enter the North Atlantic trades. New York, however, maintained good trade relations with firms in Britain and there was a renewed prosperity in Liverpool. From 1780 until the mid 1820s the port experienced a greater rate of expansion than at any former period in its history. The separation of the U.S.A. from Britain, in a commercial view of the day, seemed to have greatly promoted the interests of both countries. The ignorance and envy, which had spoiled the relations between the two, disappeared when the U.S.A. became free. No one could have

anticipated the rapid progress which took place after the turn of the century, or the extent of commerce acquired by Liverpool.

<u>Vessels handled at Liverpool</u>	<u>Inwards</u>	<u>Outwards</u>
1764	188	141
1793	160	156
1821	772	718
1823	953	825

From 1821 to 1824 more than 50% of the 5,708 vessels entering the Mersey from overseas were from North America.

The following is a contemporary account of the start of scheduled sailings from Liverpool:

‘It was in this period that the first regular scheduled sailings from New York to Liverpool were established, e.g. in 1818 the Black Ball liners, and in 1827 regular, scheduled sailings between Baltimore/Philadelphia and Charleston/Savannah began which lasted until the railways became the prime passenger carriers between those cities (about 1855). The first ships of the Black Ball Line were the **Amity**, **Courier**, **James Monroe** and **Pacific**, all of about 400 tons. These were small vessels compared to a decade later. They were maintained in standard livery colours: black topsides, white finished whales, green rails and hatches, green inside the bulwarks and the shape of a ball painted in black on the foretopsail. The desirable qualities of the Trans-Atlantic sailing packet were stated to be strength, ease of handling, speed, stability at sea, easy on the roll, comfortable passenger accommodation and beauty.

On 4th January 1818 the **Courier** sailed from Liverpool, bound for New York, whilst the **James Monroe** sailed from New York on 5th January bound for Liverpool.

In the year 1818, the first line of American packets (Black Ball Line) was established in New York by Messrs Isaac Wright & Son, and Messrs Francis & Jeremiah Thompson with another, to sail regularly once every month to and from New York. After two years, a more frequent communication was found necessary, when a second line of packets (the Red Star Line) was founded. Soon there were four lines to and from New York and two lines to and from Philadelphia.

The average passage from New York to Liverpool from 1819 to 1823 has been 23 days.

The shortest passage was by the **New York**, George Maxwell, in 15 days.

The longest passage was in December, 1820 : 37 days.

The average length of passage from Liverpool to New York: 40 days

The shortest passage by the ship **Amity**, George Maxwell, April 1819: 22 days.

The longest passage was in December 1822: 65 days.

No expense was spared in fitting out these vessels with every possible convenience for passengers and, when in port, they were visited as objects of curiosity. The furniture and hangings were superb, costly, and in good taste; but when the voyage commenced they gave way to less magnificent decorations, better appointed for a sea voyage. The short period they remained in harbour was exhibition days. They were all New York built, coppered and copper fastened.'

The vessels in this employ, in July 1824, were :

<u>Name:</u>	<u>tons:</u>	<u>Captain:</u>
NEW YORK	500	G. Maxwell
NESTOR	452	E. Lee junr.
ORBIT	380	Tinckham
PACIFIC	500	G. Maxwell
WILLIAM THOMPSON	495	R. Crocker
CANADA	540	James Rogers
JAMES CROPPER	478	Charles Marshall
COLUMBIA	500	Seth G. May

A third line of packets (Swallow Tail Line) to New York was established in 1822, one of which sailed on the 8th day of every month from Liverpool. The vessels in this line, in July 1824, were:

JOHN WELLS	360	Isaac Harris
MANHATTAN	385	Ricketson
PANTHEA	370	Thomas Bennett
METEOR	312	T.W. Gardiner

A fourth line (the Dramatic Line) had a vessel sailing on the 24th of each month to New York. The ships of this line, in July 1824, were:

CORINTHIAN	401	G.W. Davis
LEEDS	408	W. Stoddard
building		H. Holdridge
CORTES	330	Nash de Cost

There were also two lines of Philadelphia packets, established on similar principles. One ship of the first line (Cope's Line) sailed from Liverpool on the 20th of each month. The fleet comprised, in July 1824, of:

FLORIDA	520	J.L. Wilson
JULIUS CAESAR	346	F.M. Marsh
COLOSSUS	412	R. Marshall
COURIER	384	G.H. Wallace
DELAWARE	399	John Hamilton

A second line of Philadelphia packets was also established, one of which sailed from Liverpool on the 20th of every month, except December. In July 1824 the vessels were:

MONTEZUMA	T. Potts
ALGONQIN	C. Dixey
ALEXANDER	Stephen Baldwin
TUSCARORA	James Serrill

It can be seen that six packets left Liverpool for New York and Philadelphia every month, besides a considerable number of itinerant merchant vessels. The facilities which all these afford to commerce attract it with magnetic force.

At the end of the Napoleonic Wars most Liverpool registered vessels would be based at and sailing from Liverpool. The trading conditions did not encourage what is today referred to as 'tramping' with sailing vessels. It was not easy for local owners to manage ships, cargoes and crews in distant ports or cities. The merchants were much more comfortable and happy when their vessels carried their own cargoes.

The Introduction of Steam

Fulton introduced the first successful steam vessel to U.S. waterways in 1807. There then followed a great increase in the use of steamers over long distances along the the U.S. inland waterways. In 1834 a survey of transport in the U.S.A. showed 234 steamers on the Mississippi - the long wide river systems of the region encouraged the construction of wide-decked, shallow draft craft on which steering was possible only from high forward-placed wheelhouses. Since the earliest and cheapest fuel for the boilers was wood, inland navigation had cheap fuel at each place along the route. But wood does not have the same calorific value as coal and prior to the 1830s, coal, the better fuel, was customarily ignored due to cost.

In contrast, by 1830 coal-fired boilers were the norm in general use around the coast for passenger ferries. The use of animal and vegetable oils as lubricants which, when heated under pressure, tended to break down to become fatty acids, caused severe wear in the cylinders and escaped to the boilers, causing further mayhem. But superior metals employed on the European side of the Atlantic reduced such damage. In 1814 there was a regular steamer service between Liverpool and Dublin.

The Post Office organised a service of small fast craft, sloops, schooners and cutters for carrying the mails across the Atlantic from Falmouth to Halifax. From Halifax the mail/government papers were distributed by schooner to other Canadian ports in the St. Lawrence, and also south to the Bahamas and Bermuda for the West Indies. Samuel Cunard was one of the operators of these services. The Postmaster General also recognised the importance of steamers and inaugurated services operated at first by the Admiralty from Liverpool to Dublin, thereby supplanting its late 18th century service from Parkgate, on the Dee, to Dublin. In Canada the Quebec and Halifax Steam Navigation Company was formed to maintain a steamer service with a

new vessel, the **Royal William**, from Quebec to Halifax. Among the shareholders were Samuel, Henry and Joseph Cunard. However, there were problems with maintaining a financially successful service and the mortgagees reclaimed the **Royal William**. The first steamers to cross the Atlantic did so in the early 1830s, and soon the benefit of using steamers for long distance communication was apparent.

In 1834 the Postmaster General (PMG) sought tenders for a contract to carry mails to India. In fact the East India Company had made many successful runs to the Cape of Good Hope. The PMG accepted the steamship services of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company to carry mails to Gibraltar, and when this was seen to be successful, the contract was extended to Alexandria so that the mails could be sent across the isthmus of Suez for onward transmission to India. This subsidized mail service to the Iberian peninsula which began in 1836 was the origin of the P. & O. Four years later the first subsidized scheduled mail steamer services to Canada commenced, the new Cunard Line. The organization of the original Cunard fleet required three (later four) vessels to operate a twice-monthly trans-Atlantic service. Four identical vessels were needed and this was the first multiple order and was to prove that such a fleet could be a viable and economic proposition. Although these were wooden vessels, the economies were in the technical and mechanical fitting. The Cunard directors continued to order ships in groups of four, although it was to be a decade later before other shipowners joined in the business of operating trans-Atlantic steamer services. This was another instance of Liverpool being at the forefront of ocean transport development.

The earliest Cunard steamers were constructed of wood and remained so for a decade as the Admiralty, controlling the mail contracts for the PMG, would not sanction anything else. However the shortage of timber brought about a change in the thinking of British shipbuilders. From the 1840s iron hulls were constructed and ship-owners found that maintenance was easier and cheaper; also the metal was almost fireproof and somewhat stronger and lighter than comparable wooden hulls.

We must understand that over the years, then as now, there were booms and depressions. In 1819/20 there was a severe trade depression in North America. It seems that developments such as clipper activities across the Atlantic helped to overcome the financial problems, and fifteen years later the U.S.A. and Canada were experiencing a boom which extended to the end of the century. Trade was given a tremendous boost. Ships brought large amounts of softwood into Liverpool - spruce, pitch pine etc - in quantity, and it was comparatively cheap. At the same time the East coast of England pilots complained that their work in bringing in timber-laden vessels from the Baltic was very much reduced.

From 1840 to 1850 steam on the Atlantic was restricted to the Cunard Line. Collins attempted to compete but the costs forced him to demand fast passages from his captains with large quantities of coal being fed into the boiler furnaces by a large number of firemen to maintain high speeds. Even if he had not lost two of his vessels in tragic circumstances, he would have had to close down following the withdrawal of the American mail subsidy.

The improvements to the steam engine steadily reduced the ability of the sailing vessels to compete with steamers. Screw propulsion, direct-acting condensing compound engines and better boiler pressures reduced coal consumption thereby improving efficiency and reducing costs. This led to faster passages carrying larger cargoes. Many of these improvements were applied, initially, to Liverpool ships by Liverpool owners, and provided by engineers coming to Liverpool to offer their ideas. The following table shows the improvements over the years. Note the increase in speed and carrying capacity, the number of passengers carried, against the decrease in fuel consumption:

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Tons</u>	<u>IHP</u>	<u>Av.Speed</u>	<u>Coal/day</u>	<u>Bunker Capacity</u>	<u>Cargo/Passengers</u>
BRITANNIA (1840)	1,139	740	8.3	38	640	225 / 90
PERSIA (1860)	3,300	3,600	12.9	150	1,640	1,100 / 180
JAVA (1870)	2,697	2,440	12.8	85	1,100	1,100 / 160
BOTHNIA (1880)	4,556	2,780	13.0	63	940	3,000 / 340

(*Britannia* and *Persia* were paddle steamers)

Liverpool was the terminal of the first major railway service in the world. During the 1840s the port was linked to London by rail, attracting passengers to the by now regular, relatively safe and fast, steamer service to the New World.

A crucial date for the sail-steam confrontation was 1869 when the Suez Canal opened, thus allowing bunker stations at convenient points along the route such to the Far East such as Port Said and Aden. A far more significant development was the introduction of the compound engine by Alfred Holt in 1865 when one of his vessels made a non-stop passage from Liverpool to Mauritius.

The relatively slow early steamers attracted more competition from the Americans who built larger sailing vessels and sailed them fast across the ocean. In 1855 the direct-acting condensing steam engine reduced coal consumption and, in itself, needed less space in larger vessels thus allowing greater freight capacity. Thus by 1860 the large U.S. packet operators accepted that European shipping had the advantage and began to withdraw from the race and offered cheap passages to emigrants from Liverpool. American financial backing brought the iron-hulled, propeller driven vessels on the scene in the form of the Inman Line from 1850 onwards sailing initially between Liverpool and Philadelphia.

In 1859 Ismay re-introduced the White Star Line, this time with steamers sailing from Liverpool to New York, and from now on steamers began to rule the Atlantic. Sailing vessels, by the end of the century, were reduced to carrying the coal necessary for the steamships.

The facts and figures gathered from the Customs Bills of Entry were not the best source of information after all. The Cunard managers did not begin to register their vessels at Liverpool until after 1880, and then only some of the fleet. Also not all the Elder Dempster fleet was Liverpool registered. It is worth noting that Cunard took advantage of the space reduction by providing its new tonnage with very large bunker capacity, and filling the same with cargo. It seems that they were not the only ones to do this and thereby reduce payment of port dues, effecting considerable savings when we recall that the larger vessels were making at least ten round voyages every year.

To summarise the rise in Liverpool shipping, it has been shown that the port gained strategic importance through the many wars and hostilities along the South coast of England and even gained commercially when London was devastated by the Black Death and the Great Fire of London. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the American shipowners already using Liverpool's business connections introduced the first scheduled and regular lines of ships sailing between two fixed ports. As those lines reached the peak of success so the first steamers crossed the Atlantic and the rise of Liverpool shipping began and these developments continued until after the First World War. The end of Liverpool's era of greatness came in 1919 when the Cunard Line decided that Southampton was to be its main passenger terminal. ||||

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THE CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Archives and Library,
Merseyside Maritime Museum,
September, 2000

Dear Members,

I often wonder how much the average man or woman in the street is really conscious of our nautical heritage. Obviously those who live close to seaports or even on the coast will be familiar with ships and the sea, but how about the remainder? In mid-July the **Queen Elizabeth 2** spent a day anchored in the Mersey. I happened to be in the city that day and I was surprised at the number of people who had come to see the ship. All round the Pier Head and the nearby streets there was much activity with great queues waiting to go round the ship by ferry. I needed to go into the Museum that day and could find no place to park anywhere in the Albert Dock complex, with many cars just going round and round. In the end I had to park miles away and walk back. It was not even a warm day, so were all these people showing pride in one of our great liners, in the 'Red Duster' or in our maritime heritage? On the other hand was it simply a curiosity or somewhere to go?

Somebody remarked how splendid the ship looked at anchor in the Mersey with her beautiful black hull and balanced design, and how much better she looked than the modern white square floating blocks which are the norm for cruise ships built today. But then it was recalled that when the profile of the **Queen Elizabeth 2** was made public thirty years ago, there were great howls of derision over the design of her funnel - and a single funnel at that! Later there was much comment about the colour of the hull. However, even with the bouts of bad publicity and mechanical troubles, and with her strange funnel, she is 'our' ship, and no matter how well the new **Queen Mary 2** turns out, the **Queen Elizabeth 2** will always be the last proper Cunarder for me.

I also wonder just how much the average person in the street realises the tremendous revolution which container shipping has brought to their lives. They are probably aware of the effect of jet aviation, but do they ever think that it is the simple container, either in a deep-sea vessel or a cross-channel ferry, which provides the huge variety of goods in the shops and in supermarkets. Without such an efficient, economic and regular form of transport from every corner of the world, our diets and lives would not be as exotic as is now possible; and perhaps more importantly but less obviously the international container industry allows the people of less developed and less fortunate countries around the world to bring the goods and the produce of their lands to our markets and tables. Surely a benefit to us all.

I was recently amongst a party which travelled up the Manchester Ship Canal from Liverpool to Manchester on a Mersey ferry. It is a very pleasant journey which takes about six hours and there are coaches to bring you back to Liverpool. There are so many interesting things to see and there is a commentary to answer many of your questions. Very little can have changed in the canal itself since it opened in 1894; the

locks and their buildings and fittings are unchanged and the structure of the 36 mile long canal remains as built. For this the Ship Canal is quite unique and it is good to note that while the number and types of ships using the canal has drastically reduced, we did see shipping along its full length and even a medium sized ship discharging at a berth within a mile of the old Manchester docks. Other ships were under repair in the Manchester dry docks. I can recommend the journey as a very good day out, made perfect by good sunny weather.

I want to close my letter by thanking Mrs E.M. Summerfield for all the years she has served as Vice-President of the Society, and furthermore for the work, time and care that Mrs Summerfield and her husband put into nurturing our Society at a time when it needed it most. While Mrs Summerfield has resigned as Vice President, I hope that she will join us at one of our social events towards the end of the year.

I hope you have all enjoyed a very good summer, and look forward to the resumption of meetings in the early autumn,



Yours sincerely,

Michael D Jones

JUST FANCY THAT !!!

ROUND THE HORN ON A LONDON TRANSPORT 'ROUTEMASTER' BUS

The **Queen Mary** left Southampton on 31st October 1967 for the 40-day, 14,559 mile voyage to Long Beach, California. She had on board 1,093 passengers and as an economy measure she ran on just two of her quadruple screws, restricting her speed to 20 knots. This meant she used only 550 tons of fuel a day - instead of 1,100 tons. Before leaving Southampton, two London Transport 'Routemaster' double-deck buses had been stowed on the main deck aft - these would be used to transport visitors to the **Queen Mary** at Long Beach.

As the **Queen Mary** approached Cape Horn a number of passengers boarded these buses for the decidedly novel experience of 'Rounding the Horn' on a London Transport bus. The ship's printers produced certificates to authenticate the occasion and the proceeds of the charge made for the '*Cape Horn Trips*' were given to an orphanage in Valparaiso. The 'Horn' did not live up to its fearsome reputation for bad weather - as the **Queen Mary** sailed round it was cloudy and clear with a moderate north-east wind and slight swell.

The **Queen Mary** finally arrived at Long Beach on 9th December 1967. Shortly afterwards her propellers were disconnected from the engines and henceforward the **Queen Mary** was classified as a building. |||||

**THE STRANDING OF THE 'ULSTER QUEEN' AT MAUGHOLD HEAD,
ISLE OF MAN ON 28th FEBRUARY, 1940.**

*Shortly after the start of the Second World War, the track for the Liverpool to Belfast vessels was changed. Instead of sailing from Liverpool Bar and proceeding south-about the Isle of Man to Belfast Lough, they were required to sail along the North Wales coast to a point off the Skerries, turn north to Langness at the south of the Isle of Man, proceed up the east coast of the Isle of Man to the Point of Ayre and then sail direct to the entrance of Belfast Lough. This change of track arguably was responsible for the loss of the **Munster** on 7th February 1940 (see 'The Bulletin', Vol.43 No.5, February, 2000, page 19), and certainly was responsible for the stranding, just three weeks later, of the **Ulster Queen** at Maughold Head, 54°18'N, 4°19'W.*



*The **Ulster Queen** aground at Maughold Head. Photo taken by LNRS Member Ron Evans*

Following the loss of the **Munster** on 7th February 1940 and the requisitioning by the Admiralty of the **Louth**, the **Ulster Queen** was left to maintain the Liverpool-Belfast service on her own.

The **Ulster Queen** left Liverpool for Belfast on 27th February 1940 with 93 passengers and 370 tons of general cargo, under the command of Captain W.J. Arbuckle. In thick fog in the early hours of the following morning, 28th February, the **Ulster Queen** ran aground on the Manx coast just to the south of Maughold Head between Stack Mooar and Cor Stack.

Assistance was rendered by the **Duke of Lancaster** on passage from Heysham to Belfast. Ironically this vessel had been aground on Jurby Head, on the north-west coast of the Isle of Man, only a few months earlier. Flares were burned on board the **Ulster Queen** to guide the **Duke of Lancaster's** approach through the fog. Passengers had gone to their emergency stations and were then transferred to the **Duke of Lancaster** in the **Ulster Queen's** lifeboats which were towed across two at a time

by the Ramsey lifeboat. With one of the **Ulster Queen's** officers on board carrying the ship's papers, the **Duke of Lancaster** left the scene at 8.am for Belfast.

At the time of the grounding the weather had been calm with just a slight sea, but by noon on 28th February a strong north-easterly gale had developed which is on shore at Maughold Head. This swung the **Ulster Queen** broadside on to the rocky beach. The crew had to abandon ship and were taken off by breeches buoy although some were immersed in the icy waters during the transfer.

A tug arrived from Liverpool but was unable to do anything in the gale conditions. Commander G.H. Smith of the Liverpool & Glasgow Salvage Association flew to the Isle of Man and immediately realised that salvage would be a difficult and protracted operation. The north-east gale drove the **Ulster Queen** so far up the beach under Maughold Head that at high water there was only 11ft 2in depth around her, whereas her mean free floating draft was 15ft. At low water she was high and dry and entirely unsupported for a distance of 180ft from the stem. From the foremost point of support the **Ulster Queen** was resting on an uneven spur of rock and boulders for about 120ft, whilst the remaining 46ft of her stern was unsupported. In addition she had a list to port, her seaward side, of 12 degrees. At a point roughly amidships, the **Ulster Queen's** starboard side was impaled on a spur of rock running seawards from the foot of the cliffs and this had caused indentations of the ship's side and bottom for several feet under the bilge which had been badly buckled with many rivets sheared. However, she had made no water except in No.4 tank, where there was a visible fracture, and the for'ard tunnel compartment. Following the north-east gale, a heavy swell was running which was striking the **Ulster Queen** on the port bow, causing the serious vibration problems that those ashore had noticed, and raising the fear that she would break.

The Liverpool & Glasgow Salvage Association's vessel **Ranger** (see *'The Good Old Ranger'* - L.N.R.S. 'Bulletin' Vol.41, Number 1, Summer 1997, page 4) arrived on 2nd March 1940 and it was clear that much delicate blasting of the cliff would have to be undertaken, also of the spur of rock which was causing the 12 degree port list.

The plan was to take advantage of the maximum spring tides due towards the end of March, and with the aid of the **Ranger** and the tug **Maycock**, to heave the **Ulster Queen's** bows to seawards, and then to lift the stern by flooding the forepeak and numbers 1, 2 and 3 double bottom tanks. Blasting of the rocks to seaward was also necessary so that a path could be cleared for her as she was hove into deep water.

The first task was to lighten the **Ulster Queen** and her 370 tons of general cargo was offloaded into a shallow draft coaster which was able to come alongside at high water. Portable equipment such as the eight lifeboats, anchor cables, buoyant apparatus and stores, as well as fresh water ballast, was taken off.

Events were reaching crisis point by 25th March when the spring tides would pass their peak. Some movement of the stern to seawards had been achieved but progress, on the whole, had been disappointing. On the morning of 25th March more blasting was undertaken under the starboard bilges, around the stern and under the port

quarter. In an ultimate effort to lighten the ship, a search was made in the engine room for any spares or parts which could be dismantled. Heaving commenced as the tide approached its peak and the forepeak and the chain locker were pumped out to correct any tendency of the bow to pin the stern as it was hove seawards.

At 1pm on 25th March 1940 the **Ulster Queen** floated free to the cheers of the crowds on the cliffs and was taken in tow by the **Ranger** towards Ramsey Bay where at 4pm she was anchored one and a half miles off the North Breakwater lighthouse. At 5pm on 27th March 1940 the **Ulster Queen** arrived in Belfast for repairs. It was hoped to have the **Ulster Queen** back on the Liverpool-Belfast run as soon as possible but this was not to be. Soon after her arrival at Harland & Wolff's yard she was requisitioned by the Admiralty for conversion into an auxiliary anti-aircraft cruiser.

*The full story of the **Ulster Queen**'s service in the Second World War will be told in the December 'Bulletin'. - j.s.*

THE MONDAY FACILITY

Members' access to the Archives and Library at the Merseyside Maritime Museum on Mondays continues as follows:

SEPTEMBER : 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th.
OCTOBER : 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th.
NOVEMBER : 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th



LOOKING BACK . . .

April, 1953, and salvage work is in hand on the fire-gutted **Empress of Canada** which capsized in Liverpool's Gladstone Dock during fire fighting operations. The picture is from the Dally Post archive.

THE "ANSELMA DE LARRINAGA" AT WAR

*L.N.R.S. Member Dr F.W.J. de Bass has sent the following damage report following the torpedoing of the **Anselma de Larrinaga** in the English Channel on 9th August 1918. The report was written by Dr de Bass's grandfather - Captain Felix Torribio de Bastarrechea.*

Friday, 9th August, 1918. 2.00pm: Whilst being escorted by two destroyers **Liberty** and **Owl**, the ship was torpedoed in Latitude 50°00'N, Longitude 0°32'W. The track of the torpedo was seen by the gunner on the platform and the lookoutman in the crow's nest when it was about twenty or thirty feet from the side and too late to avoid. Immediately after the explosion the ship commenced to settle by the stern and took a list to starboard. For about one minute nothing could be seen of the ship as we were enveloped in a cloud of everything: asphalt, coal, dust, pieces of all sorts and water, and the after deck was flooded. No.3 hold was full and the hatches blew up. No.4 hatches blew up. All engine skylight glass came down with a heavy shower of water.

The engineer on watch shut off the steam on the main engines and managed to get up without any further damage other than some glass in his back. The ship seemed as if she was going to settle at once. After the first shock I had all the boats lowered with the crews at their respective places and we kept around the ship in our boats to see if anything further was going to happen as regards the ship sinking.

In the meanwhile the destroyer **Liberty** came and picked us all up. Immediately on arriving on board I went and consulted with the captain of the **Liberty** and gave my opinion as regards our chances of getting her in. Tug assistance had been called for. I said that I would try and get sufficient volunteers so that we might, if things were all right, steam in. During the passage home from Mexico the majority of the crew had been down with malaria, several having been delirious during their bout of fever, so that more or less they were not very strong. When I first went to get volunteers I could not get sufficient firemen so I suggested to the captain of the **Liberty** that probably, after they had had a little time to get over the shock, I might get sufficient volunteers. The ship, meanwhile, was sinking very slowly and the weather which at the time of the attack had been moderate wind and sea, was moderating to light, fine and smooth. At 9.05pm GMT the captain of the **Liberty** asked me if I was ready and if I had sufficient volunteers. I answered 'yes', so then the captain had us sent on board by his boat.

Immediately on arriving on board I had the ship sounded fore and aft and found No.3 hold full, the ballast tank all right, and No.4 making water 2feet 10inches. The ballast was full but we had filled that at sea previously for trimming purposes. The engine room bulkheads were strained and leaking in many parts with the water overflowing the platform. The boilers were practically dry so that the chief engineer saw that it was not possible to get steam on the main boiler to try and work the engines in time as the engine room was gaining water all the time. We just managed to get steam on the donkey boiler and keep the water under in the engine room.

At 9.30pm GMT the tug **Drage** came alongside and gave us a tow rope and commenced towing. The weather was fine. I kept sounding every half hour. When towing commenced I found that the ship was making water faster and we were unable to pump anything out of No.4 hold owing to the connection being up the tunnel which was flooded. In No.3 hold the water was apparently keeping the same level. At 6.15am GMT the tug **Hector** came up and gave us a tow rope and commenced towing. At 7.30am GMT the tug **Grapple** came alongside with a salvage officer and a representative of the Naval Construction Department, both of whom came on board and estimated our chances of getting in, from my report as to how she was behaving.

At 8.00am GMT I noticed a considerable difference in water in No.3 hold. The ship was, of course, sinking faster all the time. Thanks to the weather and being close to port there was still a good chance of getting the ship in. At 3.00pm the ship arrived at Southampton off Netley and when the pilot came on board I told him to put the ship on the beach as I did not trust the bulkheads and was afraid of her sinking in deep water.

No.4 hold had 12feet of water in above the ceiling and the ship was well down by the stern. All our good boats had been left in the water so before leaving the destroyer **Liberty** I mentioned the fact that if we should get another torpedo we would all jump overboard as we had no boats left that were of any use.

We were well looked after on board the **Liberty** and one and all appreciate the kind treatment we received. Twenty-eight volunteers came back to the ship with me.

Captain Felix Torribio de Bastarrechea,
ss Anselma de Larrinaga

David Eccles writes:

The Liverpool registered **Anselma de Larrinaga** (Official Number: 109420) was of 4,090gt and built in 1898. She was bound for London from Coatzacoalcos (Mexico) laden with asphalt. She was torpedoed by **UB.88** on 9th August 1918 and beached at Netley. The **Anselma de Larrinaga** lay there for three months (until the armistice was signed) and was then re-floated and towed to Manchester for repairs which took five months to complete. She re-entered the company's Manchester/U.S. Gulf service in May 1919 until her sale to Italian owners in 1924. Re-named **Chiabrera**, she traded until 28th June 1934 when she arrived at Savona and was scrapped.

For those with an interest in the Larrinagas and the Basques, Dr de Bass recommends a book by Mark Kurlansky '*The Basque History of the World*' published by Jonathan Cape, ISBN 0-224-06055-4.

Dr de Bass mentions that on 11th June 1917 the **Minnie de Larrinaga** was attacked by a submarine and obviously damaged. A letter in his possession indicates the rewards given to the crew. £10 each was paid to the 1st, 2nd & 3rd officers, 1st 2nd & 3rd engineers, the Marconi operator and a cadet. £10 was also paid to C. Zuniga (greaser) 'for special service'. Eleven other members of the crew each received £5 each. |||||

THE "OCEANIC" MUTINY OF 1905

by L.N.R.S. Vice-Chairman David Eccles

*One of the many questions asked by visitors to the Liverpool Nautical Research Society's stand at the Local History Exhibition held at St. George's Hall last March, was for information concerning the 1905 'Firemen's Mutiny' on board the White Star Liner **Oceanic**. Unaware of this incident at the time, research has uncovered these facts:*

On 23rd September 1905 the White Star liner **Republic** sailed from Liverpool to Boston prior to commencing her scheduled autumn voyages between New York and Italy. On these voyages Italians were employed as firemen, and so the thirty-three Liverpool firemen who signed the Articles of Agreement were told they would be relieved at New York and returned to Liverpool by 'Mail-boat'. They were aware that 'Mail-boat' firemen were paid higher wages than normal. Ten days later at New York, these men raised no objection when they were transferred to the mail steamer **Oceanic** at their usual rate of pay. They signed the **Oceanic's** Articles of Agreement in the presence of the British Consul, who (they understood) told them that they would be paid four-pence a day extra if they were required to work.

After the **Oceanic** had departed from New York, the *ex-Republic* firemen refused to work until they were paid the same wages as the **Oceanic's** firemen, although it was explained to them that they would not be in the stokehold as the mail ship carried its full stokehold complement. They continued to refuse to work throughout the seven day Atlantic crossing, and when the **Oceanic** arrived at Princes Landing Stage on 11th October, a Police Inspector with a 'possé' of thirty constables boarded the vessel to arrest the 'mutineers'. They offered no resistance and were taken to Dale Street Bridewell in two police vans.

The men appeared before the Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr Stewart, at Liverpool City Police Court the following morning, accused under the Merchant Shipping Act of '*refusal to obey the lawful command of the Master from 5th October and on other days whilst vessel was on the high seas.*' All the men denied mutiny but admitted that a question of wages arose after they had transferred ship at New York.

They were defended by Mr Quilliam who stated the men admitted the offence but had been told that they would get four-pence a day more for working on the **Oceanic**. "*It was a case of an error of judgement. The probability was that they were ill-advised by someone, and all had followed like a flock of sheep. That explained their conduct, but was no defence.*"

The prosecutor, Mr Furniss (Hill, Dickinson & Co.) stated that the men had signed Articles before the British Consul at New York, where the clause in their pay agreement which read '*to serve in the **Republic** or any other ship of the Line at the same rate of wages*' was explained to them. After the **Oceanic** had sailed, the men refused to work as other men on board were getting more money.

The thirty-three men were told by the Stipendiary Magistrate that *'whatever way the case was put, it was still a serious one, which might have made the rest of the crew discontented. If the men had a grievance, the law-courts were the remedy. If their employers had broken the law then they would have had to pay the wages.'*

Each man was then sentenced to seven days in prison with hard labour.

Reporting this incident, the *'Shipping Gazette'* and *'Lloyd's List'* of Friday 13th October 1905 remarked: *"We imagine the White Star Company will not allow this case to pass unnoticed. On the face of it, it would seem that the shipment of these men on the Oceanic was more or less a method of bringing them home. They were, indeed, supernumerary. But the modern fireman has such a keen sense of his rights that it seems undesirable to give him the least possible excuse for thinking that he is not getting all that does, or should in his rather hasty judgement, strictly belong to him."*

Note: The **Oceanic** had eight stokeholds which contained a total of 98 furnaces feeding twelve double and three single-ended Scotch boilers. These consumed 550 tons of coal each day when steaming at 20 knots. Because of their importance to the mail schedule, the White Star Line paid the mail-ship stokehold crew four-pence a day above the Board of Trade rate. When these firemen transferred ship at New York it should have been explained clearly to them that they would be paid four-pence a day extra only if they were required to FIRE THE BOILERS aboard the **Oceanic**. They would have been expected to work their passage to Liverpool spending time in machinery spaces at normal pay.

ss.**REPUBLIC**. Liverpool. 15,378gt, built 1903 as **Columbus** for Dominion Line service Liverpool to Boston. 1904-renamed **Republic** when taken over by the White Star Line for employment Liverpool to Boston during the spring and summer, New York to Italy during the autumn and winter months.

ss.**OCEANIC**. Liverpool. 17,274gt, built 1899 for Wednesday weekly service from Liverpool to New York.

Sources: Lloyd's List / Liverpool Daily Post / Liverpool Echo / Liverpool Mercury / The Marine Engineer ||||

READERS' LETTERS

From: L.N.R.S. Member Charles Dawson:

Fine new *'Bulletin'* just received! I can add a postscript regarding my details on early steamers 'sold foreign' featured in *'The Bulletin'*, Volume 44, No.1, June 2000.

The ps **Albion** became one of the earliest Polish steamers. She was bought in 1827, together with ps **Victory**, 100'4" x 30' x 7'5", 394 tons, built by J.Pelham, Rotherhithe in 1818, and altered in 1825 to 111'6" x 30' x 10'6", 275 tons. The **Danzig**

merchant house Behrend arranged the purchases for Piotr Steinkeller & Konstanty Wolicki who had in 1825 founded the first Polish company with the aim of running steamship services. The **Albion** perhaps retained her name, but the **Victory** is believed to have been renamed **Xsiaze Xavery** (or **Ksiaze Ksavery**). She was sent to Warsaw in 1830, presumably to serve on the River Vistula, and was sold again in 1836.

The sales of both ships in England appear to have been arranged by H.W. Atkinson & R.J. Brapsey who, it is believed were London bankers.

I would refer to Terry Kavanagh's article in which he mentions the twin-screw system. The first practical demonstration of the possibility of this arrangement was made by the American Colonel John Stevens (1749-1838) in 1804.

In 1803, Stevens was granted his second patent when he started work in fitting a piston engine to the open wooden boat **Little Juliana**, 24' long x 6'1" x 2'3", with a displacement of c.5 tons. The engine had a vertical 4'5" diameter cylinder with piston stroke of 9". Steam at a pressure of 50 lbs. per square inch was supplied from a multi-tubular boiler fitted with 28 copper water-tubes of 1'5" diameter x 18" long. There was no condenser. Motion was transmitted from the overhead cross-beam via two connecting rods to a pair of cranks, one on each side of the twin propeller shafts. The cranks turned in opposite directions and were phased together by means of toothed gear-wheels on the shafts. The propellers were four-bladed of about 18" diameter. This appears to have been the first time contra-rotating screws were adopted in order to avoid the drift created by a single propeller. The boat was tried at Hoboken in May 1804. It ran at a mean speed of 4 mles per hour and for a short distance attained about 7 to 8 miles per hour. The twin screw engine and multi-tubular boiler are preserved in the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, USA.

AND FINALLY

After two years of massive disruption to winter schedules caused by wave heights in the Irish Sea exceeding three metres (the operating limit for **SuperSeaCat Three**), the fastcraft is to be withdrawn from 3rd November until just before Easter 2001. Attempting to cross to either Dublin or Douglas in the so-called 'fast-craft' over the last two winters has been nothing short of a lottery.

A spokesman for the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company said: "*So many crossings on the fast SeaCat were cancelled last winter that the service became uneconomic.*" He added: "*The schedules for this winter have not yet been finalised. But we may operate the **Lady of Mann** and use the SuperSeaCat as back-up.*"

Well, just fancy that !!!

It is looking increasingly likely that money will be spent on the 1976-built **Lady of Mann** to bring her up to SOLAS standards with which she must comply by May 2001 if she is to continue to carry passengers. Steam Packet communications manager Geoff Corkish has already told a local Manx branch of the W.I. that the work will be done - confirmation indeed! Indeed it is patently and crystal clear to everyone, except Sea Containers apparently, that the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company cannot operate during the winter and at the T.T. peak without her. j.s. |||||

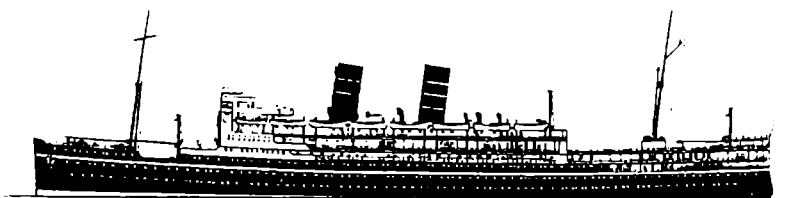
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

THE BULLETIN

Editor : John Shepherd

Volume 44, Number 3, December 2000



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Front Cover :

The Viceroy of India visited Douglas, Isle of Man on 29th July, 1930.
see 'Big Boat in the Bay' - page 20

"A HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS !"

A CHRISTMAS VOYAGE THAT MADE ATLANTIC HISTORY

FROM LIVERPOOL TO NEW YORK AND BACK IN TWELVE DAYS

by T.E. Hughes

*The Cunard liner **Mauretania** was holder of the 'Blue Riband' of the Atlantic from 1907 until 1929 - a longer period than any other ship. This is the story of one of her Christmas voyages - a voyage which fired public imagination in that the world's fastest and most popular ship was to attempt what had never before been achieved - a passage from Liverpool to New York and back in just twelve days.*

It was at 5.43pm on Saturday 10th December 1910 that the Cunard liner **Mauretania**, under the command of Capt. W.T. Turner and with Mr J. Kendall in charge of the engine room, left Princes Landing Stage, Liverpool to begin a voyage which was to make trans-Atlantic history.

To cheer the liner on her way, a great crowd of people had gathered at the Pier Head and along the waterfront. For this was no ordinary occasion. The **Mauretania**, manned largely by Merseyside men, had set herself the task of challenging the wintry North Atlantic and maintaining a schedule which would take her out to New York and home again to Liverpool in twelve days.

If speed was to be the sole criterion then success was virtually assured. The **Mauretania** had already accomplished a record voyage of 4 days, 10 hours and 41 minutes and given fair weather, there was no reason why she should not do it again. The decisive factor would be the turn-round in New York. Normally, five days were allotted for these operations, but the twelve-day round voyage schedule allowed for a tight margin of only two days. Within a matter of 48 hours the **Mauretania** would have to be readied to put to sea again, her passenger accommodation inspected and cleaned, supplies of linen and stores put on board, cargo loaded and in addition, 6,000 tons of coal to feed her hungry boiler furnaces.

It was not merely a voyage planned by Cunard for the sake of publicity and prestige. There were sound economic reasons behind it. The main purpose was to enable Americans living in Europe to get home for Christmas and, in the reverse direction, for British and other Europeans resident in the United States to voyage home in the liner in time for the festive season. Arrangements had also been made with the postal authorities for the **Mauretania** to carry heavy consignments of Christmas mails.

It was not surprising then that the voyage was to become the big pre-Christmas news story of the year 1910. To keep the public fully informed, several newspaper correspondents were sailing with the **Mauretania**, and as a result of the increasing efficiency of Marconi's wireless telegraphy system, it was hoped to send back to London day-by-day accounts of the ship's progress.

In all, some 1,270 passengers sailed on the westbound passage to New York - an unusually large number for a December sailing. There were 430 in the first-class, 240 in second-class and 600 steerage. After leaving Liverpool the **Mauretania** was scheduled to call at Queenstown where she would embark by tender passengers who had travelled overnight from London by way of Holyhead, and also take on a further consignment of mails.

The passage from the Mersey was uneventful and the **Mauretania** arrived off Queenstown at 5.45am on Sunday 11th December. Here a heavy swell made embarkation by tender a slow and difficult operation causing delays to the voyage schedule. The **Mauretania** passed Roche's Point shortly after 9.am and was abeam the Daunt Rock light vessel at 9.55am. She was soon steaming at 25.25 knots.

It was a promising start but the Atlantic decided to take a hand in the proceedings and to put on an exhibition of winter weather with head winds and heavy seas playing the major rôle. From noon on Sunday 11th to noon on Monday 12th December the **Mauretania** steamed 587 miles at an average speed of 23.27 knots, but the weather continued to deteriorate and the next 24 hours were to tell a vastly different story with the day's run to noon on Tuesday 13th December falling away to 517 miles and the average speed to 20.72 knots. For Captain Turner the prospect was not encouraging. If the weather worsened still further with a consequent need to further reduce speed, arrival at New York in time to permit the essential turn-round work would be out of the question.

Fortunately the storm abated and the liner gradually picked up speed until she was making 25½ knots. By noon on Thursday 15th December the **Mauretania** had made good sufficient time to indicate that she would reach New York early on the following morning. In the event she passed the Ambrose Channel Light Vessel at the entrance to New York harbour shortly after midnight. She had completed the passage from Queenstown in 4 days, 20 hours and 7 minutes at an average speed of 23.94 knots - well below her best, but sufficient for the purpose.

Newspaper reports of her arrival suggest, appropriately enough, that it held all the elements of the transformation scene beloved of Christmas pantomime. It was, we are told, a moonlit night and bitterly cold, with a keen wind blowing. As the great liner progressed to her pier at 14th Street, accompanied by two tenders on to which the mails were being unloaded, she presented an unforgettable sight, her four immense funnels caught in the moon's light, her rigging and superstructure festooned with icicles and the entire surface of her long, sleek hull frozen over by storm-tossed spray. In brief, she was the perfect 'Christmas ship' arriving from the sea.

There still remained the major task of getting the ship ready for her return voyage. Customs' examination of the passengers' baggage did not start until 7.am on Friday 16th December, and so it was almost noon before the last of the incoming passengers were off the ship. The **Mauretania** was due to sail again at 6.pm the following evening. Mr G. Sumner, the Cunard general agent in New York and Captain Roberts, the marine superintendent, had however perfected their plans and expressed

confidence that the job could be done. The *Daily Telegraph* correspondent in New York vividly described the ensuing activity in a special despatch to his newspaper:

"The Mauretania's return dash to England," he cabled, *"with the proud and determined prospect of completing the round trans-Atlantic voyage within 12 and possibly 11 days, commenced at six o'clock on Saturday evening.*

Following her arrival at six o'clock on Friday morning, this 32,000 ton quadruple screw turbine steamer discharged over 1,000 tons of cargo and baggage, a big passenger list and nearly 5,000 sacks of Christmas mail; cleansed house thoroughly and took aboard 6,000 tons of coal, 1,000 tons of cargo, 1,800 passengers, nearly 4,000 sacks of mails and enough food to supply an army for a week.

She arrived here in New York coated from stem to stern with ice and frost she started away with every inch of her brass freshly polished, the outward scars of her rough voyage carefully painted away, her decks immaculate, and every piece of linen aboard freshly washed and ironed.

She could not have been more spick and span, more perfect in every detail of mechanical organisation, from the donkey engines forward to the most complicated part of her great engines below, if she had been in port for a week."

It had been a tremendous combined operation and one which could never have been accomplished without the willing and enthusiastic co-operation of the New York port labour force and the ship's company, who worked the night through. So far as the *Mauretania* herself was concerned, she was ready to sail 12 hours before the scheduled time; the actual time taken to finish the exercise had been 21 hours.

Two hours before sailing time - 6 pm on Saturday 17th December - the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent commented: *"the scene outside the Cunard wharf reminds one of the scene at Waterloo Station on Derby Day."* The crush of visitors on board was so great that stewards began clearing the ship at 5 pm, an hour before departure. Meanwhile, on the pier, thousands of people were filing by the supplementary post office to mail letters which would go in the ship and glad to pay the double postage and special fees for the privilege. Altogether it was estimated that no fewer than 50,000 of these supplementary letters were mailed.

But sailing time was imminent. The *Daily Telegraph* correspondent continued: *"The tolling of the ship's bell at the gangplank and a prolonged blast from the ship's whistle at length warned everybody that they must hurry ashore. Prompt at six o'clock Marine Superintendent Roberts flashed from the lower and outer end of the pier a white electric light bulb. A man stationed on the roof of the pier structure flashed a second white light signifying 'all clear'. Captain Turner standing on the bridge with the pilot pulled the handle of the telegraph apparatus which signalled to Chief Engineer Kendall to start the engines. The ship began to move out stern first.*

In the North River, whither she had been assisted by a flotilla of tugs, she turned. An island of lights straightened out and paused as if to gather strength for the return dash to John Bull's domain. Then with a gentle vibration from stem to stern, the mighty engines began throbbing and the Mauretania leapt forward on the first

stage of her long ocean voyage. Thousands of people cheered the Christmas vessel and all the way down the New York Bay, craft of all nations with fog horns and steam sirens took part in sailor fashion in speeding the departing liner."

A wireless message received from the **Mauretania** two hours after sailing had this to say: *'All well and happy, going full speed, beautiful evening.'*

Hull down and leaving the tumult and shouting of her American well-wishers far astern the **Mauretania** steadily pursued her homeward course. Moderate south-westerly winds and fine clear weather attended her, and she was able to maintain an average speed of 25-28 knots.

Plans had been made for the liner to call at Fishguard where passengers bound for London and the Continent could disembark if they wished to do so; it had also been arranged for mails to be landed. Over 600 passengers indicated that they would like to take advantage of this call and Cunard officials proceeded from Liverpool to supervise disembarkation.

Shortly after midnight on Thursday, 22nd December 1910, the **Mauretania**, her schedule maintained arrived off the Welsh port. Passengers disembarked into waiting tenders while baggage and mails were loaded on to other tenders. The Great Western Railway had arranged for three special trains. Two went direct to Paddington and the third went by way of Reading to Dover with passengers bound for the Continent.

The **Mauretania** proceeded to Liverpool where the remainder of her passengers and the other mails were landed. Her homeward voyage had taken 4 days, 15 hours, 57 minutes at an average speed of 25.07 knots. The *Daily Mail*, in a leading article, anticipating the successful outcome of the voyage commented:

*"If the **Mauretania** puts her passengers ashore punctually to the time appointed, then indeed not the Cunard company only but the whole British people will exult at a new trophy gloriously won on the most savage and stormy oceans by sterling quality in the face of bad luck."* But in the flood of congratulatory messages perhaps none was more apposite to the occasion and the season of the year than that sent by Mr Edward Morris, Governor of Montana, who, after congratulating the **Mauretania**, went on: *"On the eve of this happy holiday season it is profitable to reflect on the intimate ties existing between the United States and the Mother Country, and to express the hope that these bonds may be knit more closely as years go by."* ||||

'BULLETIN' EXTRA !!!

The Editor has a large backlog of well-researched and well-written material waiting to appear in the Society's *'Bulletin'*. To break this log-jam an extra edition of *'The Bulletin'* will be sent out to Members in mid-January, 2001. j.s.

DONATION RECEIVED

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society gratefully acknowledges a donation of \$1,000 from the Pape Family Trustees of Waterbury, Connecticut, U.S.A.

On 7th July the Society's Secretary received a letter from William J. Pape II, publisher of the *Waterbury Republican-American* newspaper. Mr Pape was searching for information about his great-grandfather, Robert Pape, who was captain of the s.s. **Maitland**, an English merchant ship engaged in the Chinese and Japanese trade in the 1870s. The only information available to Mr Pape was that Captain Pape died of an Asiatic fever on board the **Maitland** at Yokohama in 1877. His wife and two children, who had accompanied him on the voyage, were sent home to Liverpool.

Captain Pape's son, William J. Pape I, emigrated to America in 1887 and purchased the *Waterbury Republican-American* in 1901. This has been a family-owned business since that time.

Given the foregoing details, two Members of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society were able to come up with the following information. There was a Captain William Pape of Workington, who appeared to be a little younger than Robert Pape. The s.s. **Maitland** was an iron screw steamer built at Port Glasgow in 1872. She was barque rigged, i.e. usually three masts, square rigged sails on the foremast and main, and fore-and-aft on the mizzen. She was of 550 gross tons, 422 nett, with a length of 190 feet. The owners were Hine Brothers of Maryport, Cumbria.

The 1877 voyage was checked in *Lloyd's List* (on micro-fiche) and the following details were found. The **Maitland** was reported as passing the Lizard on 17th April 1877 when outward bound from Cardiff. She arrived at Yokohama on 23rd June and on 3rd July it was reported that "*Captain Pape of barque Maitland died.*" This date does not tally exactly with the date in the Official List of Masters' Certificates, i.e. born 1842, died 29th June 1877. Captain Pape held Master's Certificate No: 822317, and he had passed his examination at Liverpool in 1870.

In a letter of appreciation to the Society, William J. Pape II writes that the Pape Family Trustees were all pleased and impressed with the results of the research. Mr Pape goes on to say that his grandfather, William James Pape, was just four when Captain Pape died. His mother, Martha Burnett Pape, managed to get William and his two sisters back to Liverpool where they opened a boarding house. When William was twelve he was sent to live with relatives in Passaic, New Jersey, U.S.A.

William took a lowly job with the *Passaic Daily News* at the age of 16 and the following year became a reporter. He rapidly progressed to the position of city editor at the age of 19, then became business manager, and bought the *Waterbury Republican*, a not very prosperous paper at the time, when he was just 26. His career continued to prosper and he became a highly respected public figure.

William was gifted with a sense of humour. On one occasion when the 'Coming Events' column was too wordy, he admonished his staff with this directive: "*Only two lines allowed under 'Coming Events' heading, except for announcement of the end of the world!*" |||||

CAPTAIN WILLIAM WILSON AND BLOCKADE RUNNING

by L.N.R.S. Member Charles Dawson

The finely researched article by Ron Evans in the September 'Bulletin' mentions Captain William Wilson's blockade-runners **Margaret and Jessie**, ex **Douglas**, being intercepted on 1st June 1863.

Details regarding her life vary a little from author to author. Stephen R. Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy* (Columbia, S.C. USA), 1988, states that the **Douglas** was purchased in England in November 1862 for £24,000 by Melchir G.H. Klingender. He was one of the many mysterious undercover agents used by the Confederacy, and his name appeared on her register as the owner, although he had bought the vessel on behalf of Fraser, Trenholm & Company, Liverpool. This company and John Fraser & Co. in Charleston were in fact both controlled by one of the principal figures in blockade running: George Alfred Trenholm in Charleston, who loyally served Confederate interests.

Captain Wilson took the **Douglas** from Liverpool on 12th November 1862 and arrived at Nassau, in the Bahamas, on 27th December. It was at Charleston in January 1863 that the **Douglas** was renamed, and it is of great significance that she was renamed in honour of the wife and daughter respectively, of Captain Wilson.

With his ship now renamed **Margaret and Jessie**, Captain Wilson made five trips before he was pursued off the Bahamas at the end of May 1863 by the U.S. gunboat **Rhode Island** which fired on and damaged his ship. Captain Wilson, fearing for the safety of his crew and passengers, beached his ship on the island of Eleuthra, which of course was in British waters, and ordered her evacuated. She was then towed to Nassau and salvaged. John Fraser & Co. sold the **Margaret and Jessie** to the Importing & Exporting Co. of South Carolina, and she continued her career in the capable hands of Captain Robert Lockwood until her capture on 5th November 1863.

The great honour afforded Captain Wilson in having the **Douglas** renamed after his wife and daughter appears to have been largely due to the prowess he had previously achieved in March 1862 when he recaptured his ship the **Emily St. Pierre** from the U.S. Navy. Captain Wilson had been appointed master of the **Emily St. Pierre** on 1st June 1861 and it was this vessel that brought him renown, at least in Britain, if not in the United States. The **Emily St. Pierre** was built at Bath, Maine in 1854 and she too had been named after an actual person. This was the daughter of George Alfred Trenholm, whose grand-daughter, Ethel S. Nepveux, wrote a book about him and his activities.

An earlier captain and 2/12ths owner of the **Emily St. Pierre** was Eugene L. Tessier. We know that he was in command of her when she arrived at Liverpool from Charleston on 9th May 1859. Tessier later became the captain of the first British steamer to challenge the Federal blockade in the American Civil War. She was the iron screw brig **Bermuda**, 215' x 29' x 21', 895g.t., 135HP, built by Pearse & Lockwood at

Stockton-on-Tees in 1861. She left West Hartlepool for Savannah on 18th August of that year, and arrived on 18th September with a cargo of arms and other war supplies. The **Bermuda** was captured on 27th April 1862. In early 1863 Captain Tessier took the ss **Phantom** to Bermuda. She was a brand-new steel screw steamer, 192'-9" x 22' x 12'-4", 322g.t., built by William C. Miller & Sons at Liverpool for Fraser, Trenholm & Co. The **Phantom** ran aground and was destroyed on 23rd September 1863.

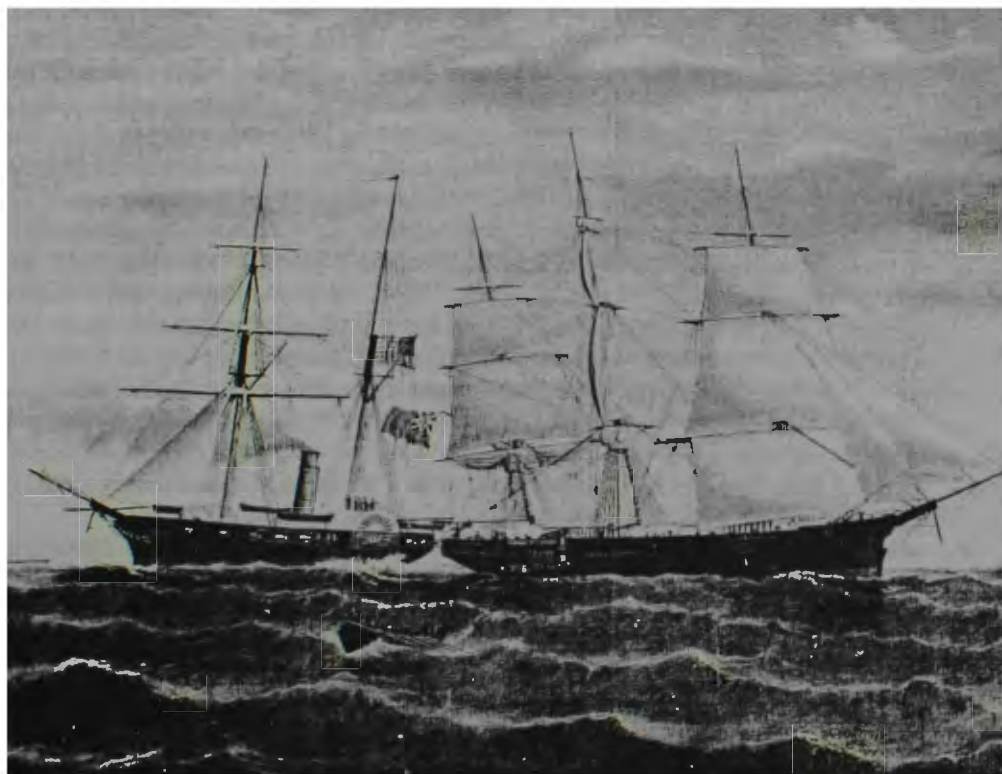
George Alfred Trenholm was the principal partner in Fraser, Trenholm & Co. and he subsequently became Secretary of the Treasury of the Confederacy from July 1864 to April 1865. Having made his fortune from plantations in the South, he now owned steamships, city business houses, wharves and stock in railroads and cotton presses. At the beginning of the Civil War he enjoyed almost unlimited credit abroad, which convenient facility was exploited by Jefferson Davis and his Confederate government, which had no credit with other nations for the purchase of armaments, ships and supplies. Trenholm's company owned or operated a considerable fleet amounting to some sixty ships which brought in cargoes for the Confederates until the end of the war. The company was in fact the authorised depository of Confederate funds abroad. The President of the company, Charles K. Prioleau, combined this office with that of banker in Liverpool during the war. He even took out British citizenship for the purpose of aiding the South, and managed the luxury of the ownership of the steam yacht **Ceres** of the Royal Mersey Yacht Club.

A year before the American Civil War began in earnest in June 1861, the associated firm of John Fraser & Co. in Charleston had proudly announced a line of sailing packets, with monthly sailing schedules between Charleston and Liverpool. The fleet consisted of the **Susan G. Owens**, **Eliza Bonsall**, **John Fraser** and the **Emily St. Pierre**. With war threatening, their owners were said to have led the field in trying out legal dodges to keep merchandise rolling; an example being flying the British flag and registering their ships in the names of obscure office clerks at their Liverpool branch. That the **Emily St. Pierre** was even assigned a British Official Number (29631) confirms that her owners were thorough in their tactics.

George Alfred Trenholm himself owned 7/12^{ths} of the **Emily St. Pierre**, so there was every reason for the Federal authorities to suspect that she was being run for the Confederacy, despite all the subterfuge to disguise the fact. Even after the war broke out, Trenholm & Co. were boldly advertising a first-class monthly steamship service between Liverpool and Charleston for passengers and goods. The steamships involved could hardly have been any other than the blockade-runners ordered in Britain.

Back in January 1861, the **Emily St. Pierre** had arrived off Charleston from Liverpool and was ready to enter port under the Palmetto¹ flag (South Carolina), since there were already rumblings that war was imminent. John Fraser, of Fraser, Trenholm & Co. in Charleston had sent his chief clerk to Liverpool where he had purchased a complete outfit of arms, shipped them to New York and then on to Charleston by the steamer **Nashville**, which arrived in February 1861. We thus see that the Confederacy had been preparing well for an eventual showdown.

We next find the **Emily St. Pierre** at Calcutta, from where Captain Wilson sailed on 27th November 1861, supposedly under orders to *'ascertain whether it was peace or war: if peace, to take a pilot and enter the port of Charleston, if blockaded to proceed to St. John, New Brunswick.'* On 18th March 1862, when Captain Wilson considered the **Emily St. Pierre** to be about 12 miles off land, he found that he was under the surveillance of the blockading Federal paddle steamer **James Adger**. He was ordered to heave to under threat of being fired on. Then the **James Adger** lowered two longboats and sent a party over to examine the **Emily St. Pierre's** cargo. This scene was the subject of two paintings by the Liverpool-based marine artist William G. York(e), 1817-c1886. He had presumably completed these some years before he moved to New York in 1871.



William G. York(e) 1817-c.1883. Capture of the British ship **Emily St. Pierre** by the Federal sloop **James Adger** off Charleston, 18th March 1862.

The British vessel is shown hove to and the Federal sloop of war, (sixteen gun paddle steamer with auxiliary brigantine rig) is passing her stern to leeward with guns run out. One of the sloop's boats is alongside with a boarding party.

From *'Marine Art and Liverpool'* by L.N.R.S. President A.S. Davidson (1986)

The ship was impounded; the ship's papers confiscated and Captain Wilson arrested. He was taken before the flag officer who accused him of carrying saltpetre which was classified as contraband. Captain Wilson denied this accusation and maintained that his ship was British property, carrying only gunny from India.

The Federal blockaders stated that the *Emily St. Pierre* had been only three miles to seaward and had been steering directly for Charleston. Further, they claimed they had information that she had been flying the secession flag prior to her departure from Calcutta. Despite Captain Wilson's protests, all his crew except his cook, a 26-year old German named Louis Schelvin, and the steward, 28-year old Matthew Montgomery from Dublin, were transferred to Federal warships. A prize crew was placed on board the *Emily St. Pierre* consisting of Acting Master Lieutenant Josiah Stone, a master's mate, twelve men and an engineer as passenger. Captain Wilson was told that she was to be sailed to Philadelphia for adjudication. The charge was that the *Emily St. Pierre's* British registration was illegal. Moreover, 'Charleston' had been scraped off her stern; other sources say that 'Liverpool' had been substituted, but carelessly enough to reveal the change, although nothing so suspect was mentioned in the official U.S. report. The *Emily St. Pierre* may well have been flying the British flag at the time of her escapade, her owners being shown as the Liverpool-based Fraser, Trenholm & Co., but this firm was, as has already been pointed out, controlled by George Alfred Trenholm from Charleston.

Despite his precarious situation, Captain Wilson was not a man to acquiesce tamely to taking passage, under guard, in his own ship to Philadelphia, even if the odds were some 'five to one' against him. So, on the morning of 21st March 1862, he called Schelvin and Montgomery into his stateroom and said that he had made up his mind to risk his life in an attempt to retake his ship, and he asked for their assistance. They quickly agreed, despite being fully aware of the odds against their succeeding, and the knowledge that they could possibly be laying their lives on the line.

While Acting Master Lieutenant Stone was on watch, they tied and gagged the mate who had been asleep, and they then gave the engineer the same treatment. Captain Wilson then invited Stone to his room to check a navigation chart and in the passageway threatened him with a belaying pin whilst the cook and the steward thrust a gag into his mouth. On the pretext that Stone had given the order, Captain Wilson sent three men into a hatch and then closed it on them. The helmsman, facing one of the captured revolvers, next went into a hatch. As the watch from below tumbled out on deck, they were bound two by two. One drew a knife and was fired on and wounded. The remaining twelve men then surrendered. Captain Wilson had achieved a rare feat - the recapture of his own vessel from a vastly superior prize crew of professional sailors trained in the art of war; not merchant mariners like himself and his two men. Some of the still free American crew actually volunteered to lend a hand, but they had to be watched at all times for fear of 'dirty tricks'. One of them fell from up top and died of his injuries on the following day.

Despite the success of this part of the operation, Captain Wilson was still in a precarious position. He had still 3,000 miles to sail home with little extra help other

than his own two men and the few American volunteers. Getting the ship back to Liverpool was going to be a superhuman feat, without an active helmsman in all his crew but himself, as neither Schelvin nor Montgomery were seamen and could not help their captain much. Two more of the American prisoners volunteered and one of them was a seaman by profession, but he tried to persuade the others to overpower their captors and retake the ship. The plot was discovered and Captain Wilson had him clapped in irons and threatened to shoot the others if they showed the slightest hint of treachery.

On the way back across the Atlantic the **Emily St. Pierre** experienced a heavy gale and Captain Wilson feared that, after all, he would not make the passage. Damage to the steering required twelve hours hard work to put right. It is difficult to imagine a thirty-day passage in such circumstances, with such a crew and with such a number of prisoners, for the latter had of course to be fed as well as guarded. However, the indomitable Captain Wilson succeeded in reaching Liverpool on 21st April, 1862. On arrival, according to a story which has not been corroborated, a tug offered to take the **Emily St. Pierre** into port for £25. Had the tug's master known that the ship had such a skeleton crew, he would no doubt have asked for salvage terms and after the vessel had been successfully docked and he had discovered the true facts, he demanded a fee in any case! We can imagine what Captain Wilson's reply to that might have been. On the following day Captain Wilson found himself acclaimed and fêted on all sides. Long accounts appeared in local newspapers and the *Illustrated London News* added a portrait of 'the chief hero of the act of daring gallantry'. The cook Schelvin and steward Montgomery received accolades later.

Lieutenant Stone's sword was returned to him and the captured Americans were released and put on a ship to take them back to their native shores. In due course the imprisoned crew of the **Emily St. Pierre** was returned home on the Inman Line's screw steamship **Etna**, except for the mate who was retained by the British Consul to give evidence about the capture of the **Emily St. Pierre**. As the men arrived back at Liverpool they sang national songs, including 'Rule Britannia' and 'created a commotion on Queen's Dock by their cheering and extravagant demonstrations', it was reported in the local newspapers. The report went on to describe how 170 merchants of Liverpool, to mark Captain Wilson's conduct, raised a subscription and presented him with a magnificent tea and coffee service, and a gold watch. In addition, the **Emily St. Pierre's** owners honoured him with a purse of £2,000 (or guineas - reports differ), and his two men with £320 each. The Council of the Mercantile Marine Association presented Captain Wilson with its first gold medal. That proved to be a very rare event, for nearly a century passed before it awarded a second. Silver medals were awarded to Schelvin and Montgomery.

The presentation of the awards to Captain Wilson took place on 3rd May 1862 in the presence of the leading mercantile personalities of Liverpool. After the captured crew members arrived back in Liverpool, they presented their own tribute to Captain Wilson with a 'splendid sextant' (which turned out to be a quintant), manufactured by John Bruce of Liverpool. In the midst of all these celebrations,

Acting Master Lieutenant Stone had the melancholy task of writing to his superiors on 26th April and explaining how he came to find himself in the doleful situation of being detained in far-away Liverpool!

There were, naturally enough, political repercussions, as had already happened in November 1861 over the Trent affair.² Charles Francis Adams, the U.S. Minister in London, in a letter dated 24th April 1862 from the Legation of the United States, London, made representations to the British Government on behalf of Washington, insisting that the **Emily St. Pierre** be returned to the U.S. Courts. The matter remained in dispute for some time, with the public interest, both for and against, remaining keenly engaged. The British Government's refusal to yield to the U.S. demand was summed up in the statement that the law of England, as the law of all nations, forbids the taking away of a ship from its legal owners. This, it could be argued, was in keeping with the way in which the British Government had 'buried its head in the sand' over the help given to the Confederacy by British interests, particularly those of British shipbuilders in supplying blockade runners. The final dénouement came some ten years later when the British Government, under threat of war from the U.S.A., agreed to paying over three million pounds compensation adjudicated by the International Court of Arbitration at Geneva in September 1872.

The festivities for Captain Wilson continued further north, where he paid a visit to his native parish of Colvend in Kirkcudbright, south-west Scotland, where he was born on 11th March, 1816. There, an interesting historical note was struck. In speeches at the banquet to the captain in Dalbeattie Town Hall on 9th May 1862, with 135 guests present, the assembly was reminded that it was from this part of Scotland that John Paul Jones had hailed. It was suggested that Captain Wilson had perhaps in some way atoned for John Paul Jones' blistering attack³ there on 23rd April 1778. A felicitous coincidence is that Captain Simon Graham, with whom William Wilson had served his apprenticeship, once owned John Paul Jones' sextant: Graham was apparently a cousin of John Paul Jones. Graham sold the sextant to a resident of Richibucto (New Brunswick, Canada), whose son D.L. MacLaren, Mayor of Saint John and later Governor of New Brunswick, presented it to President Roosevelt in 1938. That sextant and its case are now in the U.S. Naval Museum at Annapolis, Maryland. The house where John Paul Jones was born on the Arbigland estate at Carsthorpe, near Dumfries, was converted into a museum in 1993 with the help of U.S. funds.

There are other interesting sequels to the presentations to Captain Wilson. One concerns his gold watch, which he had willed to his wife Margaret. After the captain's death in 1868, Mrs Wilson emigrated to Canada and remarried, to a Mr. Porteus of Rexton, New Brunswick. It was from a descendant of the latter that the Southampton Institute of Higher Education (S.I.H.E.), which had taken a keen interest in the captain's life, was able to trace the watch. Since then, unfortunately, track of it has been lost.

An impression of the **Emily St. Pierre** in storm conditions was painted by Frank Mason, R.I. (1876-1965). The artist had at one time sailed with some of the men from the ship.

Captain Wilson's quintant came to light many years after his death, by a remarkable coincidence, in the U.S. Liberty-type steamer **Robert H. Harrison** when that vessel was tied up at the Army Piers at Norfolk, Virginia. She had served throughout World War 2 and for seven years thereafter, but a slack period in shipping brought about her withdrawal from active trade. Before being towed to the James River idle fleet, valuable material such as her clocks and navigation instruments was removed for storage. Whilst checking the instruments, a representative of the Maritime Administration examined a note attached to a particular specimen very closely. It bore the inscription: '*Presented to Captain William Wilson by Officers and Crew of the ship **Emily St. Pierre** for his gallant conduct in recapturing the said vessel from a Prize Crew sent on board from the U.S. War Steamer **James Adger**, 21st March, 1862*'. In addition, the manufacturer's name was also inscribed: *John Bruce, 26 Wapping, Liverpool*. Realising that the quintant, as it turned out to be, was of historical interest, the Maritime Administration agent felt that it should be preserved and displayed. The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, VA, U.S.A., was selected as a repository. Through the Museum's library, the events which led to the inscription on the quintant were brought to light. It is not known how it ended its days in the U.S.A.

Captain Wilson returned to Liverpool in April 1865 after the end of the American Civil War in command of an ex-blockade runner which had managed to avoid capture. She was the iron p.s. **Vulture**, built by Aitken & Mansell, Kelvinhaugh in 1864. Captain Wilson's Liverpool address in June 1868 was at 12, Everton Terrace, in a house of which he was the last resident before it was demolished. In 1870 he was shown as the occupier of 111 Mark Street, Toxteth, Liverpool.

A number of journalistic variations regarding the ultimate fate of the captain have been written. A favourite, wringing out the last dregs of pathos, is that the captain used the 2,000 guineas reward from the owners of the **Emily St. Pierre** to buy his own ship, but that he was sadly lost in her in the Bay of Biscay.* The truth appears to be, firstly that he invested the money in a firm of merchant tailors and outfitters in Lord Street, Liverpool which was owned by a compatriot who in some way cheated him, with the result that he was obliged to return to the sea in order to be able to continue to make a living. Secondly, the story of Captain Wilson's end was tragic, but in a different way. His last ship was the iron ship **Glasgow**, Official Number 42721, 1,168 tons, built by Gingras, Quebec, in 1861 and belonging to J. & W. Stewart of Greenock. According to the ship's log, she left Liverpool on 31st March 1868 with a cargo of coal, presumably as ballast, bound first for Aden and then for Moulmein (Burma) via the Cape of Good Hope.

* *This confusion presumably arose from the fact that the **Emily St. Pierre** was later bought by Fernie Brothers of Liverpool, who renamed her **Windsor Castle**. It was she that foundered in the Bay of Biscay on 31st January 1869. Captain Wilson was already dead, as we shall see.*

On 21st July 1868, when the **Glasgow's** position, according to her log, was 11°30'N, 48°36'E, Captain Wilson took ill and died on 23rd July after two days of severe suffering when the ship's position was 'Burnt Island bearing WSW 8 miles'. These positions given in the log show her to have been in the Gulf of Aden, quite near to the coast of British Somaliland, as it then was. There is only one small island in this part of the Gulf, appearing in an old atlas with the Arabic name Jebel Tur. (Jebel or gebel is the English transliteration of the Arabic word for mountain.) This island is called Jasiired Maydh in a modern atlas. Maydh (or Meid depending on the transliteration from the Arabic) is the coastal town nearest to the island. Jasiired (or gezireh) is simply the English transliteration of the Arabic word for island. This particular island lies some 90 miles west of **Glasgow's** stated position.

That the ship was *en route* for Aden when Captain Wilson died is confirmed by the annotation in the ship's log signed by the Assistant Resident at Aden on 11th August 1868. That is nineteen days after the captain's death, but the ship could easily have been becalmed in the Gulf of Aden. Reference to the *Sailing Directions for the Indian Ocean and China Sea*, and the British Admiralty Pilot Book *Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Pilot*, states that Maydh or Mait Island, latitude 11°13'N, longitude 47°14'E, was known as Meyet or Burnt Island in the period around the year 1870. This is undoubtedly the island referred to in the ship's log. We now know for certain that it was in the waters of the Gulf of Aden off this island that Captain Wilson's crew buried him. |||||

Notes

¹ page 7 'the Palmetto flag': Each U.S. state has its own flag and Americans have a slang name for their favourite state, usually called after a feature of its flag. South Carolina has a 'palmetto' (from the Spanish 'palmito') on its flag, a palmetto being a small palm tree. I think South Carolina's was particularly the dwarf fan-palm. I don't have the Latin name for it! (The palmetto emblem may still be seen on a ceiling in C.K. Prioleau's house in Abercromby Square, Liverpool.)

² page 11 'the Trent affair': In November-December 1861, a U.S. vessel intercepted the British steamer *Trent* and removed two leading Confederate supporters, Mason and Slidell, who were travelling to England on a 'diplomatic mission'. In the face of strong British hostility (held in check only by the tact of the Prince Consort, who was dying of typhoid fever at the time), Lincoln induced his Secretary of State William H. Seward to order the release of the two men. [Alan Palmer, *Penguin Dictionary of Modern History* (Penguin 1983), 'Prince Consort' page 234, and 'Trent Incident' page 288; also Stephen R. Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy*, (Columbia, 1988), page 399].

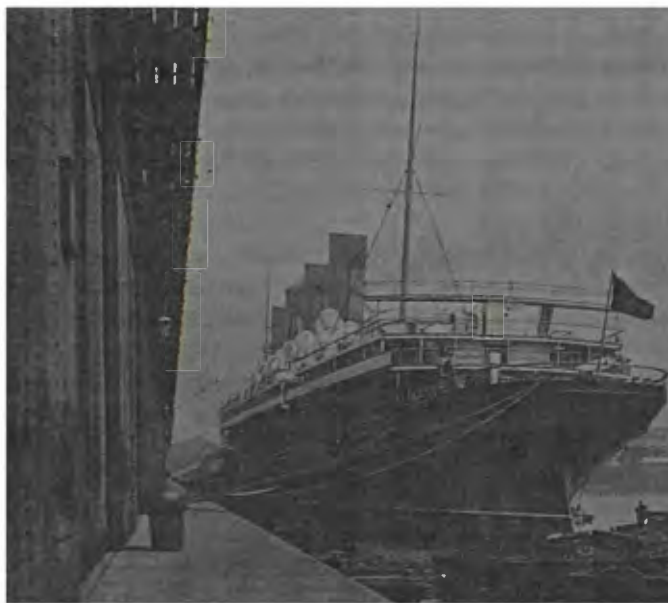
³ page 11 'John Paul Jones' blistering attack on 23rd April 1778': John Paul Jones was born as John Paul in 1747 on the Arbigland Estate, Carsthorpe, near Dumfries, and became master of various slaving and merchant ships trading to the West Indies

and the American colonies. On 27th November 1770 he became a Freemason of St. Bernard Lodge, Kirkcudbright. The following year he was probably the master of a Galloway - Isle of Man packet and in 1773 he killed a mutinous seaman. He then changed his name, first to John Jones and then to John Paul Jones. In 1775 he was commissioned as First Lieutenant in the Continental Navy which had been formed by disgruntled American colonists. These colonists held three meetings, which are referred to, as a group, the 'Continental Congress'. At the first of these meetings held in Philadelphia in 1774, one of the early decisions seems to have been to form their own Navy. [*The Penguin Dictionary of Proper Names*, Penguin, 1991, p.115.]

John Paul Jones took part in the Continental Navy's first action on 6th April 1776 against H.M.S. **Glasgow**, and subsequently many later engagements against the English Navy. He gained a regular captain's commission from Congress on 8th August 1776. From then until 1779 John Paul Jones was on roving commissions in command of a number of vessels. Whilst in command of the **Ranger** in 1778 he engaged vessels in English and Scottish waters and on 23rd April he raided Whitehaven and St. Mary's Isle (Kirkcudbright) where he stole the local laird's silver - but returned it later!

Acknowledgements

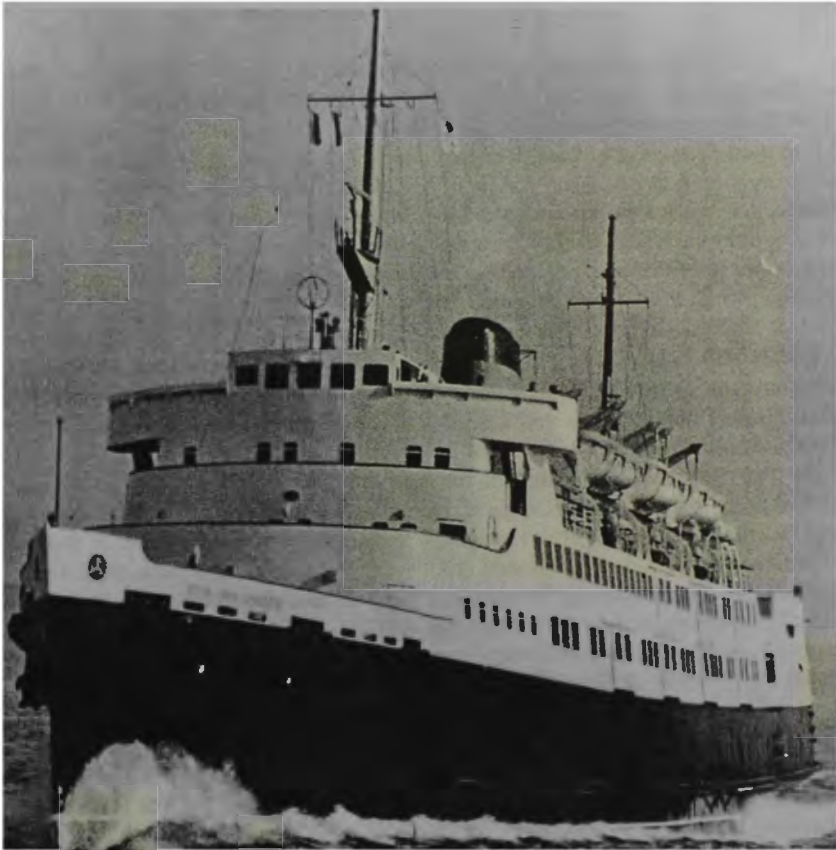
Mr Peter Barton, Kenilworth; Mr Tony Blackler, Petersfield; Mr Don Geddes, Folly Beach, SC, U.S.A.; Mr Ernie Robinson, Kippford; Mr Brian D. Thynne, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich; Dr. Stephen R. Wise, Beaufort, SC, U.S.A.



LOOKING BACK . . .

CUNARDER **Mauretania**, and the **Blue Riband Holder** for Atlantic speed in 1907, her maiden season, is tied up at Liverpool's Sandon Dock awaiting a berth in Huskisson Dock. The picture appears by courtesy of the NMGM (Maritime Museum) Trustees.

STEAM PACKET MEMORIES



The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company's *Ben-my-Chree* of 1966
on her trials in the Firth of Clyde on 10th May, 1966.

In his book *Turbine Steamers of the British Isles*, Nick Robins records
that 128 turbine steamers were built for use around the coasts of Britain
between 1901 and 1966. The first was the **King Edward** and the last
was the 1966 **Ben-my-Chree**.

The **Ben-my-Chree** sailed for the IOMSPCo until 1984 and was
finally broken up in Spain in 1989, having been towed from Birkenhead
by the tug **Hollygarth** on 16th August 1989.

*photograph from the Cammell Laird Archive,
supplied by I. N. R. S. Member Ron Evans*

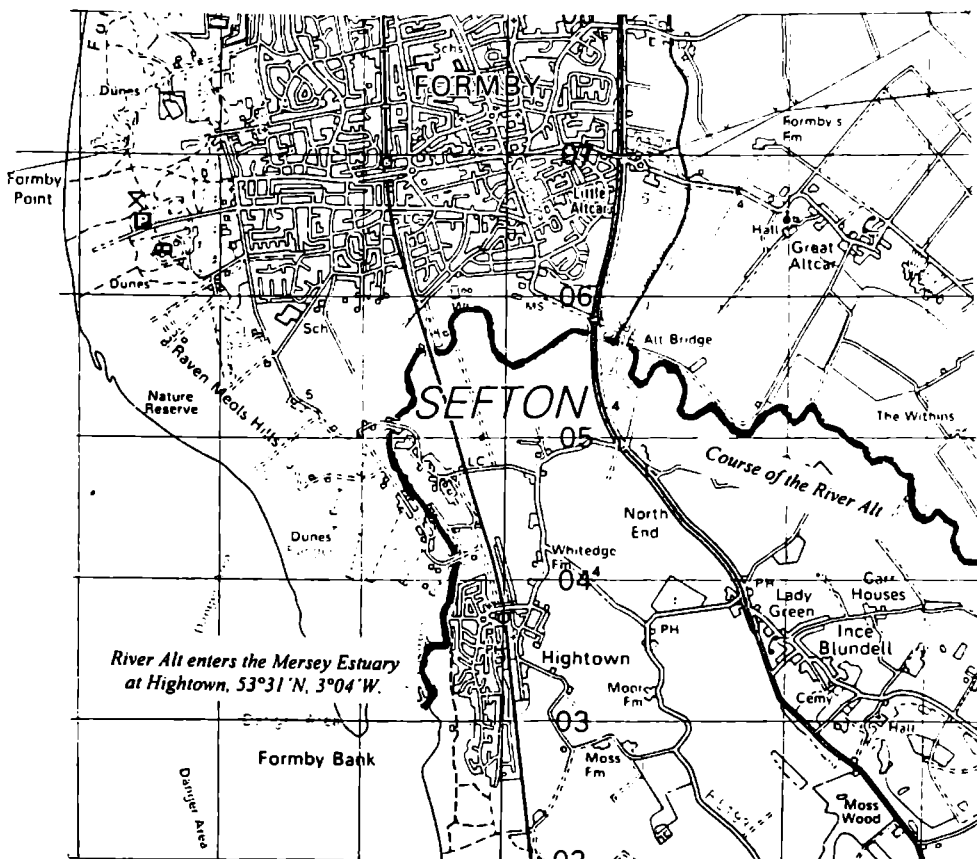
MORE SHIPS IN THE ALT

by L.N.R.S. Member Terry Kavanagh

As Mike Stammers points out (*'The Bulletin'*, Vol.44, No.1, pp.8-9), there is evidence indicating that ships of the River Alt played an important rôle in the coasting trade during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.¹ For example, a list of 31 barques belonging to Liverpool and other parts of Lancashire; and to Beaumaris, Caernarvon and those parts, "*collected out of the Custome bookes*" in 1618 includes no less than seven from Formby and three from Altcar.² Also, Manx records show that vessels from the River Alt transported soap and other goods to the island.³ The Welsh port books refer to such craft trading between the Isle of Man and Beaumaris, as well as other places, in Elizabethan times.⁴

Indeed, four of these small coasters sailed from the Isle of Man to the Anglesey port in 1587. The first to arrive, in February, was the **Michael** of Al[t]car (7 tons burthen), Robert Williamson master, laden with 50 barrels of barley, 6 barrels of oats, 2 salted beef carcasses and 2 barrels of oatmeal for Robert Witter of Liverpool, merchant; and 12 barrels of oats and 3 salted beef carcasses for Richard Johnson, the elder. Six days later, the **Michael** returned with 40 barrels of lime and 1 pair of quernstones, to the order of William Higgins, the Lord Bishop of Man's factor. A month later, the **Jesus** of Alte (10 tons), William Ryse master, arrived at Beaumaris with 30 barrels of barley for Oswald Hill of Alte, merchant. Next came the **Edward** of Forneby (10 tons), Thomas Wynstanley master, with 3 hogsheads of salted herrings full, 3 hogsheads of salted herrings shot and 1 fardel [package] of linen cloth, the property of John Bateman of Tenby, merchant; and 1 hogshead, 2 barrels and 4 sacks barley for Thomas Waters of Beaumaris, merchant. Then the **Jonas** of Formby (6 tons), Ellice Rummer master, arrived with 80 barrels of barley and 8 barrels of wheat belonging to John Holland, a Manx merchant. At the end of March the **Michael** of Al[t]car entered Beaumaris again with 20 barrels of barley for the aforementioned William Higgins. Two months later, in May 1587, the **Gregory** of Alte (12 tons), John Harrison master, left Beaumaris for the Isle of Man, freighted with 2 pairs of quernstones and 20 barrels of lime for the Lord Bishop's factor. And in March, 1593, the **Dragon** of Formby (15 tons), Richard Williamson master, entered Beaumaris with passengers from the Island and 50 bushels of barley from a Manx merchant named William Robertes.

There are more references to river Alt vessels in the Beaumaris and Caernarvon Port Books. The earliest one dates from May 1577 when the **Jesus** of Ault (5 tons), Christopher Mores master, arrived at Beaumaris - but the cargo and port of origin are not given. In March 1583, the **Good Lucke** of Alte (8 tons), Christopher Warton master, entered Beaumaris with 100 sheepfells and 100 codlamb fells from Washford [Wexford], belonging to Thomas Wignall of Liverpool, merchant. Two more vessels arrived at the Anglesey port ten years later: the **Mary** of Alte (16 tons), Thomas Norres master, had 3 butts 'seck' [wine] on board, the property of two



merchants, Harry Gouding and Thomas Rowland; and the *Jesus of Alte* (16 tons), Robert Johnson shipmaster-cum-merchant, brought 80 bushels of rye and 80 bushels of white salt (by warrant dated Liverpool 10th June 1593).

In May 1592, the *Mychell of Alte* (15 tons), Richard Blundell master and merchant, entered Caernarvon with 140 barrels of rye from Alte. Four weeks later, an Alt vessel with the same name, John Blundell master, arrived at the Welsh port, possibly to collect Richard after he had sold his cargo of grain. (Incidentally, John Blundell could be the Formby mariner who was paid 47 shillings for 'carrying the officers from the *Audyt*'⁶ to the Isle of Man in 1594.) Finally, in June 1597, the *Gregory of Formeby* (20 tons), John Harryson master - which may be the same vessel that traded with Beaumaris ten years before - arrived at Caernarvon with 60 barrels of barley malt from Tewxbury for Edmund Welsh, a Tewkesbury merchant.

It is also worth mentioning that two years previously, in 1595, a vessel belonging to Alt entered and left the port of Chester.⁷ In that same year, one vessel from Formby and four from Alt sailed into Manx ports. One of these may well have been involved in the illicit trade in horseflesh from Scotland: in May 1595 two Scottish 'naggies' were landed at Douglas by Ellis Rymer - the master of the *Jonas* of Formby in 1587 perhaps. In June 1599 John Norres landed '*firewood [and] other tymbre not ratable*'⁷ there, probably out of a Formby vessel. Certainly the *Margaret* of Alt (12 tons) brought merchandise from Douglas to Liverpool in 1603.

In common with other River Alt craft entering the Mersey, the *Margaret* was liable for the payment of Liverpool town dues. Exemptions had been given by Royal grant to the merchants of London, Bristol, Wexford and Waterford, and the inhabitants of Altcar and Formby put forward the same claim by prescription - but to no avail. At a Port Moot Court held at Liverpool in 1567, under entries headed '*Devises thought by us needful for the benefit of the Town*', it was stated:

*"We find that evry Bark, Picard (sailing barge) or Boat as well of Wallasey, Formby, as elsewhere, shall pay all Customs and Anchirage, with all other Duties belonging to this Town."*⁸

Not surprisingly, attempts were made to evade these duties. On one occasion, in February 1641, herrings imported by Formby men were detained for non-payment of town dues and sold forthwith. The 'composition' money was taken for the town's use and the remainder of the money returned to the offenders.⁹ And in January 1652, at another Liverpool Town Assembly:

"the payment of town customs and compositions for all kinds of provisions imported was raised, in particular herrings brought in by Formby men to Ault river without breaking bulk, who refuse any town customs. It is ordered that even though they do not break bulk but only make their entry in the customs house and pass on to another place or creek belonging to this port, nevertheless they shall pay half duty and composition for their goods at the discretion of the mayor and aldermen. And because [Water] Bailiff Andoe has paid 45 shillings for such Formby men he is to receive 22 shillings back."

*COMPOSITIONS at half rate by Richard Norris for 5 score and 12 barrels of herring in the Elizabeth of Formby, 13s 4d."*¹⁰

Just how far up the River Alt vessels like the *Elizabeth* could once navigate is not clear: the aforementioned ships '*of Altcar*' would not need to go that far inland to be so described. (We know that "*Gilbert Norres the younger of Formeby, sailor, on 12th July 1605 at Alker broke the close of Sir Richard Molyneux called Helmescoughe Woodd and cut down a crabtree*".¹¹ But of course this doesn't prove his vessel was moored at Altcar.) During the building of Alt Bridge, which connected Ince Blundell with Altcar, stone brought by water from the Toxteth quarry in 1676-7 was landed two miles downstream and carted the rest of the way.¹² However, the first floodgates near the Grange could have been the reason for this.

Be that as it may, the Alt Estuary was still navigable and in use well into the eighteenth century. On 5th April 1710 Nicholas Blundell, of Little Crosby Hall, wrote

that Captain Peter White was sailing in his ship the **Betty** (tonnage unknown) from Fairclough's Lake (a sheltered roadstead off present-day Southport) "*towards Leverpoole but he himself landed near the Grange. He sent his Ship forwards and Walked hither on foot. I lent him a Hors to ride on to Leverpoole.*" ¹³ On 13th July 1715 Nicholas went on board the **Flint Hoy**: "*she had brought some bricks from Leverpoole for Margrit Brownbill*" to the seaward end of the Alt. A couple of weeks later, two Little Crosby men came to see if he would join her in having more "*Bricks brought by Water from Leverpoole.*" ¹⁴ The **Flint Hoy** was kept pretty busy in those days ! |||||

References

¹ The vessels from Grange frequenting the port of Liverpool in 1660-61 belonged to Grange, near Lancaster, not Alt Grange. See T.S.Willan, *The English Coasting Trade 1600-1750*, 1938 (Manchester, 1967edn), esp. pp. 184-5.

² Cheshire Record Office, ZML/6/133a. This return of 1618 was compiled by the Mayor of Chester, and is not preserved in the Liverpool records. So it may be useful to list the relevant ships with their burthen or tonnage, and name of master:

FORMBY: **Mary Jane** (18 tons), Richard Rimmer; **Elizabeth** (16 tons), Thomas Lawrenson; **Harrie** (12 tons), Richard Harrison; **Angell** (16 tons), Richard Ensall; **Unity** (16 tons), Richard Norres; **Guiffte of God** (12 tons), Francis Norres; **Cuthbert** (10 tons), John Christopherson.

ALTCAR: **Ellen** (24 tons), Richard Blundell; **Unicorn** (16 tons) John Blundell; **Mark** (12 tons), Edward Warton.

³ J.R. Dickinson, *The Lordship of Man Under the Stanleys: Government and Economy in the Isle of Man, 1580-1704* (Chetham Society, 1996), pp 284ff.

⁴ E.A. Lewis, *Welsh Port Books, 1550-1603* (London, 1927) pp 258ff.

⁵ Dickinson, *op.cit.*, fn260, p.299.

⁶ D.M. Woodward, *The Trade of Elizabethan Chester* (Hull,1970) pp. 133-4.

⁷ Dickinson, *op.cit.*, pp.290-1, fn193, p.276.

⁸ *Report of the Inquiry into the State of Liverpool Corporation*, 1833, p.279

⁹ George Chandler, *Liverpool Under Charles I* (Liverpool,1965), p.72.

¹⁰ Michael Power, (ed.), *Liverpool Town Books 1649-71*. Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Vol. 136 (1999), p.43.

¹¹ James Tait, (ed.), *Lancashire Quarter Sessions Records, 1590-1606* (Chetham Society, 1917), p.273

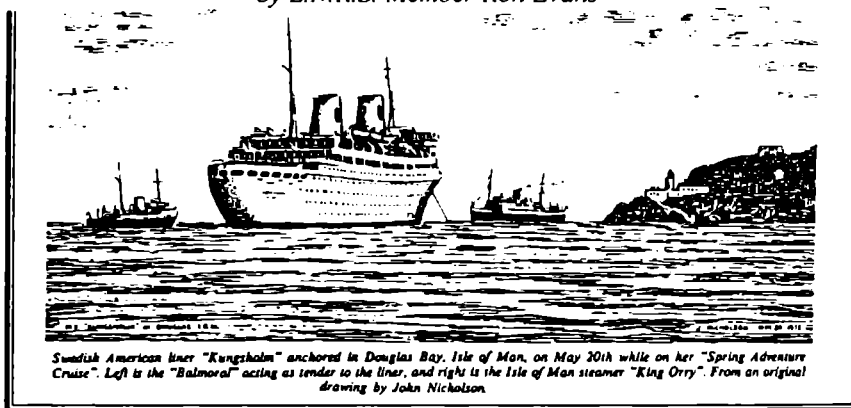
¹² Alison Maddock, 'Alt Level 1589-1779'; *Transactions Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, Vol.148 (1999), p.85.

¹³ *The Great Diurnal of Nicholas Blundell* (1702-1728), eds. Frank Tyrer and J.J. Bagley, 3 vols, Record Society of Lancashire & Cheshire, Vols. CX, CXII, CXIV (1968-72), I, p.250.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, II, pp.140-2.

“BIG BOAT IN THE BAY”

by L.N.R.S. Member Ron Evans



“Big Boat in the Bay.....” was often the cry of newspaper vendors echoing around the streets of Douglas in the 1900s when a visiting liner or warship would be arriving in Douglas Bay.

From 1927 many liners visited Douglas, bringing home people who had emigrated to North America in the late 1800s and early 1900s and who were described as ‘Homecomers’ on their return to the land of their birth. These liners were specially chartered for the ‘Homecomers’ and were soon followed by cruise ships from Europe and North America as the North Atlantic passenger traffic began to reduce before and after World War 2.

Prior to the two World Wars, Royal Naval warships also made frequent visits to Douglas Bay to show the flag and to provide Navy ‘Open Days’ for the public to visit the ships. Many famous ships came to Douglas, but none more famous than in August 1907 when half the Channel Fleet anchored in Douglas Bay.

Ships of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company were often used as tenders for these visiting liners and warships, together with any excursion ship which happened to be in Douglas at the time. Sometimes the excursion ships would have made the voyage to Douglas specially to provide these tender services.

The Douglas Harbourmaster Logs of 1907-1912 and 1925-1940, courtesy of the Manx Museum, provide a most interesting picture of vessels arriving and departing from Douglas in this period and detail movements about the harbour and the berths in use, creating a real life picture at any point in time of the port. A detailed study of these logs has provided the references to many of the vessels described in this article.

These vessels have now all passed into history with some notable exceptions: namely the Cunard liner **Carinthia** of 1956 (see ‘*The Bulletin*’, April 2000), and the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company’s **Manxman** of 1955. Is it too much of a coincidence that the **Manxman** also provided tender services to the **Carinthia** on that liner’s visit to Douglas Bay on 30th May 1958, and both vessels are still in existence in

the year 2000? Another regular tender to liners at Douglas was the **Balmoral** which can still be seen around the coasts of Britain preserved as an excursion vessel by associates of the Waverley Steam Navigation Company and now on charter.

The pictures created and the memories invoked by the arrivals and departures of these ships in Douglas Bay are well portrayed in John Nicholson's drawing of the **Kungholm** in Douglas Bay on Saturday 20th May 1972 with the **Balmoral** acting as tender and the **King Orry** leaving harbour on a scheduled voyage to Ardrossan. Many more pictures may be brought to life with the following brief description of the liners, warships and tenders with profile drawings.

There were no deep-water berths in Douglas Harbour until the 1980s when dredging was carried out to berths at the Victoria Pier. Tenders were required for the larger vessels until the 1970s when cruise ships began to carry their own on-board motor cruisers, and vessels up to 15,000 tons could be accommodated at the Victoria Pier.

The Isle of Man has seen the annual number of visiting cruise ships grow from just four in 1993 to fourteen in 1996. Visiting cruise ships now include the smaller expedition type of vessel like the **Explorer** and luxury vessels such as the **Song of Flower**, **Seabourne Spirit**, **Hanseatic**, **Europa**, **Silver Cloud**, **Silver Wind**, **Royal Viking Sun**, **Royal Viking Sky** and the **Odessa**. Cruise ship movements may now be followed in all the shipping magazines.

Many of the liners and tenders featured in this article are well known to the people of Liverpool. The liners became famous on the trans-Atlantic services between New York, Montreal, Quebec and Liverpool. The tenders also became well known on the Irish Sea services of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company and the Liverpool and North Wales Steamship Company. The tenders of the Alexandra Towing Company, providing ferry services between Princes Landing Stage and the liners anchored in the Mersey have now all passed into history.

The ALBERTIC of 1919

Gross Tonnage: 18,940 Length overall: 615 feet Breadth: 72 feet Speed: 17 knots

The **Albertic** was built by A.G.Weser of Bremen. She was laid down in 1914 as the **München** for Norddeutscher Lloyd, but building was suspended during the war. In 1919 she was ceded to Great Britain under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. The vessel was launched on 23rd March 1920 and was completed in 1923, having been purchased from the Shipping Controller by the Royal Mail Line and named **Ohio**. She sailed on her maiden voyage from Hamburg to New York on 27th March 1923. In February 1927 the **Ohio** was sold to the White Star Line and re-named **Albertic**. Her first voyage in White Star colours was from Liverpool to New York on 22nd April 1927. The **Albertic** was the first trans-Atlantic liner to be chartered for a 'Homecomers' visit from North America to the Isle of Man. She sailed from Montreal and Quebec on Friday 3rd June 1927 and arrived off the west coast of the Isle of Man on the evening of 10th June to be greeted by gun salutes from Peel Battery,

acknowledged by rockets from the vessel. She then sailed south-about and more rockets were fired as the **Albertic** passed the Chickens Rock Lighthouse. The morning sun was bright behind the White Star liner as she anchored in a calm sea in Douglas Bay on 11th June 1927. The **Albertic** was dressed overall and bands played the Manx National Anthem and *Ellan Vannin* both on board and on the Victoria Pier where large crowds had gathered to greet the Homecomers.

The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company's **Peel Castle** acted as tender to bring the Homecomers ashore for the many organised events. It was the first time an ocean going liner as large as the **Albertic** had visited the Isle of Man and she was far too big to enter Douglas Harbour. The 1927 Manx Homecoming was so successful that it was to lead to many more in the years to come. It is interesting to note that the IOMSPCo's **Viking** departed from the Victoria Pier at 9.am on her scheduled service to Liverpool and her passengers would have had a very fine view of the **Albertic**, a '*Big Boat in the Bay*'!

The **Albertic** continued on the North Atlantic until September 1933 when she was laid up in the Holy Loch in the Clyde. In 1934 she was transferred to Cunard White Star ownership but she was never used by them and was broken up at Osaka where she arrived on 29th November 1934, just fourteen years after her launch.

The **DORIC** of 1923

Gross Tonnage: 16,484 Length overall: 601 feet Breadth: 68 feet Speed: 15 knots

The **Doric** was built by Harland & Wolff, Belfast in 1923 for the White Star Line's Liverpool-Quebec-Montreal service and she sailed on that route until 1932.

On 22nd June 1930 the **Doric** arrived in Douglas Bay from Montreal, the second visit of Manx Homecomers, and came to anchor outside the Battery Pier. The IOMSPCo's **Peel Castle** acted as tender.

In 1933 the **Doric** operated cruises from Liverpool and after her transfer to Cunard White Star operated summer cruises and was laid up during the winter. On 5th September 1935 the **Doric** was inbound from a Mediterranean cruise with 700 passengers on board when she collided with the French steamer **Formigny** of Chargeurs Réunis in fog off Cape Finisterre. The passengers were taken off by P.& O.'s **Viceroy of India** and the Orient Line's **Orion**, after which the **Doric** put into Vigo for temporary repairs. She then sailed for Tilbury where she was declared a constructive total loss and sold for breaking up at Newport, Mon.

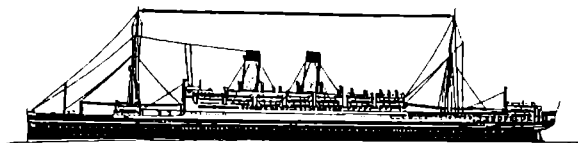
The **POLONIA** of 1921

Gross Tonnage: 7,858 Overall Length: 450 feet Breadth: 56 feet Speed: 15 knots

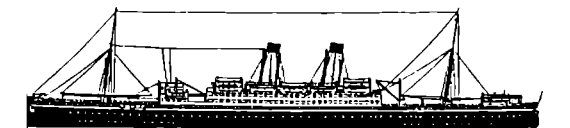
The **Polonia** of 1921 was built by Barclay Curle in 1911 as the **Kursk** for the Russian American Line. After the Armistice of 1918 the **Kursk** was turned over to the East Asiatic Company of Copenhagen and re-named **Polonia** and in January 1921 opened

"BIG BOAT IN THE BAY....."

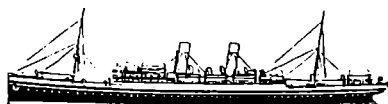
LINERS



ALBERTIC 1919



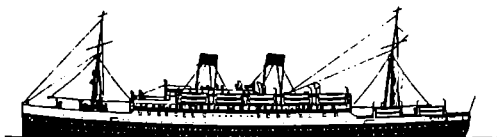
DORIC 1923



POLONIA 1921



VICEROY OF INDIA 1929



MONTE PASCOAL 1931



ATHENIA 1923

TENDERS



PEEL CASTLE 1912



PEEL CASTLE 1912



PEEL CASTLE 1912



RUSHEN CASTLE 1928



RUSHEN CASTLE 1928



VICTORIA 1928

the service between Libau and New York, trading as the Baltic American Line.

On 29th September 1930 the **Polonia**, described in the Douglas Harbourmaster logs as a Danish steamer, arrived in Douglas Bay on a cruise from Oban and came to anchor in the North Bay. The **Peel Castle** once again acted as tender and landed 323 passengers at the Victoria Pier to tour the Island.

The **Polonia** was sold later in 1930 to the Polish Transatlantic Shipping Company Ltd, and this concern changed its name in 1935 to the Gdynia-America Shipping Line. The **Polonia** was transferred to South American services in 1936 and was scrapped in 1939.

The VICEROY OF INDIA of 1929

Gross Tonnage: 19,627 Length overall: 612 feet Breadth: 76 feet Speed: 19 knots

The **Viceroy of India** was launched on the Clyde by Alexander Stephen & Co. of Glasgow on 15th September 1928 for the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company. Originally to have been named **Taj Mahal**, the new ship entered service on the London-Bombay route on 19th February 1929.

On 29th July 1930 the **Viceroy of India** anchored in the North Bay at Douglas whilst on a cruise from Southampton and landed some of her passengers to tour the island. The IOMSPCo's **Rushen Castle** may have acted as a tender as according to the Harbourmaster logs she was in port at the time.

In 1940 the **Viceroy of India** was requisitioned and converted into a troopship. On 11th November 1942 she was torpedoed and sunk by U.407 some 34 nautical miles off Oran with the loss of four of her crew.

The MONTE PASCOAL of 1931

Gross Tonnage: 13,882 Length overall: 524 feet Breadth: 66 feet Speed: 14 knots.

The **Monte Pascoal** was built in 1931 by Blohm & Voss at Hamburg for the Hamburg-South America Line for service between Hamburg and River Plate ports with calls at Spanish ports *en route*. She also cruised during the summer months.

The Douglas Harbourmaster logs record: "*on 17th July 1936 the Monte Pascoal on a cruise was brought to anchor in the North Bay, Douglas, by the Harbour-master Captain W.S. Moore. Draught 28 feet. 900 German passengers were landed to visit the Island. Departed at 20.00 hours.*"

The author was privileged to be rowed out to this vessel, a distance of nearly a mile from Douglas promenade in a calm sea but with a slight swell running when approaching the liner which was a massive vessel when viewed close from the waterline. The IOMSPCo.'s **Rushen Castle** acted as tender.

In 1940 the **Monte Pascoal** was requisitioned by the Kriegsmarine and used as an accommodation ship for the Navy Yard at Wilhelmshaven. On 3rd February 1944 she was bombed, burned out and sunk. On 12th May of that year the **Monte**

Pascoal was raised and on 31st December 1946 she was loaded with chemical warfare munitions and sunk by the British at Skagerrak.

The ATHENIA of 1923

Gross Tonnage: 13,581 Length overall: 526 feet Breadth: 66 feet Speed: 15 knots

The **Athenia** was completed in 1923 by the Fairfield Shipbuilding & Engineering Co. Ltd. of Glasgow for the Anchor-Donaldson Line. She was designed for the Liverpool-Quebec-Montreal services with winter sailings to Nova Scotia.

Douglas Harbourmaster logs record: "on 9th May 1937, Sunday a.m., the Donaldson liner **Athenia** 13,000 tons arrived off Douglas and was met by the Harbourmaster, Captain W.S. Moore, who piloted her to an anchorage in the North Bay. She had on board a party of Manx Homecomers from Canada and North America who were brought ashore by the IOMSPCo.'s steamer **Victoria** and landed at Victoria Pier. They were welcomed on arrival by the firing of maroons, blowing of whistles, the singing of massed choirs, and many speeches were made and replied to; the whole ceremony being recorded by the BBC and broadcast later in the day."

On 1st September 1939 the **Athenia** left Glasgow 'under wartime conditions' and cleared Liverpool the following day. At 19.30hrs on 3rd September 1939, the day war was declared, the **Athenia** was torpedoed and sunk by U.30 when some 200 miles west of Inishtrahull in position 56°44'N, 14°05'W. 93 passengers and 19 crew out of 1,418 persons on board were lost. The sinking of the **Athenia** was against the emphatic order that no action was to be taken against passenger ships for the time being. Throughout the War, the Germans denied the sinking.

The COSTA RICA of 1910

Gross Tonnage: 8,672 Length overall: 473 feet Breadth: 56 feet Speed: 15.5 knots

The **Costa Rica ex Prinseps Juliana** was built in 1910 by Nederl. Scheps. Maats. at Amsterdam for the Royal Netherlands Steamship Company for services between Europe and South America, with calls at intermediate ports. As built she had only one funnel (see profile by author), but the vessel was completely re-constructed during 1933-34 and an extra funnel provided.

Douglas Harbourmaster logs record: "On 6th August 1939 the **Costa Rica**, 15,900 tons displacement, registered Amsterdam, Royal Netherlands Line, on cruise, anchored in North Bay. Draft 22 feet, arrived at 5.am BST from Kingstown and sailed for Helensburgh at 8.pm." No tender is recorded, but the **Rushen Castle** was in harbour at the time and could have provided tender services if the **Costa Rica's** own boats were not used.

In 1940 the **Costa Rica** joined the Allied Forces in the Mediterranean and on 29th April 1941 she was divebombed by German Stukas and sunk north of Crete whilst evacuating British Forces from Greece.

"Big Boat in the Bay" will be concluded in the next 'Bulletin'. j.s.

THE CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Archives and Library,
Merseyside Maritime Museum

1st December, 2000

Dear Members,

In October my wife and I had a short holiday on the island of Malta which left us with a very great appreciation of its history. I had many times sailed close to Malta during my career at sea, but I had never actually set foot on the island. I well remember how we marvelled at the number of churches on the skyline as we steamed past, but what we did not realise was that they stood out so well mainly because of their size. Even the smallest village has a huge domed church on a hill, and being constructed of the island's sandstone they stand out even more clearly in the sunlight.

Of course the history of Malta spans the full history of European civilisation with a strong religious significance. Being an island, its history has considerable nautical interest.

The part played by Malta in the 1939-45 War together with the siege-breaking convoys are much remembered and there is a fine war museum at the entrance to Grand Harbour at Valletta. I was very glad to be able to visit the newly opened and still developing Maritime Museum of Malta which is situated at Vittoriosa on the opposite side of Grand Harbour from Valletta. The museum is housed in the large and ancient building of the former naval bakery and with three floors the naval ratings of old must have been fed a lot of bread! I much enjoyed touring the museum which is very well presented with paintings, charts, guns, nautical instruments and some fine models of vessels; in particular a number of galleys and traditional Maltese boats. There is of course a strong naval influence in the exhibits and I recommend this museum to Members.

Here in Liverpool our 2000-2001 Programme of Meetings is going well with a most interesting series of speakers. In December we have our traditional Christmas lunch at the Liverpool Marina in Coburg Dock on the 7th, followed by the Christmas Social and Quiz on the 14th.

Since my last letter the Society has been represented at both the Local History Exhibition in Birkenhead and also at the Wirral History Fair which took place at Port Sunlight. We had a fine display to illustrate our interests and I think it is fair to say that the Society made a number of new friends and may even have acquired one or two new members. With an extra issue of '*The Bulletin*' scheduled for early in the New Year, there is really quite a lot of activity within the Society.

I wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.



Michael D Jones

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday, 14th December, 2000

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SOCIAL AND QUIZ

Thursday, 18th January, 2001

"A RATHER THIN WHITE LINE. THE HISTORY OF BROCKLEBANKS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR"

(Mr J. Stokoe)

Thursday, 15th February, 2001

"THE LOG OF THE SHIP *HAROLD*, CONGO VOYAGE, 1869"

(David Eccles)

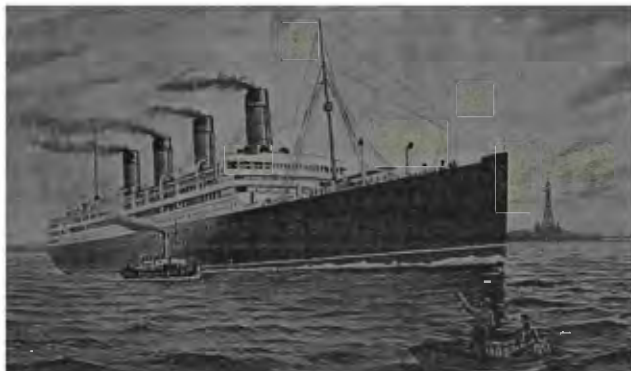
THE MONDAY FACILITY

Members' access to the Archives and Library at the Merseyside Maritime Museum on Mondays will continue in 2001 as follows. Provisional dates for January to March are :

JANUARY : Monday 29th

FEBRUARY : Mondays 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th

MARCH : Mondays 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th



The *Aquitania* steams past New Brighton Tower whilst outward bound to New York in 1914.

Original painting by Wirral artist Ralph Coventry of Noctorum, Birkenhead.

D.I.Y. NAVIGATION

by Graeme Cubbin

The author of this article was once, many years ago in 1940, a Prisoner of War among many on board the German Raider Atlantis. Six months after their capture, the prisoners were transferred to a makeshift prison-ship, the s.s. Durmitor, and transported to Italian Somaliland to continue their incarceration. During this time, ingenious methods were devised to plot the course of the Raider and her consort. Despite a lack of essential hardware, and although an untutored first-voyage Cadet at the time, the author made careful note of the procedures adopted by his mentors, and these are described in the following text.

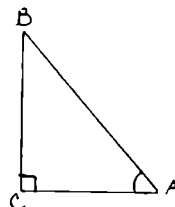
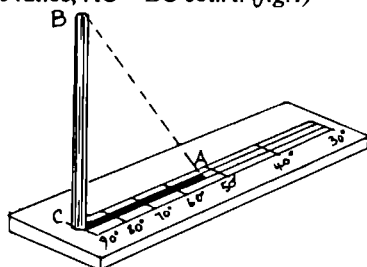
Note: Marine compass notations and Astronomical ephemeris discussed in this article are those which were in common usage in the 1940s.

There are few spectacles more harrowing than that of a seaman who does not know where he is. And in the long ages before satellite navigation was even dreamt of, that was a situation which arose quite frequently. In latter years, at least, this doleful state of ignorance was usually short-lived. Our seaman would not rest until he had confirmed that his ship was situated on at least one position line that traversed clear of danger. He would reach that happy conclusion perhaps by means of a snapsight of sun or star through a breach in the clouds, or by a bearing of a distant landmark, or by a line of soundings, or in later more sophisticated times, by a radio D/F bearing or radar contact.

However, in the year 1940, I happened to be one of a crowd of Merchant Seamen, prisoners of the German Reich, aboard the commerce-raider **Atlantis**. There we were kept in a permanent state of darkness as far as the raider's position at sea was concerned. Our German captors, though open and affable in non-operational matters, kept their ship's position a closely guarded secret. This was a very frustrating state of affairs to the navigators among the prisoners. Perhaps to others - engineers, for example - one patch of sea looks very much like any other, but to a navigator each patch has its own identity, an identity defined precisely in terms of Latitude and Longitude. Thus it was that a number of Officers felt compelled to direct their restless minds towards finding a solution to the problem of our global whereabouts, using whatever means, however primitive, they could find among the possessions they had been allowed to keep. Obviously, all basic instruments, such as chronometers, sextants, compasses and binoculars which had been salvaged when their owners' ships had been abandoned, were confiscated (and formal receipts issued with typical German punctiliousness). The instruments would be returned to their owners (on production of receipt) at the end of the war when we would all go home, an event which, in German eyes, at least, lay not very far into the future.

To Find the Latitude.

Two, perhaps three thousand years ago, ancient Greek philosophers had noted the regular motion of the Sun in the heavens as seasons advanced and retreated. Indeed they had invented an instrument for measuring the Sun's maximum altitude at noon - the Gnomon. This was simply a vertical rod of known length arranged to cast a shadow along a graduated scale marked in degrees and minutes, using values derived from the trigonometric ratios, $AC = BC \cot A$. (fig. 1)



It was realised vaguely that this result was related to the Latitude of the place, but without knowing the position of the Sun in relation to the Equator, the actual Latitude could not be determined. However, they continued their observations diligently throughout the year, noting the meridian altitude daily. They observed that the maximum altitude was reached in summer on the longest day (summer solstice), and the minimum on the shortest day (winter solstice). It seemed logical that the mean of these two meridian altitudes marked the altitude at the Equinox, when the Sun's declination North or South of the Equator was zero. Therefore, they reasoned, the Latitude must equal the complement of the altitude ($90^\circ - \text{Altitude}$; i.e. the Zenith Distance). A simplified example and sketch may clarify the concept. (fig. 2)

Max. Mer. Alt. @ Summer Solstice $75^\circ 30' \text{S}$.

Min. Mer. Alt @ Winter Solstice $28^\circ 30' \text{S}$.

2) $104^\circ 00' \text{S}$.

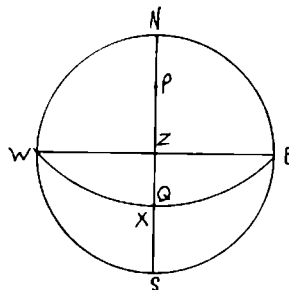
Mean Mer. Alt. @ Equinox $52^\circ 00' \text{S} \text{ (SX)}$

$90^\circ 00'$

Zenith Distance $38^\circ 00' \text{N} \text{ (ZX)}$

Sun's Declination $0^\circ 00'$

LATITUDE $38^\circ 00' \text{N} \text{ (QZ)}$



Clearly, this was an inordinately long time to work out a Latitude sight! But from these patient observations the Sun's declination for each day throughout the year could be deduced, and tables published.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that bereft navigators in the mid-20th Century should hit upon the same idea, though little was known of ancient Greeks and very few had ever heard of a Gnomon. Those who had would probably associate the

term with a sundial. However, it was decided that we should make a Gnomon of our own (though we called it 'Macleod's Shadowangle', after its designer), using a length of broom-handle and a short plank which may once have served as a bunkboard.

The original land-based Gnomon was firmly fixed in the ground, the perpendicular baton and horizontal base rigidly at right-angles, yielding quite accurate readings. To use our primitive instrument aboard ship, even in calm conditions, called for a steady support, a keen eye, and a lot of faith in the judicious assessment of mean readings! Nevertheless we were confident that altitudes within an error of half a degree (i.e. 30 nautical miles on the surface of the sea) were possible, and we were quite content with this order of accuracy in the middle of the ocean. Consequently, when the German officers assembled on the bridge to take noon sights, we were ready with our 'Shadowangle', screened discreetly from curious eyes by a convenient mast or deck-house, timing our reading at the moment the Germans ceased observing the Sun to read the result on their sextants.

For our precious altitude to be of any use we needed to know the Sun's declination at the time. One of our keenest navigators, Ken Macleod, he of the 'Shadowangle', had started a school for Cadets and Apprentices, and when this initiative reached the ears of the Prisoners' Liaison Officer, he was all enthusiasm and asked how he could help.

"Next time you plunder one of our ships," murmured our S.B.O. (a senior shipmaster), delicately, "ransack the chartroom and gather up all the navigation books, Nautical Almanacs and Tables you can find, and the boys will make good use of 'em!" Leutnant zur See Ulrich Mohr, Liaison Officer, was as good as his word and we soon had the best equipped Navigation School on the high seas! This included a Nautical Almanac for 1940 which listed the hourly declination of the Sun throughout the year!

The Latitude calculation would look something like this: (fig. 3)

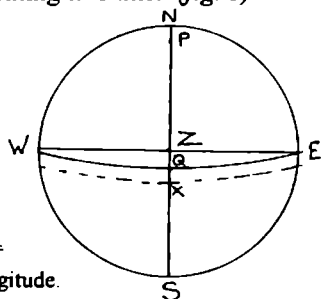
Altitude from "Shadowangle" (SX) $72^{\circ}30'S$.

(SZ) $90^{\circ}00'$

Zenith Distance (ZX) $17^{\circ}30' N$.

Sun's Dec. from Almanac (QX) $12^{\circ}21' S$.

LATITUDE (QZ) $5^{\circ}09' N$.



We next turned our minds to the problem of Longitude.

To Find the Longitude.

Having thus ascertained a Latitude, we were still no better off than our 16th Century forebears who were adept at obtaining their Latitude with Astrolabes, Cross Staffs and Back Staffs, but completely at a loss when it came to computing the Longitude. Hope-inspired guesses as to course and speed made good, extended over many days and weeks at sea, often led eventually to a surprise landfall, or even

disaster. It was not until the late 18th Century that Longitude, tamed by John Harrison's excellent chronometers, ceased to be a problem. There was no shortage of excellent timepieces, some with a second-hand sweep, among the prisoners. These they had been allowed to keep, but, in the days before quartz chips, even the best of them needed a time-check occasionally to establish a rate. Errors could mount significantly over periods of days or weeks.

At this time, the summer of 1940, German victories were of daily occurrence, and the German Officers considered it was in their interests to keep their enemy guests fully informed of German superiority, and the futility of resistance. So senior British Officers were routinely invited by Kapitän zur See Bernhard Rogge to his cabin to listen to short-wave radio broadcasts. The Germans were astute enough to realise that broadcasts in English from Berlin would be given little credence by their hostile listeners; B.B.C. broadcasts were out of the question, so Kapitän Rogge tuned his radio to a neutral station, Treasure Island, a short-wave station near San Francisco, U.S.A. As newscasts they were very good, though rather lurid, and very depressing to our spirits. Thus it was that we learned that the B.E.F. had been driven into the sea at Dunkirk; that Mussolini, not one to miss a golden opportunity, had declared war on the Allies; that France had fallen, and that London had been all but destroyed by a *blitzkrieg* from the skies.

But the essential worth of these news broadcasts from a navigator's point of view was that each was preceded by a time signal! And what is more natural upon hearing the 'pips' than to glance at one's watch and note the time, and on these occasions to the nearest second?

Meanwhile the *Atlantis* had reached her cruising area in the tropics of the Indian Ocean, but we soon discovered that the standard *Longitude by Chronometer* method was impracticable with our resources, and another method had to be found which did not compound the errors induced by the crudity of our instruments. The weather was fine and clear, and at noon each day, as noted earlier, the German Officers congregated on the bridge to 'shoot the Sun'. In these latitudes, when the Sun is high and near the zenith at noon, it moves swiftly across the meridian at maximum altitude. Older navigators will readily recall how observers 'swung' their sextants from east to west at this precise moment before reading the altitude from the vernier scale, or (in the case of the Germans) from a very modern micrometer screw. To our intrepid D.I.Y. navigators this moment was, as near as dammit, 12h00m00s. Apparent Time Ship (A.T.S.), when the Hour Angle of the True Sun (H.A.T.S.) i.e., the angular distance of the Sun westwards from the Observer's meridian, is zero. The exact Greenwich Mean Time (G.M.T.) of this instant was noted on one or more of our reliable watches; and from our complimentary copy of the 1940 Nautical Almanac the value of a quantity called 'E' was extracted for the date and time in question. This was necessary in order to convert H.A.T.S. to H.A.M.S. - the Hour Angle of the Mean Sun. Mean Time is conveniently divided into a regular 24-hour day, but True Time is anything but regular, the True Sun being sometimes ahead, and sometimes behind, the hypothetical position of the Mean Sun. The difference is known as the 'Equation of

Time' and must be applied to compare like with like. To avoid obvious pitfalls involving plus and minus signs, the artificial device 'E' was conceived, and is simply 12h. minus the Equation of Time. Consequently, Ship's Mean Time = H.A.T.S. - E, and the calculation applied thus:

HATS	00h. 00m. 00s.	By Observation
E	- <u>11 53 48</u>	From <i>Nautical Almanac</i>
SMT	12 06 12	
GMT	<u>06 56 44</u>	From Watch (corrected)
Longitude	<u>5 09 28</u>	
i.e.	<u>77° 22' E.</u>	("Long. East, Greenwich Time least")

To Estimate Speed.

A running estimate of dead-reckoning was calculated several times a day. (We were allowed almost unlimited hours exercise on deck most days, but not at night). Speed could be estimated by the professional Engineers in our midst by taking into account the type and probable power of the ship's engines, listening to the beat, and counting the revolutions per minute. This yielded an invariably optimistic figure for speed; it was then up to the navigators to apply 'slip', a negative factor induced by many variables, notably weather conditions, ocean currents and the prevalence of marine growth on the ship's bottom. All guesswork, of course. A more reliable estimate was calculated by timing the relative drift of a floating object, nonchalantly tossed overboard, against a carefully measured distance along the ship's rail. Thus, a matchbox dropped overboard at a point forward, and its drift timed over a distance of 60 feet in 5 seconds, indicated a speed of 12 feet per second, which, converted to knots equals:

$$\begin{aligned}
 &\underline{12\text{ft.} \times 3600 \text{ seconds}} && 3600 \text{ secs} = 1 \text{ Hour} \\
 &6080 \text{ ft.} && 6080 \text{ feet} = 1 \text{ naut. mile} \\
 &= \underline{7.1 \text{ Knots}}
 \end{aligned}$$

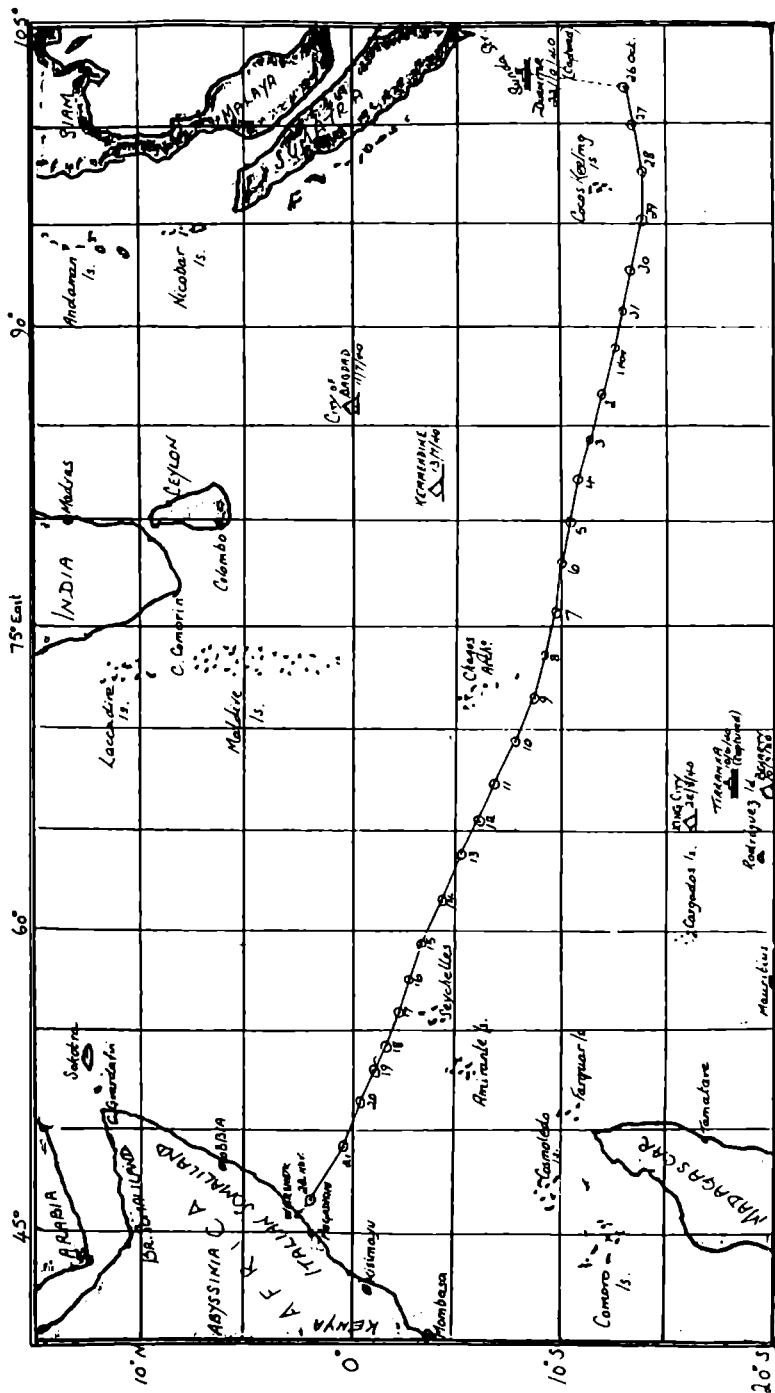
To Estimate the Course Steered.

The ship's course was determined by measuring, with a protractor adapted as a pelorus, the angle on the bow from the Sun's true bearing, especially and preferably at sunset. At that time, the Sun's true amplitude, i.e. the arc of the horizon between due West and the bearing of the Sun, could be readily extracted from *Norie's Nautical Tables* (of which several copies were available), provided an approximate Latitude and Declination were known - which invariably they were. Then

$$90^\circ - \text{Amplitude} = \text{Sun's True Azimuth, or bearing.}$$

The angle of the ship's head from the sun applied to the Azimuth then gave a fair estimate of the course steered. For example, in Latitude 4°S., Sun's Declination 9°N.,

THE TRACK OF S.S. "DURMITOR" OF DUBROVNIK OCT. 26 - NOV. 22 1940



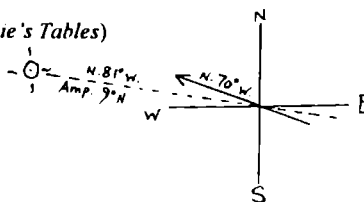
TOTAL STEAMING TIME: 27d. 03h. 00m. (=651 hrs.), TOTAL DISTANCE: 3496 nm., TOTAL AVG. SPEED: 5.37 kts.

Amplitude is 9° North of West (From *Norie's Tables*)

$$90^{\circ} - 9^{\circ} = N 81^{\circ} W.$$

$$\text{Angle of Sun on Port Bow} = 11^{\circ}$$

$$\text{True Course} = N 70^{\circ} W.$$



Another useful Table in *Norie's* gives the Apparent Time of the rising and setting of heavenly bodies. Using this information a further check on the ship's Longitude could be obtained by noting the G.M.T. of sunset (taking care to allow for refraction by noting the time when the Sun's lower limb was a semi-diameter above the horizon).

Hour Angle (= A.T.S. pm) of Sun at sunset	6h. 03m 00s (From <i>Norie's</i>)
"E"	<u>12 07 20</u> (From <i>Almanac</i>)
S.M.T. of Sunset	17 55 40
G.M.T. of Sunset	<u>12 48 32</u> (From Watch)
<u>Long. East</u>	<u>5 06 08</u> ("Long. East, Greenwich
<u>i.e.</u>	<u>76° 32' E.</u> Time Least").

However, it has to be said that plotting the Raider's position was often a hit-and-miss affair. Unobserved and unpredictable alterations of course and/or speed during the night watches had the effect of throwing our dead-reckoning into disarray, and only a series of reliable observations could then restore order. Nevertheless, the system came into its own during the wretched cruise of the prison-ship *Durmitor*, where an acute shortage of fuel discouraged any wild diversions from the prescribed track. The sketch map of the Indian Ocean shows noon positions plotted for each day of the four-week voyage. We were surprised, however, when 24 hours before our expected arrival the ship apparently veered away from the main Italian port of Mogadishu, but that is what our observations led us to believe, and that belief was vindicated when the ship ran aground on a reef 40 miles north-east of Mogadishu, off the tiny village of Warshiek! But that, as they say, is another story. Apparently the alarming news that a few days earlier a British cruiser squadron had bombarded the port of Mogadishu, had prompted the diversion!

Maintaining morale among a few hundred Prisoners-of-War for an indefinite period was quite an undertaking. In practice, many methods were employed, some by our captors, others by our own senior officers, but by far the most effective was achieving the ability to assess our position, and, roughly, where we were heading. An awareness that this classified information had been acquired from under the noses of the German Officers and crew gave an added boost to our morale! ||||

FOG AT THE BAR

An extract from 'The Cruel Sea' by Nicholas Monsarrat

They were returning to Liverpool with convoy BK.108 consisting of thirty-eight ships. The Bar Light Vessel was some nine miles ahead and **Viperous** had instructed **Compass Rose** to move to the head of the convoy to lead it in. The convoy was forming into single line, ready for the narrow passage up the sea channels, and **Compass Rose** had at least six miles to make up before she was on station at the head of the column. **Compass Rose** could not rival **Viperous's** swift get-away, but she did her best: the hull throbbed as the revolutions crept upwards, and presently they were passing ship after ship on their way to the front of the convoy. Lockhart noticed, without paying much attention to it, that the sun had gone in and that it had turned suddenly colder, but he was not prepared for what followed after. They were just drawing level with the fourth ship in the convoy, and he had sighted the Bar Light Vessel about two miles ahead of them when it disappeared; and as he stared round him, unwilling to believe that visibility could have deteriorated so swiftly, the convoy disappeared also, sponged out like chalk from a slate. It was fog, fog coming down from the north, fog blowing across their path as thick as a blanket and blotting out everything on the instant.

Lockhart leaned over the front of the bridge, momentarily appalled. The fog enveloped them in great thick wafts of vapour, cold and acrid; he could see the tip of their gun-barrel, twenty feet in front of him, and nothing more at all - no sea, no ships, not even **Compass Rose's** own stem. It was like moving inside a colourless sack, isolated and sightless - and then suddenly he heard the other occupants of the sack, a wild chorus of sirens as the convoy plunged into the fog-bank. It had taken them by surprise, when they had just crowded into a single compact line: many ships that were less than their own length from the next one ahead of them, and the convoy was telescoping like a goods train when the brakes are applied. Now, unsighted, moving blindly in the raw and luminous air, they were doing the only thing left to them - making as much noise as possible, and praying for the fog to lift.

Lockhart's moment of panic did not last. **Compass Rose** had been in fog before, and he had admired Ericson's calmness and sure control of the situation; now he had to simply follow that example. There was a temptation to sheer away from the convoy, and take an independent line altogether, but that had to be resisted: in a fog one had to trust other ships to hold their course, and to do the same oneself, otherwise it was impossible to retain a clear picture of what was going on. One single ship, losing its nerve, and trying to get out of trouble in a hurry, could destroy that picture, and with it the whole tenuous fabric of their safety, and bring about disaster.

At the moment all the ships were comfortably to starboard, and he set to work to plot, inside his head, the varying notes of their sirens. The nearest one, with a deep note, was a big tanker they had been passing when the fog came down: the ship ahead of her made a curious wheezing sound, as if some water had got into her siren. The

commodore's ship, at the head of the column, had another distinguishable note; and above them all the authoritative voice of the fog horn on the Bar Light Vessel, two miles ahead, supplied as it were the forward edge of the pattern. Beyond that fog horn they could hardly go in safety, for there the channel narrowed to a bare hundred yards in places: if the fog did not lift, and the convoy had to anchor, it must be done within a time limit of not more than twenty minutes.

Lockhart had the picture in his head, for what it was worth: and beside him in the raw air of the bridge the others - Morell, Baker, Leading-Signalman Wells, the two look-outs - tried to contribute their own quota of watchfulness and interpretation. For the sound were deceptive - they all knew that well: it was possible that a siren which seemed to be coming clearly from one side was being reflected off the fog-bank, and came in fact from some unknown area of danger. **Compass Rose** ran on, over the oily water, with the ghostly company beside her keeping a distance and a formation which could only be guessed at: the rest of the convoy seemed to recede, while the four sounds Lockhart was specially on the alert for - the big tanker, the ship ahead of her, the commodore, and the Bar Light Vessel - succeeded in even rotation, with **Compass Rose** as the fifth element in the pattern. As long as that pattern held, and the fog blew over and dispersed, they were safe.

Suddenly he raised his head, and was conscious of Wells jerking to attention at the same time. A new siren had sounded, an intruder in the pattern, and it seemed to be coming from their port bow - the side away from the convoy, the side that had been clear. "*Ship to port, sir?*" said Wells tentatively, and they waited in silence for the sound to come again. One - that was the tanker: two - the ship ahead of her: three - the commodore: four - a prolonged wail from the Bar Light Vessel. Then *five* - a wavering blast, nearer now, coming from that safe place to port which had suddenly assumed an imminent danger. Lockhart felt his scalp lifting and prickling as he heard it. It might be anything - a ship coming out, a stray from the convoy, an independent ship creeping along their own track; but it was *there*, somewhere in the fog, somewhere ahead of them and to port, steaming along on an unknown course and getting nearer with every second that passed.

He gripped the front of the bridge-rail and stared ahead of him. He knew without turning round that the others were watching him: he was the focus now, **Compass Rose** was in his grip, and her safety and perhaps all their lives depended on what he did next. Their own siren sounded, tremendously near and loud, and then the safe four in succession, and then the unidentified fifth - nearer still, dead ahead or a little to port. He said: "*Slow ahead!*" surprised at the calmness of his voice: the telegraph clanged, the revolutions purred downwards to a dull throbbing, the slop and thresh of their bow-wave died to a gentle forward rustling. But the tension did not die: Lockhart felt himself taut as **Compass Rose** ran on, nearing the edge of the known pattern and nearing also the fifth ship, the doubtful element that could wreck them all. If the commodore did not give the signal for anchoring, then he *must* do something - either stop dead, or take a wide sheer to port, away from the crowd and the danger: they could not simply run on, swallowing up the safety margin, surrendering foot by

foot their only security. Lockhart had a quick vision of what might lie a few seconds ahead - the crash, the grinding of wood and metal, the wrecked bows, the cries of men trapped or hurt in the mess-decks: he felt all the others watching him, trusting and yet not trusting, hoping that he could meet this inexorable crisis - and then suddenly the port look-out called out: "*Ship to port, sir!*" and forty yards away, in the fog that suddenly cleared and the sunshine that suddenly broke through, a small coaster slid past them and down the side of the convoy. He felt a great surge of relief as the last wisps of the fog blew away, showing him the lines of ships still intact and the Bar Light Vessel riding clear on the smooth water. As suddenly as the danger had come, it had been taken away again.

An hour later they were in the thick of the Mersey traffic, leading the slow and stately progress up river to the convoy anchorage. The long line of ships stretched behind them, deep-laden, travel-stained, proud and yet matter-of-fact: ships they had guarded for many days, ships they knew well by sight from this and earlier convoys, ships they had cursed for straggling or admired for skilful handling. Wells said suddenly: "*Commodore calling up, sir!*" and there was silence on the bridge as he took and acknowledged the message from the big freighter that led the convoy. Then Wells turned from the signal lamp.

"From the Commodore, sir. Message reads: Nice to see those Liver Birds again. Thanks and goodbye." Lockhart looked up river, towards the great gilded birds that topped the Liver Building in the heart of Liverpool. |||||

"The Cruel Sea" by Nicholas Monsarrat
published by Penguin Books Paperback, ISBN 0140011218, price £6-99.



Nicholas Monsarrat on the Landing Stage at Liverpool

READERS' LETTERS

Alan McClelland writes

RUNNING THE BLOCKADE

Further to the most interesting and detailed account of the career of the **Douglas (1) / Margaret and Jessie / USS Gettysburg** by Ron Evans, the motives of those Liverpool-based businessmen and seafarers who involved themselves in blockade running to and from the Confederacy in the war of 1861-65 deserve careful attention. Undoubtedly the underlying motives were thoughts of quick profits on the one part and high wages on the other, but there were other considerations which had their effects.

The mid-nineteenth century had witnessed the triumphant assertion of free trade, and Liverpool, which was the first port of the United Kingdom on a number of counts, was in the forefront of it. By the late 1850s, half of Britain's external trade passed through the town. Along with Glasgow, Liverpool was the home of many technical and commercial innovations. Fortunes were made and lost, some rapidly; great wealth and abject poverty existed virtually cheek by jowl. At all levels of society opportunities had to be seized.

In Liverpool there was an awareness of the rapidly expanding industrial power of the northern United States; developments were viewed with apprehension. There was concern about their impact on traditional trade links with the largely agricultural South. As awareness of nationality grew among states in Europe and leaders of freedom movements were entertained in Britain, so sympathy was aroused for Southern States anxious to protect their individual rights under the terms of the American Constitution. It was the impact of Lincoln's political astuteness in eventually deciding to promote the abolition of slavery which weakened support for the Confederacy, along with war weariness.

It is foolish, if not dangerous, to view the past through the distorting lens of the standards of today. In declaring the ports of the Confederacy to be in a state of blockade at the beginning of the conflict, the Lincoln administration put itself at odds with Liverpool's commercial interests. It was felt that by this action a state of belligerency had been conferred upon a geographically defined area. This presupposed a state of war, not rebellion. Therefore running the blockade was not conceived of as a breach of neutrality under the conventions of the time. ||||

POINT LYNAS LIGHTHOUSE FOR SALE

The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company has put its lighthouse at Point Lynas on the north coast of Anglesey up for sale. The lighthouse, a house, two cottages and eighteen acres of land are available for purchase at a cost in the region of £175,000.

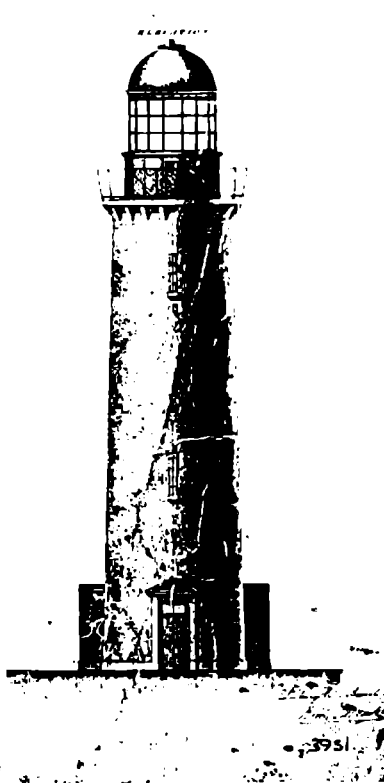
The lighthouse is operational and automated so any purchaser will have to lease back the light room and fog signal building to the harbour company, and live

with a fog signal likely to sound its single blast every forty-five seconds when the Irish Sea mists swirl in.

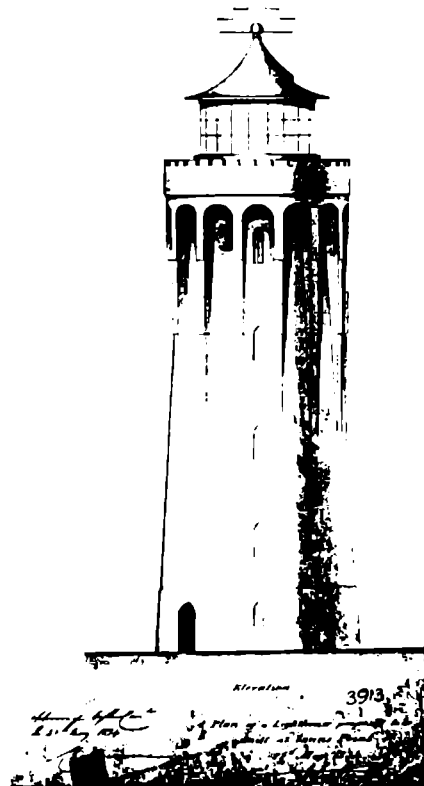
The lighthouse was built in 1834, along with an adjacent pilot station, as one of the lights marking the approaches to the port of Liverpool. It cost £1,165 to build the eleven-metre light and fog signal tower, and the associated keepers' dwellings. The design is unusual, having the lantern room at ground level. The light was electrified in 1951 and changed to automatic operation in 1989.

There has been a high level of interest from private individuals but the Isle of Anglesey Council hope that the lighthouse can be purchased for public use and are hoping that funding may be made available in a partnership between heritage trusts and public authorities.

Two rejected designs for a lighthouse at Point Lynas



*Elevation of a proposed lighthouse for Point Lynas
by Robert Stevenson of Edinburgh 1834*

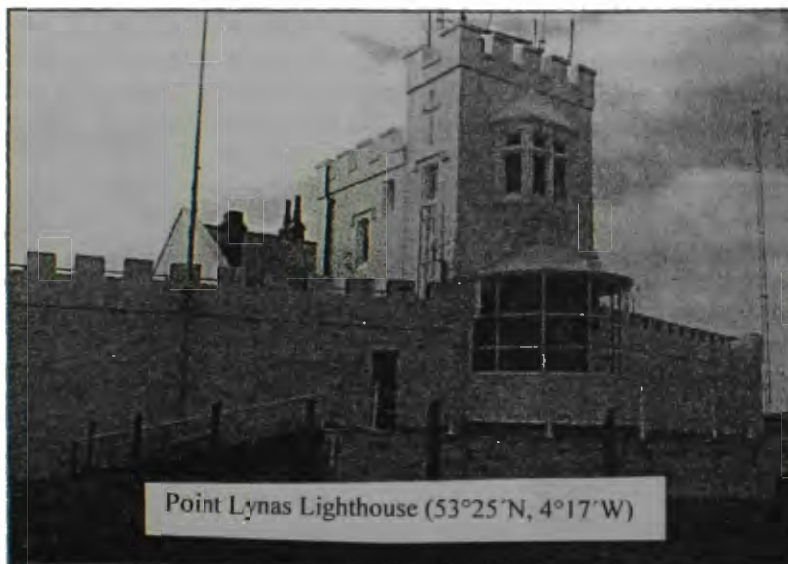


*Elevation of a proposed lighthouse for Point Lynas
by Jesse Hartley, Liverpool, 1834*

John Tebay writes:

A pilot station was established on Point Lynas on 1st October 1781, and a house, painted white, built on the Point for pilots 'with a flagstaff and coloured hoist occasionally by day, and two small reflecting lamp lights in the upper windows by night, one facing north-west, and the other east.' (J.Rees - *History of the Liverpool Pilotage Service*).

Point Lynas light was in 1835 transferred to a castellated building 39 feet high, with a white basement surrounded by a square tower, erected on the pitch of the Point. On 1st August 1835 the tower exhibited a powerful steady light of a natural colour, at an elevation of 128 feet above half-tide level, visible 16 miles. In June 1839 the light became a flashing light. |||||



THE 'BIGGEST BANG EVER' - IN THE SUEZ CANAL

by R.M. Watt

'*The Book of High Explosives*', published by the Nobel company in 1908, contains the story of how a sunken ship in the Suez Canal, the **Chatham**, was removed by an explosion reputed to be the greatest which had ever been undertaken.

The **Chatham**, an iron steamer of 2,174 gross tons built by Ropnor & Son of Stockton in 1898 and owned by the Britain Steamship Company, left the UK in August 1905 for the Far East with a cargo consisting of 1,500 tons of superphosphates, 500 tons of pig iron and 800 tons of coke, together with 90 tons of explosives and 16 cases of detonators, the products of the Nobel factory at Glasgow. The explosives were the

extremely dangerous nitro-glycerine and the dynamite invented by Alfred Nobel in 1866.

In passing through the Suez Canal on 5th September 1905 the **Chatham** came into collision with the **Clan Cumming** at a point about ten miles from Port Said. A fire broke out in the **Chatham** and to keep it from reaching the explosives the vessel was flooded. She settled on the bottom of the canal at a depth of 25 to 30 feet.

Two cases of dynamite flooded out of the hold, and nitro-glycerine was found to be exuding from its containers. Fearing that the explosives might be detonated on coming into contact with the pig-iron, the Suez Canal authorities decided that the vessel should be blown up. Mr Harold Harris, a Nobel explosives expert, was appointed to carry out the task.

The 90 tons of explosives on board the **Chatham** were a greater amount than had ever been exploded before in bulk at one time. Fears were felt for the safety of the canal itself. On the Asian side there was nothing that could come to much harm, but the African side had the fresh water canal to Port Said, together with telegraph and telephone lines and then the railway beyond them. A diversion was made in the fresh water canal, the telegraph lines were cut for some distance on each side of the **Chatham**, and a military cordon was placed around the area to stop anyone from coming within six miles of the wreck.

The charges used to blow up the **Chatham** consisted of 250lb of blasting gelatine and 50lb of dynamite enclosed in a canvas bag which was lowered into the forward hold on top of the explosives, and 150lb of blasting gelatine and 50lb of dynamite, also enclosed in a bag which was lowered into the after hold to explode the 160,000 detonators. The charges were 15ft below the surface.

At 9.50am on 28th September 1905, the canal being cleared of all craft, the charges were exploded by electric current from a distance of 3¼ miles. A column of water, mud, sand and debris rose to a height of nearly 3,000ft.

The explosion made remarkably little difference to the water level in the canal. Measurements taken showed that at a distance of six miles from the **Chatham**, the rise was only six inches.

Fortunately the damage to the banks of the canal was not as great as had been feared, the fresh-water canal and the railway line and the telegraph line escaping unharmed. Only on the Asian side was there any appreciable damage: a section of the canal bank about 360ft long had been carried away for a width of about 100ft.

The remains of the **Chatham** were removed by cranes. Within a fortnight of the arrival of the Nobel expert at Suez, traffic through the Suez Canal resumed. |||||

Editor's Note:

The **Chatham** explosion of 28th September 1905 was certainly superseded on 6th December 1917 at Halifax, N.S. when the French Line's **Mont Blanc**, with 5,000 tons of high explosives on board was in collision with the Norwegian tanker **Imo**. A full account of this disaster appeared in *'The Bulletin'*, Vol.41, No.1, Summer, 1997 on page 9. *j.s.*

AND FINALLY

The potentialities for the transport of freight by water in and around the United Kingdom have been ignored for decades. Since the Second World War continental European countries have encouraged continuous development of inland waterway and coastal shipping services and their infrastructure. Britain has done little, and what has been done is on too small a scale. Interested shipping and shipbuilding concerns have largely been left to struggle on their own.

Hopes rose with the general election of 1997. In 1998 the Government outlined its proposals for the future of transport in *'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone'*. Further announcements made it clear that on environmental and economic grounds more use should be made of rail and water alternatives to road haulage for freight movement. *'British Shipping Charting a New Course'* was published to stimulate positive, practical approaches to all the issues involved. Recently the publication of *'Policy Planning Guidance Note (PPG) 13 Transport'* encourages the transport of more freight by water. Local authorities are to identify, protect or promote opportunities for waterway, rail and road interchanges.

At the time of writing it was hoped that the Government would further emphasise the desirability of regenerating freight carriage on inland waterways and coastal seaways. Locally one might look forward to increased use of the Mersey, the Dee, the Manchester Ship Canal and possibly the Ribble. No doubt the nonsense of transporting bulk chemicals by road from Cheshire for trans-shipment in Mersey ports might be addressed by re-activating the Weaver - at least for barge traffic. *a.m.*

JUST FANCY THAT !!!

'POTATO' WARSHIP SANK SUBMARINE

The USS **O'Bannon** gained twenty battle stars in the Second World War and in the Korean War. However, she once used potatoes instead of grenades in an attack on a Japanese submarine !!!

In April 1943 the **O'Bannon** engaged a Japanese submarine at such short range - pulling up alongside - that she could not lower her guns. It was then that the Americans hurled potatoes. The Japanese crew, thinking that they were hand grenades, ran below so fast that they forgot to close the hatches before the submarine dived.

The official Navy version says that the submarine was sunk when the **O'Bannon** pulled far enough away to use her five-inch guns. The report adds: *"Admiral William F. Halsey congratulated the O'Bannon on sinking the submarine and in the ingenuity shown in making use of all available weapons!"*

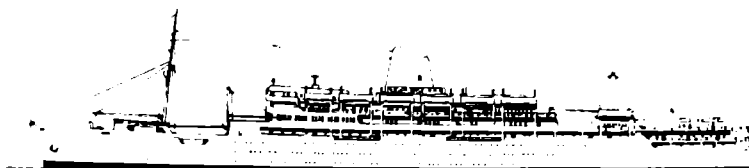
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

BULLETIN EXTRA

Editor : John Shepherd

mid-January, 2001



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The next edition of 'The Bulletin' will be sent out to Members in mid-March. Articles will include 'The Fall and Rise of the Locksley Hall' by Gordon Bodey; the Editor will recall his days as 'A Purser's Clerk on the Queen Elizabeth' in 1963 and the occasional series of Forgotten Liners of Liverpool will feature the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company's Ben-my-Chree of 1908, written by Ron Evans.



OUTWARD BOUND FROM LIVERPOOL IN WORLD WAR II

by *Brian Potter*

Brian Potter has contacted the Society from his home in Michigan City, USA, with an account of his wartime voyage from Liverpool to Egypt via the Cape on board the Orontes. Brian was born in Manchester and spent his early years in Crosby attending Merchant Taylors' School. He went to Liverpool University before his education was interrupted by the war.

At Canterbury in December 1941 I was handed a travel warrant and went by train to London, then north to Catterick army camp. A draft of reinforcements for overseas, code-named ROAXX, was assembling at the Royal Corps of Signals' headquarters there. The officers' mess had good food, but the rooms in unheated huts were cold. The war, however, was heating up. Pearl Harbor had been bombed just a few days before and the United States was now in the war. Japan had already attacked Hong Kong, Indo-China, Malaya and the Philippines. We thought we were going to the Middle East, but now there might be some question about our destination.

We were sent on embarkation leave the week before Christmas and were back at Catterick by New Year's Eve, 1941. This seeming delay might have been to allow the troop transport ships' crews a holiday at home in England. *Reveille* was ordered for 2 or 3am, and I knew from experience that it was better to stay up than be awakened from deep sleep in the early hours. We marched to Richmond railway station in the dark and boarded a special train that did not stop anywhere *en route*. After dawn we shaved and ate our travel rations and looked out of the train windows. After a few hours I began to recognize where we were going: to Liverpool as I might have guessed, where I had just spent my leave the week before. The train arrived at the Gladstone Dock which I remembered as a child when it was first opened in the 1920s.

We left the train and climbed up a long gangplank to a large ship where we were assigned cabins. I was in what had been a first-class cabin with two bunks, but three extra ones had now been built into it. We had our own bathroom, but with five young men occupying it, the cabin was somewhat crowded. The steward came in and we asked him the name of the ship. He said: "*Orontes, Orient Line.*" He then immediately added: "*Remember the Orion? - she's sunk. Remember the Orama? - she's sunk.*" We all laughed at this welcome to the wartime high seas, but I felt disappointed as I had heard of the Orion before the war, and I didn't like to hear of her going down. However, all such shipping losses were kept secret, and I heard later that either he or I had one of the names wrong. The real unfortunates until that time comprised the Orford, bombed and run aground at Marseille, and it was true that the Orama had been sunk by the German cruiser Hipper. Two more Orient liners, the Oronsay and the Orcades would be torpedoed later in the conflict. But, as I was glad to learn later, the Orion, Orontes and Otranto all survived the war.

Some of my companions had been with me a few months previously at the Signals Officer Cadet Training Unit, and the others I had met while the draft was forming. The **Orontes** was filled with a great many other soldiers, several nurses and numerous girls from the Women's Royal Naval Service who, like my sister, had joined the Navy. Five civilian entertainers came on board as well and amused us on the ship from time to time, but they were bound chiefly to entertain the troops in the Middle East. One of them was Hugh French, then quite a well known actor from London plays of the 1930s. This group had arrived by train direct from London and had been told to keep their destination secret. But when they told their taxi driver '*Orontes, Gladstone Dock*', he said '*She's sailing tomorrow, ain't she?*'

We each chose a bunk and went to bed. In the morning we heard that we were to be inspected by shore-based *brass-hats* but I didn't see any of them. In the afternoon the ship was eased away from the dock by tugs and was pushed very slowly through the narrow lock gates. Everyone was out on deck to watch this delicate operation being controlled by a Royal Naval Reserve officer, probably an experienced pilot, on the dock with a megaphone. The **Orontes** then sailed down the Mersey, past several bell-buoys and the Bar Lightship and out into the Irish Sea.

We awoke the next morning to find the ship at anchor in a wide estuary with hills on either side. It was probably the Firth of Clyde or maybe Belfast Lough. As we sailed again that same evening, I never did find out which. We had joined a large number of other ships including the **Pasteur** and the **Orontes'** sister ship - the **Otranto**. After the convoy had formed we sailed out into the North Atlantic escorted by two destroyers.

The troops were allocated to mess decks in what had been the holds and these were now equipped with long tables so that they could all sit for meals. They slept in the same areas in hammocks or on the tables or on the deck. The officers ate in the **Orontes'** dining room and I found myself at the purser's table. Although as passengers we had all the time in the world with almost nothing to do, by contrast the purser was very busy and always arrived for meals later than we did and left the table earlier. There was more variety of food than was available in wartime England because, as the purser told us, the ship was victualled in South Africa when homeward bound and he insisted in retaining half the stores for the next outward passage.

The **Orontes**, having been in peacetime on the run to India, offered a different Indian curry dish every day at lunch. The purser mentioned the long-standing rivalry between the Orient Line and the Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Company. He recited a little doggerel expressing a hope that the seagulls would leave their droppings on a smart P & O ship rather than on an Orient liner! He relayed what the **Orontes'** chief engineer had told him: that the comparatively small destroyers on either side of us had as much power as the **Orontes'** engines, namely thirty thousand horsepower. The destroyers certainly put on speed when changing positions, whooping their syrens when turning sharply so as to warn their ships' companies before the consequent heeling over.

We attended lifeboat drills but there could not have been nearly enough space in the lifeboats for the large number of persons on board. The ship's officers always kept one lifeboat made fast to the starboard side of the bridge - just in case. To keep us busy our superiors told everybody to go up on deck and watch for enemy submarines. As it must have been impossible to sight a periscope in the high waves of the North Atlantic in winter, we considered this an utterly ineffectual pastime.

After a few days we sighted an enemy aircraft with angled wings - a Fokke-Wulf Kondor. The destroyers fired at it and it banked slowly and turned away in the direction of France. We expected an attack but none developed. However, a day or two later a friendly battleship appeared - probably from Gibraltar. She looked like an old World War I type - perhaps the **Ramillies**. We thought she had been despatched expressly for our protection, to defend the convoy from enemy surface ships. But she might just have joined us on her way to the South Atlantic, or to the war in the Far East where the **Repulse** had already been sunk.

We were all required to take some responsibility for maintaining discipline. I was designated an Assistant Provost Marshal or APM and I was assigned to the Provost-Marshall, a major in the Royal Marines. We patrolled the **Orontes** at intervals to make sure that the troops were not causing trouble between themselves or the ship's company. We sometimes found soldiers drinking beer in the sailors' canteen which was out-of-bounds to them, or committing other minor offenses such as gambling or midnight rambling, but no real trouble. The APMs had to make sure the ship was completely blacked out at night. A joke at the time was '*Pardon me, your ship is showing*' but, in our circumstances, this was not funny. One evening on duty as an APM I was summoned to the **Orontes**' bridge. The officer-of-the-watch wanted to tell me that any lights visible would be put out by rifle fire from the neighbouring ships. This was more business-like. However when I reached the bridge the officer was otherwise concerned as a lookout was telling him that the ship astern was drawing too close. This was true - a big unwieldy-looking Free French vessel, the **Pasteur**, was lumbering up and down in the waves not far behind us. The officer-of-the-watch inquired from the engine room how many revolutions the propellers were making and was told '*five-oh, sir*'. He ordered: '*Increase to five two revolutions, quartermaster,*' and with this we gradually drew further ahead of the **Pasteur**.

After a few days the sea became calmer so we turned out for deck sports including shuffleboard, quoits and deck tennis, almost like a peacetime cruise. The naval officers amongst us habitually marched forward and back along the deck for an hour or more each day and we began to emulate them. When the weather became warm enough, as it soon did, we changed into cotton tropical uniforms and the troops were allowed to bring their bedding rolls on to the deck and to sleep there under the stars.

Eventually the **Orontes** put into the West African natural harbour of Freetown, Sierra Leone, but none of us under military discipline were allowed ashore there. Several naval and air force officers who had been stationed there for a year or two without much female company came on board to visit the WRNS or the nurses. A

War Correspondent for the *Daily Mail* bound for the Middle East, who had embarked with us at Liverpool, was able to arrange a flight across Africa. For the rest of us it was to be five more weeks on the troop transport.

About a week later the **Orontes** entered port again at Cape Town for two days in February 1942. In South Africa there seemed to be social parties galore. All private clubs were said to be open to officers. In fact when the citizens of Cape Town awakened on any morning during the war and saw a convoy in the harbour they knew there would always be a party at every country club the same evening. So we went to the Cape Town Club for lunch and afterwards were driven out to a country club in the foothills of Table Mountain.

South Africa seemed like another world after wartime England with fruit and chocolate to eat and scarce goods like watches for sale in the stores. The two evenings in Cape Town were very pleasant for us but in South Africa the people felt an air of apprehension. The Japanese advance had already extended to air raids on Ceylon, and the South Africans realised that they might be next and were worried about so-called Fifth Columnists in their midst. Many of the young white men of South Africa were in the Defence Force, two divisions of which had already gone 'up north', which meant to Egypt.

We had made plans to meet our South African friends again the next day and ride up to the top of Table Mountain with them in the cable car. We were required to go back to the **Orontes** overnight and the following morning we were aghast to find that the ship had left the quay and was now at anchor in the outer harbour. This was such a depressing anticlimax to our stay in Cape Town that my colleagues and I all felt we needed two double whiskies before lunch. This was cheap enough, being free of tax and duty, and was my introduction to hard liquor!

Our half of the convoy then left Cape Town to meet up again with the other half that had put into port at Durban. We all sailed together into the Indian Ocean until after a few days one third of the ships was detached and disappeared to the east, probably bound for Singapore. If the troops ever reached there it would have been just in time to be captured by the Japanese. A week later another batch of our ships headed away to the north-east, to India we thought. So the rest of us really were going to the Middle East, as I had hoped all along. We crossed the equator for the second time, now steering north in the Indian Ocean, in quite different circumstances from the more dangerous Atlantic. We were each given a certificate, ostensibly signed by Neptune and dated 24th February 1942, showing a deliberately wrong longitude of 85 degrees East. Actually we must have been somewhere in the vicinity of Madagascar.

Our penultimate call before Egypt was at Aden where we were refuelled by tanker barges of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. We were not allowed ashore. It was now early March 1942 and on the last three days of the voyage through the Red Sea the weather turned cool and so we had to wear woollen battle-dress again. We arrived at Port Tewfiq and disembarked there. In retrospect the voyage on the **Orontes** had been similar to the White Star Line Scholars' Cruise to the Mediterranean on the **Doric** in 1934, but the boys and girls were now young men and women eight years older. |||||

STEAM PACKET MEMORIES

SUMMER AFTERNOON AT DOUGLAS IN THE LATE 1960s



From left to right : The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company's **SNAEFELL** (1948); **MANXMAN** (1955); **MONA'S ISLE** (1951) and **KING ORRY** (1946), double-berthed on the North Edward Pier; and the Company's centenary steamer **LADY OF MANN** (1930) in the foreground on the South Edward Pier. The funnel of the 1966 car-ferry **BEN-MY-CHREE** can be seen between the funnels of the **MONA'S ISLE** and the **KING ORRY**, whilst the funnel of the 1947 **TYNWALD** is visible over the bridge of the **LADY OF MANN**. The only unit of the passenger fleet missing is the 1962 car-ferry **MANX MAID**.

THE FIRST COPPER VESSEL

by L.N.R.S. Member Terry Kavanagh

During the years 1787-92, Thomas Williams (d.1802) of Llanidan, controlled virtually the whole of Britain's copper industry and became known as the 'Copper King'. The rich copper ore from his mines on Anglesey enabled him to produce relatively cheap copper sheathing for ships of the navies of Britain, other European countries and North America, as well as for merchant ships. He also commissioned Marmaduke Stalkartt, author of *Naval Architecture* (1781), to build an experimental 60-ton cutter-rigged vessel "covered with Copper, instead of Planking".¹

This novel copper-hulled craft resembled in hull form the "beautiful Yacht" Stalkartt had built for Thomas Williams's business partner the Earl of Uxbridge, which apparently "out-strips every Thing in Speed."² Accordingly, she was cutter-built but not very fine; very sharp at both extremities, yet with that fullness and relatively flat-bottomed which would enable her to take the ground.

*"She is to be coppered from the Keel to the lower Part of the Wales, including the Keel, Stem and Stern Posts. By a curious Invention the sheets of Copper will be joined together, so as to make an outside Surface perfectly smooth, which must add to her Velocity. The only Danger to be apprehended, that of her touching Ground, will be guarded against in the curious Construction of her Bottom - and this Evil avoided, every Thing must be in her Favour, as to Cleanness of Bottom, Velocity and Duration."*³

The vessel was launched at Deptford in June 1789 - "and promises to answer every Purpose for which it was designed."⁴

What became of her is unknown, but Thomas Williams continued supplying copper sheathing for ships, in order to prevent attacks of the worm and the fouling of the bottom. In evidence to the Copper Trade Committee in 1799, he had this to say about the benefits of coppering Liverpool vessels:

*"I know a vessel belonging to Liverpool of 350 tons, that was copper bolted and sheathed in April 1785, she has sailed from thence on her sixteenth voyage to Africa, the West Indies and home."*⁵

Total repairs in that time amounted to only £55, and the ship was so sound that she would sell in 1799 for what she originally cost, if not more:

"An iron-fastened and wooden-sheathed ship of the same tonnage, never was known to make more than eleven, or at the most twelve of these voyages in the same time, and each of these voyages at an extra expense of £2,000 and upwards, beyond that of the coppered ship. A still more important saving is made by the use of copper on ships carrying slaves from Africa to the West Indies, in the number of lives saved by the shortness of the passage."

At the close of the eighteenth century, Williams's Liverpool agent was sheathing 105 ships and repairing the coppering of a further 33 within the space of a single year.

Eventually, of course, the advent of the iron or steel ship dispensed with the need for coppering altogether. However, as late as 1843, T.R. Guppy, the engineer working with Brunel on the ss **Great Britian**, secured a patent (No. 9779) for "*Certain improvements in the building of metal ships and other vessels.*" These improvements consisted "*in the substitution of plates of copper, or other suitable alloys of metal, instead of plates of iron, for such exterior parts of the bottom and sides of ships as are exposed to or are liable to be acted on by the water surrounding them.*"

Five years later, in 1848, Coates & Young of Pilot Street, Belfast, built a 37ft long racing gig, made of copper, and weighing about 112lbs, for two local men named Charley and Wallace. "*The copper of which she is built is not thicker than common card paper, and some idea of it may be formed from the fact that a sheet measuring four feet by two weighed only three pounds,*"⁶ reported the *Banner of Ulster*. The keel was composed of yellow metal, an alloy of copper and zinc, with stem and stern posts of solid copper. After making her début at the regatta on Belfast Lough, it was hoped she would "*prove more than a match for some of the crack gigs of the Mersey or the Clyde.*" Further research may show whether this copper-built gig competed in any of the Liverpool river events. |||||

References

- ¹ *Chester Courant*, 28th August, 1787.
- ² Presumably this yacht was the Earl of Uxbridge's 37-ton cutter, called the **Druid** of Caernarfon, which was built at Rotherhithe, Surrey in 1787 - Gwynedd Archive Service, Caernarfon. XSR/1. Port of Beaumaris Shipping Register (Item 80/1787).
- ³ *Chester Courant*, 28th August, 1787.
- ⁴ *Ibid*, 16th June, 1789.
- ⁵ quoted by J.R. Harris, *The Copper King. A Biography of Thomas Williams of Llanidan* (Liverpool University Press, 1964), p.50.
- ⁶ quoted in *Chester Chronicle*, 14th July, 1848.

PICASSO AND THE DEEP FAT FRYER

Sea Containers' ro-ro vessel **Picasso** (currently laid up in the Vittoria Dock at Birkenhead) is probably best remembered for the spectacular television news pictures of her about eighteen months ago when she lost all power just off Boulogne breakwater in a force 8 south-westerly gale. It was known to the Picasso's engineers (but the reason was not understood !) that she would suffer a total power failure if the bow thruster was operated when the galley deep-fat fryer was in use. This lethal combination occurred off Boulogne with almost disastrous results!

BLOCKADE RUNNERS OF THE CONFEDERACY

by L.N.R.S. Member Ron Evans

A description of the vessels involved in blockade running in the American Civil War of 1861-1865 is included in *Charleston's Maritime Heritage 1670-1865* by P.C. Coker:

*'The vessels most sought after by blockade-running firms were paddle steamers built in the style of the Clyde river steamers, and built on the Clyde or the River Mersey. They had long, low, iron hulls; narrow beams; powerful engines and light drafts for fast speed. Fraser, Trenholm and Company were the first to recognise the potential of these vessels and purchased the **Herald** early in 1862 from the Dublin and Glasgow Steam Packet Company. She was the first Clyde steamer to be taken into the blockade running trade. By the end of 1862 many similar vessels were being built and outfitted in Liverpool and Glasgow as blockade-runners for various companies. The staterooms were removed to increase stowage capacity, funnels were adapted and masts and spars were hinged so that they could be lowered when running the blockade.*

'Different colour schemes were tried. The early vessels were black, but when black was discovered to be too discernible at night, shipbuilders turned to light blues and greenish greys ("blockader blue"). These lighter colours worked so well that the ships could pass close to the enemy without being detected. The light colours blended in with sand dunes and at times made the runners appear to be clouds of mist moving over the water. Even fuel could help camouflage. Smokeless anthracite coal was preferred, but it was in short supply. Therefore, soft coal had to be used, especially while on the open sea when the ships were less likely to be seen.

The Dublin packet **Herald** was fast and drew only 10½ feet, allowing her to use the shallower channels into Charleston and Wilmington. The **Herald** (Captain Coxetter) was renamed **Antonica** in December 1862 and other vessels brought into service at that time were the **Leopard** (renamed **Stonewall Jackson**), **Giraffe** (renamed **Robert E. Lee**), **Havelock** (renamed **General Beauregard**) and **Douglas** (renamed **Margaret and Jessie**).

The Fleet List "**Blockade Runners Built in British Shipyards**" (*facing page*) can only be a snapshot of the overall picture, and its accuracy is entirely dependent upon the accuracy of the original source information from which it has been prepared, although every care has been taken in its preparation. These details were prepared primarily to identify the vessels used in blockade running as often names were changed and vessels arrived in service with the utmost secrecy. The Fleet List illustrates the tremendous development in ships built for blockade running, from early iron paddle steamers with side lever engines, including all the different types of engines to drive paddle wheels, to steel hulled screw steamers and even twin screw steamers with very sophisticated steering mechanisms. (*TSS **Flora**, described by A.H. McClelland, LNRS 'Bulletin', Vol.35, No.4, refers*).

BLOCKADE RUNNERS OF THE CONFEDERACY

BLOCKADE RUNNERS BUILT IN BRITISH SHIPYARDS

Name	Re-name	Built	Buildery	G.T.	Dimensions	NHP	Engines	Ref
Deble & Glasgow S & S Packet Co.								CCS
P.S. Herald (1)	Antonia	1851	John Reid & Co	283		250		144
P.S. Hawlock	Gen. Beauregard	1858	J & G Thompson	339				144
P.S. Lord Clyde (1)	Advance	1862	Caird & Co.	700	243 x 26 x 14	350	S.O. 2cyls	144
G & J Burns								
P.S. Stag		1853	Wm. Denny & Bros.	499	208 x 23 x 13.2	240	S.L. 2cyls	137
P.S. Leopard	Stonewall Jackson	1857	Wm. Denny & Bros.	691	221 x 27 x 14.8	340	S.L. 2cyls	137
P.S. Gruffe	Robert E. Lee	1860	J & G Thomson	677	270 x 26 x 13	290	S.O. 2cyls	137
P.S. Roc (1)		1863	Caird & Co.	540	228 x 25 x 13.6	750 ihp	S.O. 2cyls	138
P.S. Fox (1)		1863	Caird & Co.	540	228 x 25 x 13.5	850 ihp	S.O. 2cyls	138
P.S. Fox (2)	Agnes C Frey	1864	Caird & Co.	559	237 x 25 x 13.5	950 ihp	S.O. 2cyls	138
Glasgow & Londonderry S.P.Co.								
S.S. Thistle (2)	Cherokee	1859	Laurence Hill & Co.	600		150	G'd beam	147
P.S. Thistle (3)		1863	Laurence Hill & Co.	472	202 x 26 x 12.3	310	S. 2cyls	147
S.S. Laurel (2)	Confederate States	1863	A & J Inglis	387	186 x 25 x 12.5	635 ihp	G'd beam	148
Glasgow & Stranraer S.P.Co								
Caledonia	Island City	1856	Tod & McGregor	183	163 x 19 x 9.4	80		161
M. Langlands & Sons								
S.S. Princess Royal (3)		1861	Tod & McGregor	604	200 x 28 x 15.5			159
Wm. Sloes & Co.								
S.S. Antona (1)		1859	Neilson, Glasgow	352	167 x 23 x 14	90	S. 2cyls	175
Chester & Holyhead Rly. Co.								RlyS
P.S. Scotia (1)		1847	Wigram & Co.	479	194 x 27 x 13.2	440	S.O. 2cyls	250
P.S. Anglia (1)		1847	Ditchburn & Mare	473	190 x 26 x 13.6	440	S.O. 2cyls	250
London & SW Rly.								18/24
P.S. Alice (Sirius)	Alice	1857	Caird & Co.	635	232 x 26 x 13.3	250	S.O. 2cyls	236
P.S. Fannie (Orion)	Fannie	1859	Caird & Co.	635	232 x 26 x 13.3	250	S.O. 2cyls	237
T.S.S. Atlanta (2)	CSS Talahassee	1864	J. & W. Dungeon.	418	202 x 24 x 12.5	200	Comp. twin	238
South Eastern Rly.								
P.S. Eugene	Cornubia	1862	M. Sarruckson & Co.	428	235 x 24 x 11.9		S.O. 2cyls	315
Great Central Rly								H/25
S.S. Sheffield (3)	Night Hawk	1864	McAndrews & Co.	560	245 x 27 x 12.2	180	C. 2cyls	56
P.S. Stockport (1)	Banshee (n/a)	1864	Whiteinch	981	250 x 31 x 11.1	250	S. 2cyls	57
Leeds & York.								
London & NW Rly								
P.S. Prince Arthur	Old Dominion	1864	Caird & Co.	708	228 x 26 x 14.2		S.O. 2cyls	223
David MacBrayne								H/26
S.S. Gladiator		1860	Pearse & Co.	591	193 x 28 x 15.7	80 hp.	S. Exp. 2cyl	307
Confederate Gov't.								D/L
P.S. Chancellor		1853	Wm. Denny & Bros.	161	165 x 17 x 7.3	340	S.L. 2 cyls	41
S.S. Memphis		1862	Wm. Denny & Bros.	1010	230 x 30 x 19.5	141	D.A.	82
S.S. Georgia	Commerce Raider	1863	Wm. Denny & Bros.	648	210 x 27 x 15	166	Steeple	89
S.S. Corea	Tennessee	1864	Wm. Denny & Bros.	874	210 x 27 x 15	130	D.A.	97
S.S. Cyclone		1864	Wm. Denny & Bros.	887	215 x 31 x 21	209	Horiz. B.A.	104
P.S. Ella		1864	Wm. Denny & Bros.	634	225 x 28 x 13	200	S.O.	105
P.S. Caroline		1864	Wm. Denny & Bros.	634	225 x 28 x 13	200	S.O.	106
P.S. Emily		1864	Wm. Denny & Bros.	1100	155 x 34 x 16.5	300	S.O.	107
T.S.S. Brasil	Enterprise	1865	Wm. Denny & Bros.	776	250 x 30 x 16	235	D.A.	108
T.S.S. Amazona	Adventure	1865	Wm. Denny & Bros.	776	250 x 30 x 16	235	D.A.	109
P.S. Imogene		1865	Wm. Denny & Bros.	633	225 x 28 x 13	200	S.O.	110
T.S.S. Ajax	Ofustee (returned)	1865	Wm. Denny & Bros.	341	176 x 25 x 12.5	105	B.A.	111
T.S.S. Hercules	Vicksburg (return)	1865	Wm. Denny & Bros.	341	176 x 25 x 12.5	105	B.A.	112
T.S.S. Flora (1 st of 8)		1862	J. & W. Dungeon		165 x 23 x 13.5	600 ihp		LNRS
T.S.S. Edith	CSS Chickamauga	1864	J. & W. Dungeon	510d	175 x 25 x 15	894ihp	Comp. twin	LNRS
P.S. Banshee		1862	Jones, Quiggin & Co.		215 x 30 x 11.3		S.O.	LNRS
P.S. Colonel Lamb		1864	Jones, Quiggin & Co.	1070	296 x 34 x 16.7	350		LNRS
P.S. Hope		1864	Jones, Quiggin & Co.	1040				MDL
P.S.'s Condor, Falcon, Flamingo, Ptarmigan		1864	Randolph Elder & Co		270 x 24 x 7(d)			LNRS
P.S. Julia, Will o' Wisp		1863	Simons & CoRenfrew		202			CMH
P.S. Mary Bowers		1863			230			CMH
P.S. Evelyn		1864	Randolph Elder & Co	284	230 x 28 x 7 (d)	200		Sc.M.
P.S. Denbigh		1860	John Laird Sons & Co	250	183 x 23 x 9	100	Diag.	LNRS
L.O.M. S.P. Co.								
P.S. Douglas (1)	Margaret & Jessie	1858	Robert Napier & Co.	700	210 x 26 x 14	260	S.L.	LNRS

Under International Law a neutral country could build merchant ships, but not warships, for a belligerent country. Therefore warships were constructed supposedly for other neutral countries or as merchant vessels; as the latter they had to leave British waters unarmed and were armed at sea or elsewhere, before arriving on station.

In order to procure ships for blockade running and for warships or commerce raiders it was necessary for the Confederacy to have its regularly authorised agents abroad. Perhaps the C.I.A. originated with the Confederacy (Confederacy Intelligence Agency !)

Besides the commissioners whose mission was primarily diplomatic, the most famous was Captain James D. Bulloch, an officer of the Confederate Navy who acted for the Navy Department. Next in importance came the Liverpool firm of Fraser, Trenholm and Company. There were many other shadowy, covert agents used by the Confederacy and their names are often linked with the shipbuilders in the records of the shipbuilding industry.

Names which frequently appear include: J.N.Beach, Thomas Begbie, George Carlin, James Carlin of Carrickfergus, Commander Maury (Confederate States Navy), Thomas Bold ('Liverpool Merchant'), North and Hume (England), Barron (Paris), Helm (Cuba), Heylight (Nassau), Walker in Bermuda and a late addition to the list, Melchir G.H. Klingender, as mentioned by L.N.R.S. member Charles Dawson.

It has been estimated that between 200 and 250 ships were engaged in blockade running at Charleston and Georgetown, S.C., Wilmington, N.C. and Galveston, Texas.

The shipyards of Charleston introduced more innovations in Naval Warfare in this period (1861-1865) than anywhere else in the world, including torpedo boats, submarines, mines (called torpedoes at the time), minesweeping equipment, steam-powered ironclad warships and monitors. The first blockade of modern times was enforced by steam-powered warships to the ports and harbours of the Confederacy.

Profiles of some of the ironclad warships, designed and built at Charleston, are reminiscent of present 'stealth' warship designs for the future, with their thinly armoured sloping superstructures, innovative propulsion systems and weapon delivery systems.

Sources and References

Blockade Runners of the Confederacy has been compiled from the author's own library and acknowledgement is made for the extensive reference to Duncan Haws' *Merchant Fleets* series of books, *The Denny List* and *Charleston's Maritime Heritage* from which the drawings which accompany this article have been taken.

CCS *Clyde Coastal Steamers* by Duckworth & Langmuir

Rlys *Railway Steamers* by Duckworth & Langmuir

H/24 *Merchant Fleets*, Volume 24 by Duncan Haws

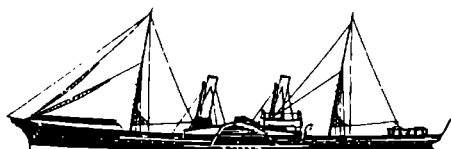
H/25 *Merchant Fleets*, Volume 25 by Duncan Haws

H/26 *Merchant Fleets*, Volume 26 by Duncan Haws

D/L *The Denny List*, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

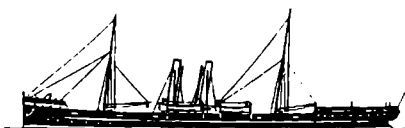
LNRS Liverpool Nautical Research Society - *'The Bulletin'* and other papers

BLOCKADE RUNNERS OF THE CONFEDERACY



P.S. Alice (Sirius) 1857

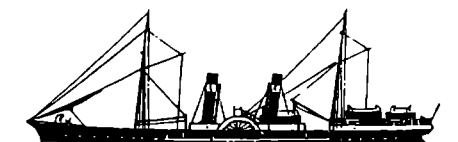
P.S. Fannie (Orion) 1859



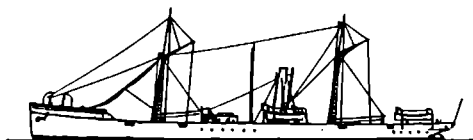
T.S.S. Atalanta (2) 1864



P.S. Eugenie 1862



P.S. Prince Arthur 1864



S.S. Sheffield (3) 1864

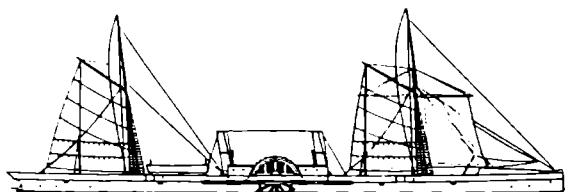


P.S. Stockport (1) 1864

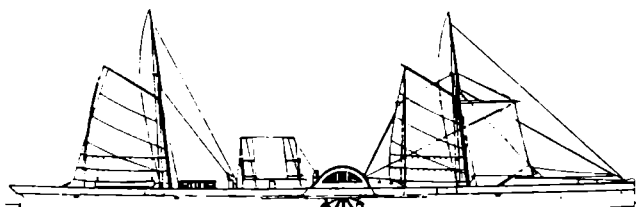


S.S. Gladiator 1860

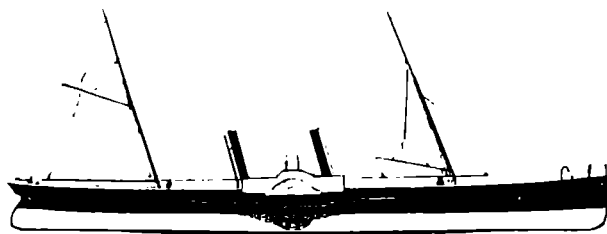
BLOCKADE RUNNERS OF THE CONFEDERACY



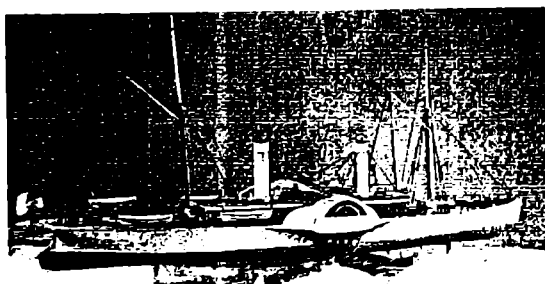
P.S. Julia, Will o'Wisp 1863



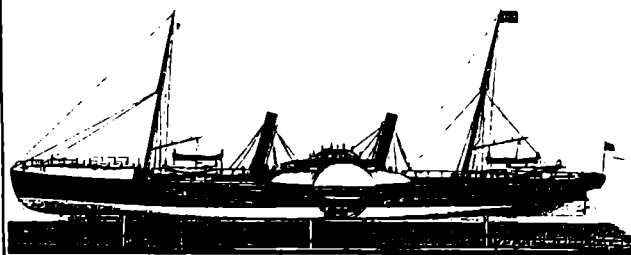
P.S. Mary Bowers 1863



P.S. Banshee 1862

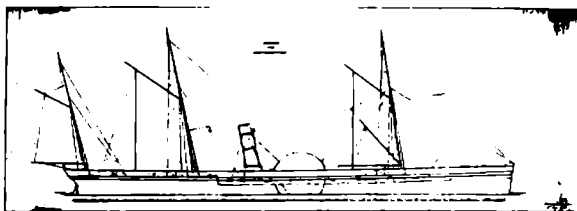


P.S. Colonel Lamb 1864

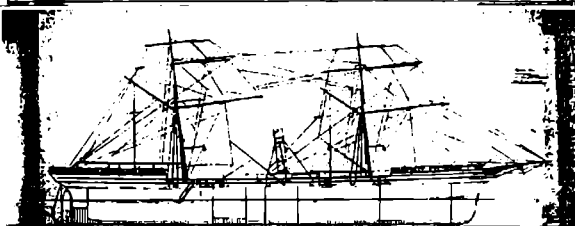


P.S. Hope 1864

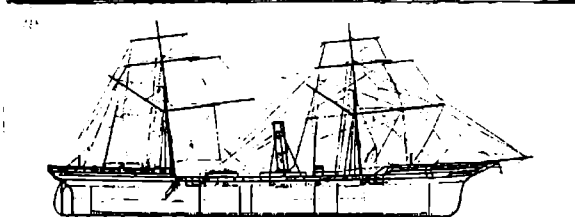
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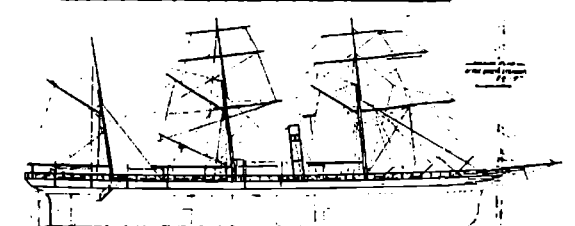
P.S. Leopard 1857



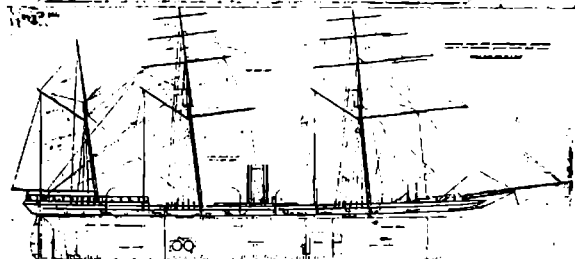
S.S. Memphis 1862



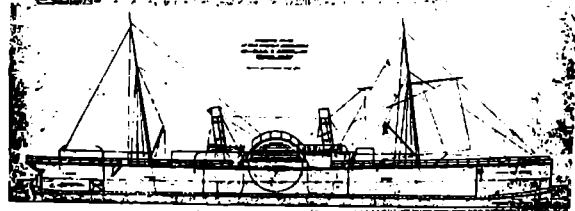
S.S. Georgia 1863



S.S. Corea 1864



S.S. Cyclone 1864



P.S. Ella 1864

P.S. Caroline 1864

P.S. Emily 1864

P.S. Imogene 1865

THE “REINA DEL MAR” AND THE MAX WILSON TRAVEL SAVINGS ASSOCIATION AFFAIR

by The Editor

from Lloyd's Register, 1957-58:

REINA DEL MAR Official Number: 187132 Signal Letters: G T Y N
Owned by the Pacific Steam Navigation Company, registered at Liverpool
Gross Tonnage: 20,225 Nett: 11,234 Length: 600' 9" Breadth: 78' 4"
Built by Harland & Wolff at Belfast
6 Steam Turbines, double reduction gearing to 2 shafts

This 20,255-ton turbine steamer, with accommodation for 766 passengers in three classes was built at Belfast by Harland & Wolff, and launched on 7th June 1955 by Mrs H. Leslie Bowes, the wife of P.S.N.C.'s then managing director. Watching the launching ceremony were the ambassadors of Colombia, Peru and Ecuador, and the Minister of State for Chile. The new *Reina* took shape as a replacement for the ageing diesel liner **Reina del Pacifico** on the service between Europe and the West Coast of South America. The two-funnelled **Reina del Pacifico** did not have an enviable reputation as a seaboat, but in spite of her nickname, the '*Rolling Reina*', many were sad to see her go.

The new **Reina del Mar** was to sail from Liverpool, via European ports and the West Indies, through the Panama Canal to Ecuador, Peru and Chile. The accommodation was air-conditioned and she had Denny-Brown stabilisers. Her public rooms were pleasant but unremarkable; her speed was a moderate 18 knots and her early career followed a routine pattern. She seemed all set for a quietly successful life on the Valparaiso run.

The new ship arrived at Liverpool for the first time on 9th April 1956 and eleven days later sailed on a pre- maiden voyage three-day cruise to the Western Isles of Scotland. By coincidence, on that same day, Friday 20th April, the new **Empress of Britain** left Liverpool on her maiden voyage to Quebec and Montreal.

The **Reina del Mar** left Liverpool on Thursday 3rd May 1956 on her 65-day maiden voyage to the West Coast of South America, calling at some 38 ports *en route*. On her arrival back in Liverpool on 7th July, her master, Captain George Rice reported that: "*she handles beautifully and steers like a yacht.*" At that time, the *Reina*'s Chief Engineer was Mr A. Currie and so it was inevitable that the new ship quickly became known as the '*Curry and Rice*' liner!

The **Reina del Mar** continued to operate with the **Reina del Pacifico** as her consort until the latter was sold for scrap in 1958.

The 1950s' boom filtered away towards the end of the decade as long-range airliners grabbed ever higher percentages of the passenger trade, and political troubles in Cuba, for many years a major stopover and an important source of revenue, added

to the difficulties. With the missile crisis of John Kennedy's presidency, the end of the West Coast passenger run was in sight. As P.S.N.C. archivist, John Lingwood, aptly put it: *"the sonic boom of jet travel sounded the death-knell of passage by sea."*

During these years, the new '*Queen of the Sea*' rarely found herself in the news. An interesting group of passengers travelled in her in 1962 - half a dozen young climbers heading for one of the great Patagonian peaks. The group included Chris Bonnington and Don Williams.

Rumours circulated in the spring of 1963 that the **Reina del Mar** would leave the South American service for a time and go cruising - a single cruise from Liverpool had already been arranged for August of that year with the staggering result that every one of her berths was filled when the booking had been open only a matter of hours. Half of the 570 passengers on the cruise had paid between £50 and £60 for the fortnight's voyage to the sun, which worked out at 2½d (1p) per sea mile!

On 2nd May 1963 confirmation was received of a five-month charter in the summer of 1964 to Travel Savings Ltd, a cheap cruise scheme owned jointly by the South African businessman Max Wilson, the Union Castle Line and Canadian Pacific. Members of the Travel Savings Association could join an 18-day cruise to New York for just £45.

Few liners have been involved in as complex a situation as the **Reina del Mar** during 1963 and 1964. There was a change of plan in September 1963 and the *Reina* found herself sailing into stormy waters. Max Wilson and Travel Savings Ltd were to buy her as their first ship; when she came into their hands in the spring of 1964 for a little over £3million, the first task was an expensive conversion. At this juncture Royal Mail, P.S.N.C.'s parent company, acquired 25 per cent of T.S.L. shares, an equal holding with the other members. T.S.L.'s first cruise, employing the **Empress of Britain**, took place in the autumn of 1963 and a notable feature was the low average age of the passengers. When Max Wilson announced the intended purchase of the **Reina del Mar**, he spoke enthusiastically of the progress made by his scheme. *"This is only the beginning,"* he promised, *"to date we have sold 26,000 berths - roughly 26 shiploads of passengers. Bookings are coming in at a minimum of 1,000 per week. Our membership in Britain is over 30,000."*

In November 1963 a powerful controversy sprang up over the decision to re-sell the **Reina del Mar** to the Greek shipowner A.J. Chandris. Flying the Greek flag and manned by a Greek crew she would be chartered back to Travel Savings for her lifetime. Chandris would become a fifth equal shareholder. Sir Nicholas Cayzer, the then Chairman of Travel Savings Limited, pointed out that T.S.L. was primarily a sales organisation and not a shipping company, and was not geared to operating a cruise ship on a complicated itinerary.

Ambitious plans were announced. With an increase from 770 to 1,150 passengers, and with new public rooms and facilities, the *Reina* would be well equipped for her new rôle as a full-time cruise liner. A sixty-day voyage from Durban to Japan for the Olympics was scheduled as her curtain raiser.

In many quarters her projected sale to the Greeks was severely criticised. The Merchant Navy and Airline Officers' Association described it as 'appalling', and the National Union of Seamen was equally vocal. N.U.S. General Secretary William Hogarth said: "*Here is a clear case for Government action to halt such sales of British ships abroad for use in competition with our own ships. At first glance, this is tantamount to condoning flags of convenience.*" The T.S.L. Board, contentedly watching their enterprise through rose-coloured glasses, were more than a little taken aback by the angry and persistent attack upon them. Just when the unions were putting great pressure on the Max Wilson group to keep the liner British, the Greek liner **Lakonia** caught fire and sank. At the end of February 1964, while the *Reina* herself was making a farewell voyage to Peru and Chile via the West Indies, Florida and Panama the decision was taken not to sell her to Chandris. A new consortium, comprised of P.S.N.C. (with a holding of 25%), Canadian Pacific, British and Commonwealth Shipping (Clan Line and the Union Castle Group) and Max Wilson's Travel Savings Association became the new owner of the **Reina del Mar**. The liner had been incurring losses on the West Coast of South America service running at between £200,000 and £300,000 a year, and in her eight years at sea she had never made a profit.

With Captain D. Idris Jones in command, the **Reina del Mar** left Liverpool on 2nd January 1964 on her last scheduled voyage on the service for which she had been designed.

On 10th March 1964 the *Reina* arrived at Belfast for conversion into a one-class cruise liner. Her cargo space was converted into additional passenger accommodation and she was ready for sea again on 10th June when she sailed on an 18-day cruise from Liverpool to New York. Some 700 T.S.A. members were on board with tourist fares ranging from £45 to £75. The **Reina del Mar** retained her familiar yellow funnel but carried the initials T.S.A. in blue, inside a blue circle, upon it. However, Travel Savings Limited was foundering and in July 1964 the T.S.A. scheme for cheap cruises was dropped. In October of that year, Union Castle acquired all the T.S.L. shares and the **Reina del Mar** reverted to P.S.N.C. ownership.

For the next nine years the **Reina del Mar** operated as a full-time cruise ship on charter to the Union Castle Line. The charter was due to expire in September 1974 but in November 1973 it was announced that Union Castle had purchased the *Reina* outright from Royal Mail Lines, the parent company of P.S.N.C.

In mid-June 1974 there came a surprise announcement from Union Castle to the effect that the **Reina del Mar** would be withdrawn from service in April 1975 because of greatly increased costs of operation. The tremendous increase in the price of oil fuel played a major part in this decision, though no doubt crew wages and the cost of maintenance and repairs also contributed. The fact remained that this fine ship, only 18 years old and very popular with the British cruising public, was unable to pay her way.

The **Reina del Mar** completed her U.K. 1974 cruising programme and then sailed for Cape Town where she operated her 1974-75 series of cruises from South

Africa to South America. Following her return to Southampton, the **Reina del Mar** was laid up on 1st April 1975 and eight weeks later she sailed for the shipbreakers at Kaohsiung, Taiwan. |||||

*L.N.R.S. Member John Lingwood knew the **Reina del Mar** well,
and recalls some anecdotes about the liner:*

At the launching ceremony Mr C. Warwick, Chairman of Royal Mail Lines - P.S.N.C.'s sister company - turned to Sir Leslie Bowes, P.S.N.C.'s Chairman and said: "You know Leslie, she'll never pay" - nor did she. But Sir Leslie was determined to have his 'daddy's yacht', as the sea staff referred to the **Reina del Mar**.

In the main dining room was a beautiful nude female glass figure standing in a shell. It was lifesize and there persisted amongst the sea staff the rumour that Lady Bowes, the Chairman's wife, posed for it. However, it was true that when entertaining guests aboard the **Reina del Mar** she posed in front of the statue and said "Now, don't you think it's just like me?", thus perpetuating the myth!

It was the custom of the Purser's staff to prepare a crew list for the Shipping Federation before sailing. However a full crew was never raised before the due date and so it was not unusual for the blank spaces to be filled in with *noms de plume*. Sometimes the names of senior management were used (without their prior knowledge, of course!) Some names were fictitious such as 'A. Carver - Butcher'. However, one voyage a young assistant purser used the Chairman's name in the position of steward. Unfortunately the head of the Shipping Federation in Liverpool who was well acquainted with Sir Leslie Bowes telephoned him and enquired: "*Leslie, I didn't know you were taking a voyage on the Reina on the q.t.*" Naturally Sir Leslie was furious and when he found out who was responsible, one young purser was sacked on the spot. However, everyone considered the hilarity the incident had caused was worth it. The young man concerned was never short of employment, and is still working in his retirement days.

In order to 'sell' the more exotic items on the menu, Sir Leslie hired celebrity chef Mario from 'Antonios of London'. So, dishes like Crêpe Suzette Flambé were served up to travelling office staff proceeding on leave to demonstrate Mario's prowess. I was one such person.

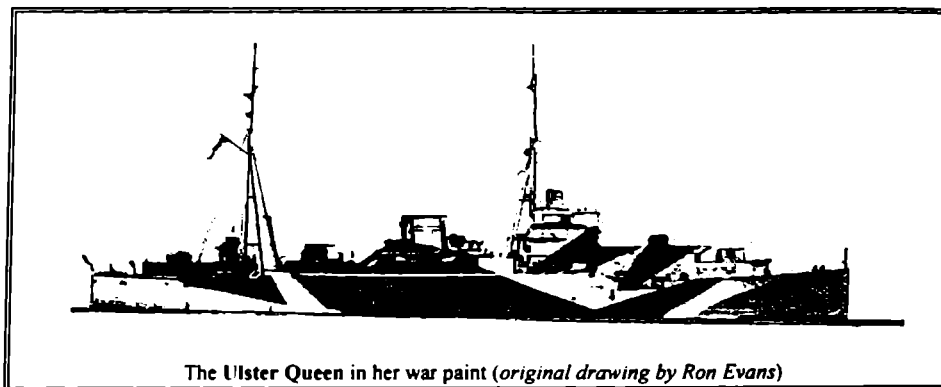
I can recall many other stories told to me by the officers and crew of the **Reina del Mar**. However most of them are libellous, and the remainder are just not suitable for printing in a journal such as '*The Bulletin*'!

John Lingwood

THE WAR SERVICE OF THE "ULSTER QUEEN"

From : Lloyd's Register 1931/32:

ULSTER QUEEN Official Number: 161857 Signal Letters: L F M W
Steel Twin-Screw Motorship, built in 1930 by Harland & Wolff, Belfast
Gross Tonnage: 3,735 Nett: 1,769 Length: 346-0ft Breadth: 46-2ft
Owned by The Belfast Steamship Company. Registered at Belfast.



At the end of March 1940, following her stranding on Maughold Head, Isle of Man, (see *'The Bulletin'*, September 2000, page 27) the Belfast Steamship Company's **Ulster Queen** was towed to Belfast where she was requisitioned by the Admiralty. Turning her into an auxiliary anti-aircraft ship involved drastic alterations, including the removal of her boat deck, one funnel, and the fitting of armour plating over her hull. By the summer of 1941 her transformation was complete. She carried six 4-inch guns, two pom-poms, two machine guns and four Oerlikons and her crew considered her to be one of the best fighting ships afloat. In addition she was fitted with torpedo tubes on each side and a depth charge chute aft.

HMS Ulster Queen was commissioned at Belfast on 26th July 1941. She ran her sea trials in the Clyde and her guns were tested off Ailsa Craig. The **Ulster Queen** was regarded as a very successful conversion. With so much of her top hamper removed she had no stability problem and was a good sea boat with excellent manoeuvrability. She was equipped with long range air warning radar and gunnery ranging radar. Her holds could be used as magazines, and it was this great capacity which made her such a valuable unit in the Russian convoys in which she was soon to play a dramatic part. In any event, the Lords Commissioners were so pleased with what Harland & Wolff had achieved that they purchased her outright from Coast Lines on 20th September 1941.

The **Ulster Queen** was soon in the action and on 12th October she arrived at Milford Haven to join the Irish Sea Escort Force. In November 1941 she escorted two Belfast bound convoys and was attacked by enemy aircraft on both occasions. The

ship's company was kitted out with 'Arctic gear', and in April 1942 the **Ulster Queen** sailed as part of a convoy escort to Murmansk. On the voyage she experienced repeated attacks from submarines and aircraft. The northern Russian ports were the only channels of supply to Russia, with the limited exception of Vladivostok which was closed as soon as Japan entered the war. Neither Murmansk nor Archangel was properly equipped to receive military cargo. Before she sailed for home, the **Ulster Queen** distinguished herself by shooting down a German aircraft. She arrived back in Belfast without incident and received much needed maintenance from Harland & Wolff. The **Ulster Queen** then returned to the Irish Sea Escort Force until the end of August.

On 2nd September 1942 the **Ulster Queen** sailed from Loch Ewe as one of the escorts for convoy PQ18. She made first for the Denmark Strait and then for Archangel. On 13th September 1942 submarines attacked convoy PQ18, and then a force of forty bombers attacked immediately afterwards. The two starboard columns of the convoy were wiped out and eight ships sunk. Following the bombers came torpedo-carrying aircraft which were driven off by intense fire from the escorts. The remains of PQ18 entered the port of Archangel on 21st September except for three ships which had run aground outside the harbour. The **Ulster Queen** remained with these three and successfully beat off repeated air attacks by German aircraft. After the three ships were safely refloated the **Ulster Queen** was able to berth, having been at 'defence stations' continuously for eighteen days. Just 27 out of the 40 merchant ships that had sailed in convoy PQ18 eventually made it to Archangel. The **Ulster Queen** was credited with the destruction of twelve German aircraft.

Before she left Archangel on 17th November 1942, the ice had closed in sufficiently for people to walk around the **Ulster Queen** and when she eventually sailed she cleared a passage through the ice not only for herself, but for the following merchant ships. The **Ulster Queen** was carrying 120 tons of silver bullion which she discharged on the Clyde on 30th November and she then crossed to Belfast for repairs to heavy weather damage.

The **Ulster Queen** was next chosen for conversion to a fighter direction ship and in June 1943 sailed to the Mediterranean. A need had been established for radar-fitted vessels to call fighter aircraft up and direct them to their targets. In July 1943 the **Ulster Queen** was present at Operation *Husky*, the Sicilian landings. From September 1943 until January 1944 she was present at the Salerno and Anzio landings, and she claimed ten enemy aircraft. She returned briefly to the Clyde for the modernisation of her fighter direction equipment in February 1944, but was back in the Mediterranean in July 1944 to take part in Operation *Dragoon*, the landings in southern France.

Almost on the eve of VE Day, following a refit at Cardiff, the **Ulster Queen** sailed out to the Far East where she served again as a fighter direction ship. She arrived at Colombo on 3rd May 1945 and at Trincomalee she embarked the Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, Admiral Sir Arthur J. Power and his staff. The **Ulster Queen** became the first British ship to sail into Rangoon after the Japanese had left. She then sailed on to Madras and Port Swettenham where she acted as a naval

control ship. She left Bombay for the UK on 1st October 1945 and paid off on arrival at Devonport on 1st November. It was claimed that the **Ulster Queen** had steamed 177,000 miles in just over four years.

It would have been a fitting end if the **Ulster Queen** could have returned to service on the Irish Sea. Quite apart from the drastic alterations which had been made, the armour plating which covered her sides had set up an electrolytic action which had corroded her plates, making them wafer-thin in places. The **Ulster Queen** was paid off into reserve on 22nd March 1946 and six days later she was towed to Pembroke Dock by the tug **Turmoil**. Two years later she was disposed of to Belgian shipbreakers Van Heyghen Frères, of Ghent, although she was still a relatively 'young' ship - just nineteen years old. A lot had happened since that stranding on Maughold Head on 28th February 1940! |||||

Sources:

Across the Irish Sea (Robert C. Sinclair) 1990 - ISBN 0 851775241

Short Sea, Long War (John de S. Winser) 1997 - ISBN 0 905617-86-X

Editor's Note:

The **Ulster Queen** had two sisterships designed to sail with her on the Liverpool-Belfast service. These were the **Ulster Monarch** (launched at Belfast on 29th January 1929) and the **Ulster Prince** (launched at Belfast on 25th April 1929). The **Ulster Monarch** survived the war and returned to the Liverpool-Belfast service until September 1967. The **Ulster Prince** was less fortunate : she grounded at the Greek port of Nauplia on 24th April 1941. The following morning she was hit by three bombs; fires broke out fore and aft and within two hours the **Ulster Prince** was ablaze and lost. j.s.

MORE ABOUT THE STRANDING OF THE 'ULSTER QUEEN' ON MAUGHOLD HEAD ON 28th FEBRUARY, 1940

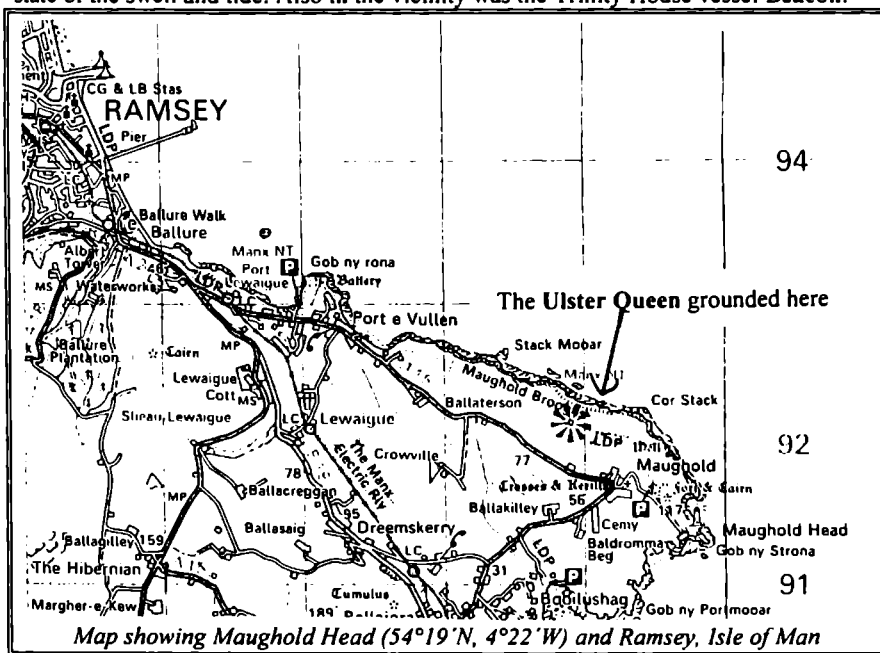
As Captain Philip Queeg, USN, pointed out several times in '*The Caine Mutiny*', you "*can't assume anything*". In preparing the short article about the stranding of the **Ulster Queen** on Maughold Head which appeared in the September 2000 '*Bulletin*', I assumed that because the **Ulster Queen** was sailing from Liverpool to Belfast when she ran aground, then the incident must have taken place on the south side of the headland. Graeme Cubbin and Ron Evans were quick to point out that the grounding, between Stack Moorar and Cor Stack, was on the **north** side of the head (*see map*).

My next assumption was that my original source information was wrong and that the **Ulster Queen** must have been sailing from Belfast to Liverpool in order to go aground where she did. Wrong again! What actually happened was that the **Ulster Queen** did not see the much reduced light (on account of the war) on Maughold Head because of the fog. She heard the fog signal and mistook it for the Point of Ayre (about

twelve miles to the north). Assuming she had rounded the Point of Ayre, she altered course for Belfast, with disastrous results. i.s.

L.N.R.S. Member Ron Evans has provided some additional information about the stranding:

There were 93 passengers and a crew of 53 on board the **Ulster Queen** when she stranded at 2.35am on 28th February 1940. At 4.30am a message was received at Ramsey Lifeboat Station from the Coastguard stating that a vessel was ashore on Maughold Head. There was a slight sea and a freshening S.S.E. wind, with thick fog and drizzle. At 5.15am the Ramsey lifeboat **John Comish** was launched and found the vessel lying bow-in, under very steep cliffs. Lying some two miles off shore was the passenger steamer **Duke of Lancaster** which did not proceed any closer owing to the state of the swell and tide. Also in the vicinity was the Trinity House vessel **Beacon**.



The lifeboat immediately went alongside and started to transfer passengers, and tow the **Ulster Queen's** boats, which were full of passengers, out to the **Duke of Lancaster**. The wind was increasing rapidly and soon a full north-easterly gale was blowing which made the transfer very difficult.

The **John Comish** then returned to the **Ulster Queen** and attempted to take in tow five of her boats, but this had to be abandoned owing to the heavy seas which were now running. She took five members of the **Ulster Queen's** crew on board and then

returned to her station at Ramsey. The reward from the R.N.L.I. for this service amounted to eighteen pounds, fourteen shillings and sixpence!

It is reported that a small vessel, possibly the buoy maintenance vessel **Victoria Regina**, which had been at anchor in Ramsey Bay, attempted to refloat the **Ulster Queen** on the flood tide and in the increasing N.E. gale, but the wire snapped and fouled the **Ulster Queen's** starboard propeller.

In the afternoon the **Ulster Queen** was thrown bodily broadside on to the rocks in the north east gale and the rising tide, with heavy seas breaking over her. It was decided that the Rocket Brigade should be sent to take her crew ashore, as requested by the captain. This was a difficult rescue in severe conditions and 44 of the crew were safely brought ashore. The only casualty was an alsatian dog, belonging to the daughter of the chairman of the Belfast Steamship Company. After being secured in the breeches buoy the poor animal panicked, broke loose, and fell to its death on the rocks below.

On 1st March an inspection was made of the ship as she lay to ascertain the damage. One little ship which played a major part in the salvage was the Isle of Man Harbour Board's **Sirdar**. Perhaps not as well known as the **Ranger**, the **Sirdar's** achievements in Manx waters were second to none. The **Sirdar** arrived from Douglas on 2nd March and picked up the **Ulster Queen's** boats, three of which were serviceable, the other two a total loss.

The **Sirdar** played a major part in the transfer of the **Ulster Queen's** cargo and goods to the Ramsey Steamship Company's **Ben Ain**, **Ben Ellan** and **Ben Vooar**. The cargo consisted of, as the saying goes, everything from 'a needle to an anchor', but there was a large consignment of Brylcreem. For a long time afterwards the heads of the male population of Ramsey had never been better dressed!

*see: 'The Stranding of the **Ulster Queen** at Maughold Head' -
'The Bulletin', Vol. 44, No.2, September 200, page 27.*



*The **Ulster Queen** as she grounded, before the N.E. 'ly gale slewed her round broadside on to the beach*

OBITUARY

L.N.R.S. Vice-President Ray Pugh

It was with much regret that I learnt of the death of Ray Pugh on 7th December. Ray had lived a very full and active life until about six months ago when ill-health forced him to give up his main interest of keeping a radio watch from his Southport home, on both a local and global basis.

Ray was born on 19th December 1908. To put this into perspective, Cunard's famous Blue-Riband holder **Mauretania** was just one year old, and the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company had just launched its fastest ever turbine steamer, the **Ben-my-Chree** (3). Ray was the only person I met who had actually sailed on the **La Marguerite** to Llandudno and Menai Bridge.

It was radio that provided Ray Pugh with his principal lifelong interest. In 1932 the Royal Naval Volunteer (Wireless) Reserve was formed. Ray answered an advert he saw in the magazine '*Wireless World*' and was enrolled as Watcher First Class, and was made Rating-in-Charge of the Merseyside Branch. These reservists had to provide their own equipment and were taught Naval operating procedures, but were not provided with any form of uniform. In time of war '*the Admiralty would only "call up" such members as might be required*'. There was no retainer - Ray and his fellow enthusiasts served on an entirely voluntary basis.

During the Second World War Ray was very much involved in perfecting Britain's secret weapon 'Huffduff', a term concocted from H.F./D.F. (High Frequency Direction Finding). Wireless direction finding did not operate on short waves - frequencies higher than 3,000 kilohertz - and the U-Boat strategy relied on the use of these frequencies to make convoy sighting reports, believing that they could not be located - until the advent of 'Huffduff'. Ray worked on HF/DF callibrations on board **HMV Hiniesta** for the last three and a half years of the War and was based at Portrush. To do this the **Hiniesta** had to make a complete half mile radius circle round the vessel to be calibrated - perhaps ten times per complete calibration. Ray estimates that in the course of this work he travelled over 20,000 miles in circles!

Ray spent his working life in shipping and forwarding. His working knowledge of Spanish was of great use to him. He recalls how the Uruguayan Consul in South Castle Street used to give him armchair treatment, instead of making him wait at the counter for documents to be authorised.

I first met Ray Pugh when I was sailing as Purser of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company's **King Orry** in the early 1970s. Ray was one of a large band of 'contractors' - the regulars, who for the price of a £25 season ticket, spent many summer days sailing across the Irish Sea on the 'poor man's **Caronia**'. I particularly remember chatting to Ray on the Saturday afternoon sails to Ardrossan. He was always to be found on a deckchair at the **King Orry**'s stern, along with his many friends and fellow 'contractors'.

Ray was involved with the Liverpool Nautical Research Society almost from its foundation in 1938. For many years in the 1970s and 1980s he edited the Society's 'Bulletin'. Although in recent years he wasn't able to attend the Society's meetings he contributed regularly to 'The Bulletin'.

I used to chat with Ray on the phone about once a week until very recently. He was a prolific letter writer and I have kept all his letters which give a unique 'snapshot' of life at sea in the Second World War aboard HMY **Evadne** and HMY **Hiniesta**. During the course of this year I shall go through his letters and pick out the best bits - there is a fascinating 'Bulletin' article contained in them. One story that I have always enjoyed was when the commanding officer of HMY **Evadne**, which was based at Holyhead, informed the ship's company that the next patrol would be in the English Channel. This caused considerable dismay and consternation and the C.O. allowed the information to sink in for several hours before clarifying the situation - the English Channel concerned runs off the Cumbrian coast from Whitehaven towards Maryport and Silloth!

Ray enjoyed a unique relationship with the watchkeepers at Mersey Radio, Liverpool's port radio station based in the Seaforth Radar Tower. He kept a daytime listening watch on Channel 12, and if one of the 'situation reports' broadcast daily at two and three hours before high water, was late; then he would phone up the duty watch to enquire why! I remember him telling me this tale one day. A large Royal Naval vessel was approaching Liverpool Bar and called Mersey Radio asking for instructions on where to anchor. Mersey Radio responded with: *'three miles to the south-west of the Bar Light Float, about two miles from the tanker Stolt Fulmar.'* The Naval vessel responded: *'Would that be the large red-hulled vessel?'* Back came Mersey Radio with: *'Well, we're too far away to see the colour from here.....!'*

I shall miss Ray Pugh very much. He was consistently cheerful and always 'signed off' his letters and phone calls with "Cheerio". So, "Cheerio, Ray"

John Shepherd

FROM CORK TO LIVERPOOL ON THE *KENMARE* IN JUNE, 1953

by Ray Pugh

At 11.30am we walked down to Penrose Quay. We were not allowed on board the **Kenmare** until 12.noon, and so we watched the cattle and sheep being driven on board. At last we got aboard and were taken to our cabin on the upper deck, just off the smokeroom below the bridge. This was a white painted room with wash basin and cold water. Towels were not provided as in the **Rockabill**. The top bunk had a square window with curtains. It was all very tidy.

Out on deck we watched the hatches being secured and the cranes lashed down. The cattle still came aboard with great reluctance. At the quay opposite were

two refrigerated coasters, the Italian **Veritas** of Genoa, and the Dutch **Henry Denny** loading carcasses for London. The sun came out and we enjoyed a spell on deck. The **Sanda** sailed for Glasgow at 1.20pm and we sailed at 1.25pm, but as a small boat had to be used to take warping lines to the far side of the dock, twice over, it was 2.05pm before we finally went ahead for the sea.

We saw several ships in harbour: the dredger **Owencurra**; the liner tender **Blarney** (ex **Royal Iris** of First World War fame); the coaster **Carthew** bringing in coal, and the **BP Manager** with spirit. Then there was a grab hopper called **Grabwell**, and a small tug with mud lighters called **Richard Wallace** (ex **Zed**, ex **Tid 108**).

Henry Ford's large factory is situated on the south bank below Cork, as well as the Irish Dunlop concern. Blackrock Castle is soon passed, standing out on a promontory, and we were soon opposite Passage West. I was especially interested in Cobh and, as we passed, the chimes of St. Colman's Cathedral rang out over the water. Alongside was the **Killarney** (ex Wallasey ferryboat **Francis Storey**). Spike Island, with its fortifications since the days when it was a British naval station, was passed, and so past the fortified straits to Roche's Point lighthouse, near where the White Star liner **Celtic** was wrecked about 1923. And here, as we met the ocean swell, we found motion on the ship. To the south, Daunt Rock lightship; to the west, America. Our course was set one point north of east, and we rolled to the long Atlantic swell as we left Ireland astern.

Since our morning coffee we had not had a meal, so at 3.40pm we had afternoon tea in the saloon: bread and butter with jam, biscuits, etc. Two ladies were also there. After this we had a brief rest on our bunks but, the sun being out, I thought we might be resting to better advantage in the open, so we went to the lower wheelhouse where the deckchairs were stored. Captain Randall asked us if we were making ourselves comfortable and offered to show us the radar, echo sounder and direction finder on the bridge. This interested my companion Lawrence greatly, and he saw how a distance of 9 miles on the radar screen and a depth of 28 fathoms (9 miles from the shore) was plotted on the chart, together with our course $E\frac{1}{4}N$. The **Sanda** was seen on the radar screen at 8 miles, and we spotted her easily with glasses. Captain Randall is a Wallasey man. The Second Officer, whose special pride and joy these navigational instruments were, was Mr Ross, a youngish sandy-haired man. It was pleasant to be in a ship's wheelhouse again under way, with the course being given and repeated.

At 6pm we read in the deck log that we were 32 miles from Roche's Point. The log is taken in at the Mersey Bar. Just after 6.30pm we went to the dining saloon for dinner. Soup, fish and chips, cheese and biscuits, coffee. The lady at the next table no sooner started her fish than she retired to her cabin. Her husband was asked "*would she be back?*", and shook his head; the elderly husband soon followed! Crockery was just staying nicely on the table. Racks had been fitted to the side tables under the tablecloths, in case of accidents. But we rolled along easily and without any violence as there was little wind.

After dinner we went up to the forecastle, where the motion is easy and noiseless, and watched the masts making arcs in the sky. Abeam was the Hook lighthouse, then we passed the Coningbeg lightship and the Saltees, and said 'goodbye' to Dunmore East. The **Great Western** came out of the River Suir, bound for Fishguard. We watched a small coaster bound west, bucking like a rocking horse. Gradually we were making on the **Sanda**. At 9.40pm we were off Tuskar light and took the inside channel where there is a tidal race which made both us and the **Sanda** roll. Soon after this we were level with the **Sanda**. We had a drink and Captain Randall joined us at our table for a chat.

Before turning in we saw another lightship, probably the Blackwater. I slept little and at 4.15am I could see the South Stack abeam. I went on deck for a moment in the still air and saw the Skerries off the starboard bow. The sky was now darker. Perhaps I then slept a little for I did not see the Point Lynas light. I was up and dressed to see the North West Float abeam at 7.30am - 24 miles to go. The wind had freshened from the south-east, but we were not rolling now. We had the ebb against us and the wind in our teeth.

The **Bar** soon hove in sight. A new merchantman, the **Kaituna**, was taking her pilot aboard there. The **Nairnbank** was being towed to the **Bar** by three of the new Rea tugs, and then we saw the **Turmoil**, the famous ocean-going tug, setting out to tow the **Nairnbank** to Blyth. We passed the **Bar** at 8.10am and sat down to breakfast. This all seemed a very rapid voyage to me; in fact I would have liked to slow it down, but the **Kenmare's** exhaust was blowing off surplus steam about every half hour, and she was pressing to get in with her hundreds of livestock.

The passengers, including some nuns, disembarked at Princes Stage and lined up with their luggage before three Customs Officers. I had nothing to declare, which may have seemed odd, so he looked through my case and then marked it with a blue chalk cross. I have no use for cigarettes, even if I had any spare room in my case. And so from Prince's Parade to Exchange Station in a taxi in the drizzle. We were back in Liverpool. 🍂



Ray Pugh : 19th December 1908 - 7th December 2000

THE CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

1st January, 2001

Maritime Archives and Library,
Merseyside Maritime Museum.

Dear Members,

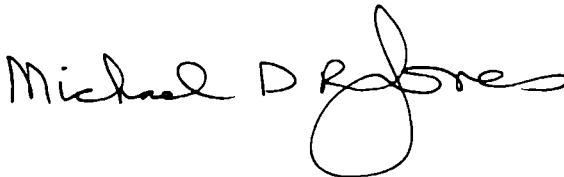
This letter will appear in the extra edition of *The Bulletin* which is scheduled for distribution in the first few days of the New Year, and so I shall start my letter by wishing all the members of the Society a very Happy New Year!

This extra edition of *The Bulletin* is an indication of the amount and quality of the research being carried out by the membership, because one of the reasons for the extra edition is to find space to put into print some of the excellent material which the Editor currently has in hand. With so many contributions coming in from members, it is also important to reduce the time before the work received actually appears in *The Bulletin*. I know we all thank the Editor for suggesting this extra edition and for finding the time and effort to produce it.

The previous edition of *The Bulletin* is still fresh in my mind as it was distributed as recently as early December, and I am still full of admiration for the high quality and interest value of the articles it contains. I do see quite a number of similar publications on nautical subjects, but none of them comes anywhere close to the depth of the material to be found in *The Bulletin*. I think it is quite unique.

I look forward to the resumption of our meetings in the middle of January as they will be one measure of the return to normality after all the recent festivities! As I write we have our first deep fall of snow this winter, and whilst it all looks very festive, I do hope it is long gone and clear before we have to think about travelling to meetings.

I wish you all well,



THE MONDAY FACILITY

Members' access to the Archives and Library at the Merseyside Maritime Museum on Mondays resumes in 2001 as follows:

JANUARY : Monday 29th

FEBRUARY : Mondays 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th

MARCH : Mondays 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th

APRIL : Mondays 2nd, 9th, 23rd and 30th

MORE PROBLEMS WITH THE MERSEY RIVER BERTHS

by John Shepherd

An article in 'The Bulletin', Vol.43, No.6, April 2000 looked at the problems of providing river berths in the Mersey for the Irish ferry traffic. Since this article was written, the saga has plunged into new depths of farce and fiasco.

It is now eight years since the plans for a river terminal on the 'Twelve Quays' site at Birkenhead were first published. Two years later, in July 1995, plans were announced for a similar terminal on the Liverpool side of the Mersey. In January 2001 the schemes have got absolutely nowhere. The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company is still bogged down in its '*raging apathy and lethargy*', whilst the ferry operators: P.& O., Merchant Ferries and Norse Irish Ferries are now threatening to abandon Liverpool altogether or to take legal action against the MD&HC.

The Millennium celebrations were hardly over before the Twelve Quays scheme was again delayed because of a dispute over a Grade 2 listed building, a pumping station, on the river wall at Wallasey. The fact that it would be necessary to demolish the 130-year old building had apparently been ignored by all the earlier planning applications for the scheme. Just days later the MD&HC announced that its Trafalgar Dock scheme had been abandoned in favour of a 70-acre residential, recreational and commercial development on the proposed ferry terminal site.

On 19th May 2000 the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company issued a Press Release announcing a new site for a terminal at Langton Dock, a mile to the north of the original Trafalgar Dock scheme. The 40-acre site would have a marshalling area for 575 heavy goods vehicles and cars, plus passenger facilities. It was expected to be operational in the first quarter of 2002.

The Press Release went on to state that work on the Twelve Quays scheme was scheduled to start in the summer of 2000 for completion in the third quarter of 2001.

Chief Executive of the MD&HC, Peter Jones, said: "*The Port of Liverpool currently handles one third of all trade between Britain and Ireland. The Langton and Twelve Quays river terminals will increase capacity in the sector by 50% and at the same time eliminate the single biggest obstacle to Liverpool's continuing expansion as Britain's major gateway to Ireland - the need for the ferries to enter the port's enclosed docks.*"

The Birkenhead Twelve Quays scheme suffered another minor 'blip' when in September 2000 protesters objected to the loss of public access along the river wall between Seacombe and Woodside. They seemed to ignore the fact that this access has never been possible because of the Alfred Entrance locks.

November 2000 was not a good month for either scheme. Directors of the MD&HC learnt that the Langton proposal was being opposed by a powerful lobby within Sefton Council who feared that the high traffic levels already generated by the

docks would be exacerbated by the new terminal. The issue had arisen over an application for a Harbour Revision Order by the docks company. As the local authority, Sefton must be consulted by the Department of Environment, Transport and Regions. The Sefton Council lobby chose to ignore the fact that traffic levels in its area will actually diminish when Norse Irish and Merchant Ferries transfer to Twelve Quays across the Mersey at Birkenhead.

After six years of sheer frustration, P.& O. reacted by threatening to move from Liverpool to new deep-water berths in the Dee estuary at Mostyn, although this was quickly denied by a company spokesman. P.& O. have invested £33million in a new ferry for its Liverpool-Dublin service, the *European Ambassador*, which is due to enter service in January, 2001.

In the event, Sefton Council reversed its decision to object and the MD&HC is now pressing the DETR for an early response in relation to the Harbour Revision Order.

If the events in Bootle had reached a stage of sheer farce, then almost unbelievable fiasco was about to be unveiled across the Mersey at Twelve Quays.

The construction company which had been awarded the contract, Christiani and Neilson, went into administrative receivership on 25th November 2000, just days before work was about to start on the scheme. The leader of Wirral Borough Council made what must amount to the understatement of the year: *"There have been a few false dawns, and I hope this is not another one!"*

The MD&HC was reported as being in urgent talks with a new developer in an attempt to salvage the existing timetable for the Twelve Quays project. It was hoped that swift action could reduce the delay by weeks instead of months. Further extended delays could have legal implications involving Merchant Ferries and Norse Irish (both part of the Cenargo group). A Cenargo spokesman refused to say whether there were any penalties which could be invoked if the terminal was not open by Autumn, 2001.

Just three days after the Christiani and Neilson collapse, Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott hailed the growth of Irish Sea traffic business through the Port of Liverpool and the plans to revitalise Twelve Quays at Birkenhead when he published a White Paper on ports. Mr Prescott said: *"For the past decade there has been consistent and strong growth in Irish Sea ferries freight volume through Liverpool. The number of ro-ro units has increased from 94,000 tonnes to 430,000 tonnes in ten years."* He went on: *"The story of Twelve Quays shows how booming trade can be exploited to regenerate derelict port facilities."*

The story of Twelve Quays is one of farce, fiasco and frustration, now entering its second decade. There is now no likelihood of the terminal being completed in 2001 - the summer of 2002 may be a possibility. The Langton scheme looks like running into 2003 before the first ferries berth.

For the foreseeable future P.& O., Merchant Ferries and Norse Irish must continue to put up with *'the single biggest obstacle'* to their continued expansion: the ninety minutes that are lost on each and every crossing by having to lock through from the tidal River Mersey into Liverpool's enclosed dock system. |||||

LIVERPOOL No.3 PILOT VESSEL 'ARNET ROBINSON' / mv 'FATIH'

by Andy Malcolm

'The Bulletin' recently reported that former No.3 Liverpool Pilot Vessel Arnet Robinson was still sailing, and currently operates as a Turkish passenger vessel named Fatih on a service from Tasucu in southern Turkey to Girne in northern Cyprus. Andy Malcolm recently came across the former Arnet Robinson lying in the harbour at Kyrenia.

from Lloyd's Register, 1968:

ARNET ROBINSON Official Number: 187181
Gross Tonnage: 734 Length: 176' 6" Breadth: 31' 10"
Built by Philip & Son, Dartmouth, in 1958

I thought some Pilots, both retired and working, might be interested to hear about the above vessel. After the Arnet Robinson left the Liverpool Pilotage Service she had a spell as the survey vessel Penn Surveyor. After a period berthed in the Waterloo Dock she left the Mersey under her own steam bound for Turkey where she was converted to a ro-ro ferry.

Whilst on holiday in May 2000 I spotted, from a distance, a vessel in the main harbour at Kyrenia that could have been No.3. Having gained access to the docks, past a policeman with a machine gun, I could confirm from the shape of the foredeck, the bridge front and the rubbing strake under the bridge that I had indeed found the Arnet Robinson. The rest of her was a completely different shape.

To get on board meant passing another armed policeman who telephoned for a more senior officer who escorted my wife and myself on board. Unfortunately I was not allowed to take my camera.

As I mentioned, the silhouette of No.3 had altered. The bridge deck has been continued aft to about where the after end of the lifeboat davits used to be, and then there is a half deck down on to the after deck which has been raised. On the stern there is a ramp for loading and discharging vehicles. The shapes of the embayments are still visible on the hull.

Going on board by the stern ramp, there was a huge ro-ro deck. The deck level was above the water line and it ran the whole length of the vessel with only a trunking in the centre for the funnel and access to the engine room. There was a ladder leading up to the 'passenger accommodation' which was on the deck level of the old boat deck. The deck that used to house the engineers and catering staffs' cabins, the galley, the pilots' saloon and TV room had been removed. The passenger deck goes from the forward bulkhead to approximately twenty feet aft of the funnel. The skippers' cabins have gone. Amidships on the forward bulkhead is a small bar and the deck has rows of seats. The windows, bedecked in fluttering purple curtains which have not been cleaned since they were put there at the refit, have been continued aft to

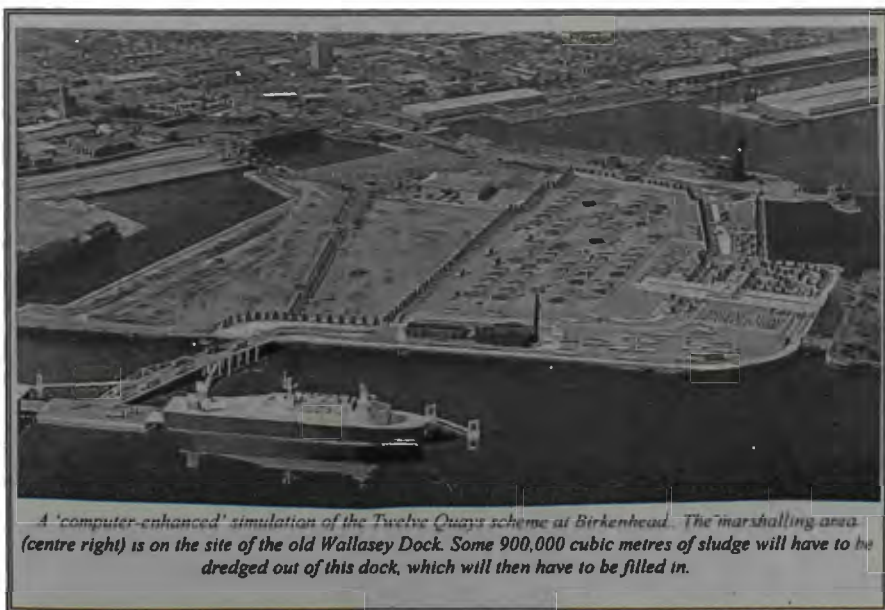
give views from the seating. At the after end of each side there are half ladders up on to the raised afterdeck, and then further half ladders up on to the continued bridge deck.

The wheelhouse is the same as it used to be, including the old Kelvin Hughes radar. The radio room has not changed, but the chart table area is now the skipper's cabin. The foremast has been moved from just aft of the wheelhouse to just forward of the funnel and is now the mainmast; the foremast and light are on a small mast where the cathead davit used to be. Attached to the after end of the wheelhouse where the mast used to be is another small outdoor bar.

The general state of the **Fatih** was pretty poor, but the hull seemed to be in very good condition and the only real rust was on the new decking. I don't think she had been in service for some time, as there are now faster and larger ferries in operation.

It was great to see No.3 again, but a little sad to see the neglected state that she is now in. |||||

The 'Rough Guide to Cyprus' (1996 edition) says: "*Fergun Denizcilik's broken-down tub the **Fatih** (cars carried) is worth avoiding if you have the choice; it leaves Tasucu Sunday through Monday at midnight, arriving in Girne (Kyrenia) the next morning.*" The **Fatih** was reported in Lloyd's List on 9th February 1999 as leaving Iskenderun (Turkey) for Tasucu. *j.s.*



CAPTAIN THOMAS PRITCHARD, RNR

by L.N.R.S. Member Ron Dennis

This short article is a précis of a paper read to the Society on 20th April 2000.

Thomas Pritchard was a farmer's son who lived in the village of Abererch, Pwllheli, on the Lleyn peninsula. Thomas was always determined to go to sea, although this was much against his parents' wishes.

Following in the tradition of young men from that area of North Wales, Thomas went to sea in 1893 when he was 16 years of age. He joined the smack **Fishguard Lass**, of 38 tons. His early years were spent in two of the more well-known ships of the Lleyn - the brig **Fleet Wing** and the schooner **Twelve Apostles**.

It wasn't long before Thomas was sailing the oceans of the world in famous full rigged ships, but he realised that he needed to progress in rank and in 1901, at the age of 24, he was 2nd Mate on the full rigged ship **Boadicea**.

In 1902 Thomas Pritchard sat for and gained his master's certificate. He had left sail behind and moved on to steamers where he sailed as 2nd and 3rd Mate and Chief Officer. In 1907 Thomas joined the Royal Naval Reserve and gained certificates in gunnery and torpedo proficiency. He was promoted to Acting Lieutenant and after 18 months training he returned to the merchant service, where he joined the White Star Company and saw service in the **Celtic**, **Cedric** and **Oceanic**.

When on leave he married the local vicar's daughter back at home at Abererch. With the outbreak of war in August 1914, Thomas was recalled to the R.N.R. He spent much time on coastal defence duties, but on a number of occasions he was made commodore of convoys to Canada.

Following the signing of the Armistice in 1918 Thomas spent four years out East on the China Station. Returning home in 1922, he saw his son Emlyn for the first time. Emlyn had been born in 1919, four years after his daughter Ellen.

In 1923 Thomas Pritchard's second son Richard was born, and in December of that year he sailed once again for the Far East. Circumstances in world trade were not good but Thomas could see things getting gradually better. He was now senior master with the Hong Kong, Canton and Macao Steamship Company which had recently been taken over by Sir Robert Ho-Tang. Thomas returned home for two leave periods in 1929 and 1934.

In 1937 Japan declared war on China, and in 1941 the U.S.A. and Great Britain declared war on Japan. On 16th December 1941 Captain Pritchard's ship, the ss **Taishan**, was bombed and sunk in Saiwan Bay, Hong Kong. He was interned in Stanley Camp where in 1943 he was to learn that his wife had died.

Like all the other prisoners Thomas Pritchard was given very little to eat. He sustained a triple hernia and suffered from beri-beri for at least two years prior to his death on 10th August 1944. He was 67 years of age. |||||

REPORTS ON MEETINGS

GLOBAL MARITIME DISTRESS AND SAFETY SYSTEMS (GMDSS)

by Mr W. Williamson (21st September, 2000)

Mr Williamson commenced his talk with a few autobiographical notes. He joined the Marconi Company and went to sea as a Radio Officer in 1960. After seven years at sea he came ashore to be a shore technician at Liverpool, training young Radio Officers in such things as the Morse Code.

In the early days of radio at sea, Mr Williamson explained that the Radio Officer was there specifically for the safety of life at sea. In the event of an emergency he would send out a distress message in Morse Code and the range of this message would be a mere 200/300 miles. There were no international standards for dealing with incidents. GMDSS started to come in about thirty years ago and the first priority was to contact a shore station as soon as possible. GMDSS has now been established on a world-wide basis with each region having its own Maritime Co-Ordination Centre.

There are certain prerequisites for each ship, such as being able to transmit a ship-to-shore distress alert by at least two means. A vessel must also be able to transmit a ship-to-ship alert and must be able to receive warnings from shore stations. For communications at the scene of an incident, VHF band apparatus must be available.

GMDSS covers four areas. The first of these is local VHF range, and equipment has an auto retransmit facility on Channel 70 every four minutes. The second area has a range of 250-300 miles and uses the medium frequency on 2175 kilohertz with digital selective calling. Area three utilises the world-wide Inmarsat system which employs four geo-stationary satellites orbiting 36,000 miles above the equator, giving coverage from 70°North to 70°South. The fourth area covers the Polar regions where the satellite system can't reach - here the high-frequency band is employed.

A principal problem with GMDSS is the number of false alerts - it is just too easy to send out a distress call either by accident or carelessness. Mr Williamson cited the example of the Falmouth Centre which receives 900 distress alerts every year of which just 30 will be genuine. However, all the alerts received have to be fully investigated.

The globe has been divided into 16 'met/nav' areas and on-board satellite equipment receives and prints out weather warnings. The receiver 'knows' when the vessel has moved from one met/nav area to another.

Mr Williamson said that GMDSS was never really intended to make the radio officer redundant, although this is effectively what has happened. Each vessel is required to carry just one certificated GMDSS officer who has passed a four-part examination.

The meeting closed with a brisk question and answer session and Mr Williamson's talk was enjoyed by all Members present. *i.s.*

THE MODERN MASTER

by Captain P. Woods (19th October, 2000)

Captain Woods commenced his talk by outlining his career at sea. He had been at sea for 41 years, 26 in command of ocean-going vessels. In 1959 he joined Elder Dempster and stayed with them for four years before moving on to Elders and Fyffes for two-and-a-half-years. Captain Woods next spent 27 years with Canadian Pacific and sailed on most units of the fleet except for the *'Empresses'*.

Captain Woods gave the meeting an amazing insight into the duties of a *'modern master'*. He is currently serving on board the 331,000 tonnes displacement VLCC **Libra Star**, built in 1993 by Mitsubishi in Japan. With a speed of 14½ knots loaded, his vessel can carry 286,000 tonnes of crude oil. Loading time for a full cargo is 24 hours at a maximum rate of 15,000 tonnes per hour, and it takes 36 hours to discharge the cargo. There are no manual valves at all - everything is automated. The length of voyage can vary between 35 days from Saudi Arabia to the U.S. Gulf to just four hours on the *'Red Sea shuttle'*. On this short run it is possible for the **Libra Star** to load 3.5million tonnes of crude oil in just six weeks! In a period of four-and-a-half months the ship was *'in port'* for just 11 days - at anchor 45 miles off Galveston! The **Libra Star** does not carry accommodation ladders - all personnel transfers are carried out by helicopter.

Captain Woods said that in *'the old days'* a vessel would carry a Purser, Radio Officer, Chief Steward and maybe a Doctor, but times have drastically changed and the Master is now required to carry out all these duties. There are satellite navigation systems and electronic charts, but sextants are still used. Telex and fax machines are standard on board.

Captain Woods stated he had been on a 5-day Shipmaster's Medical Course and that was the extent of his medical training for looking after a crew of 26. There was a total ban on alcohol on board and two breathalysers were carried to ensure that this ban was adhered to. A positive breathalyser reading would result in instant dismissal.

In certain parts of the world piracy was becoming an increasing problem; however no firearms were carried on board to combat this.

For someone like myself who sailed on his last voyage to sea as Purser of Harrisons' **Administrator** in 1978, Captain Woods' talk provided an amazing insight into how conditions at sea have changed in just over twenty years.

J.S.

A full report on Captain R. Flamman's talk 'The Baltic Lighthouses, A Voyage from Kiel to St. Petersburg on ss Philately' (16th November 2000) will appear in the March 'Bulletin'.

READERS' LETTERS

From L.N.R.S. Member Mr L.A. Leigh of Aberdovey:

Thank you for yet another interest-packed '*Bulletin*'.

I (as an Engineer!) particularly appreciated Graeme Cubbin's presentation of *D.I.Y. Navigation* in a unique and interesting context. Turning to our Chairman's Letter - for anyone wishing to learn more of Malta's history, I can recommend Peter Elliott's well researched and readable *The Cross and the Ensign - a Naval History of Malta 1798-1979*. (Harper Collins 1992, pb reprint of 1980 hb).

In T.E. Hughes' excellent *Mauretania* article I was puzzled by the statement that passengers travelling from London *via* Holyhead (implying ferry to Kingstown/Dublin, followed by train to Queenstown) had embarked at Queenstown. Geographically this seems a long tortuous route compared with train direct to Liverpool, or did Mr Hughes mean *via* Swansea, if a Swansea-Cork ferry existed in 1910?

From Edward Paget-Tomlinson:

Many thanks for sending me a copy of Ray Pugh's obituary which is excellent and says it all, with the bonus of Ray's own account of his trip in the *Kenmare*. Thank you too for the L.N.R.S. '*Bulletin*' which really is good. I believe the Society is in a very healthy state.

From L.N.R.S. Member Charles Dawson:

Harry Hignett tells me that he gave the incorrect date for the start of a regular steamship service between Liverpool and Dublin ('*The Bulletin*', September 2000, page 21). I thought it might be useful to give a compressed view of the earliest Irish Sea steamship services.

The first ever crossing into Liverpool from Ireland was that of ps *Waterloo*, built by John Scott & Sons, Greenock in 1819. She sailed in July of that year, but from Belfast. The first intermediate call of a steamship at Dublin (from Glasgow) was in 1815 by ps *Argyle*, built by Alex. Martin, Port Glasgow, in 1814. She continued her voyage round Land's End and then plied from London to Margate, for which she was renamed *Thames*. The second tentative voyage from Howth-Holyhead was by ps *Britannia* in October 1816. With her sister, ps *Hibernia*, (they were both built in 1816 by J. Munn of Greenock), some sources say that she ran a service between Holyhead and Dublin in 1816, but both steamers quickly disappeared and I believe they may have been sold to South America, although I am still trying to prove this.

The first regular Irish Sea service appears to have been started by ps *Rob Roy*, built by William Denny at Dumbarton, in 1818. She sailed that year from Greenock to Belfast. The next sailing, in 1819, from Holyhead to Dublin, was by ps *Talbot*, built by J.Wood & Co. of Port Glasgow in that year. In 1820 it was the turn of ps *Ivanhoe*, built by John Scott & Sons, Greenock. She sailed from Holyhead to Dublin in that year. The *Ivanhoe* seems to have made at least one voyage from Liverpool to Dublin in 1821, but no regular voyages as far as I can discover. She was

transferred to the Admiralty in 1837, renamed **Boxer**, and then served as a naval tug at Sheerness.

It was not until 1822 that a regular postal service between Holyhead and Dublin was established, according to the Parliamentary Report of 12th June of that year.

The first regular service from Liverpool to Belfast was started by the newly formed Belfast Steam Packet Company on 5th December 1824 with ps **Shamrock**, built by Bland & Chaloner of Liverpool in that year. The company disposed of its assets, including ps **Shamrock**, to the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company in 1825, who put her on the Belfast-Dublin run. The Liverpool-Dublin (and Glasgow) route was taken up in 1827 by the City of Dublin company's ps **Sheffield**, built by Dawson & Pearson of Liverpool in that year.

The Saint Patrick Steam Packet Company's ps **St Patrick**, built by Mottershead & Hayes, Liverpool, in 1822 (see '*The Bulletin*', June 2000, p.19) in that year started a service between Bristol-Tenby-Dublin and Liverpool. This appears to have been the first regular service between Dublin and Liverpool.

From L.N.R.S. Member Ron Evans

I recently came across the book 'Lamson of the Gettysburg' by James and Patricia McPherson which contains the Civil War Letters of Lieutenant Roswell H. Lamson (1838-1903). Roswell Lamson was one of the boldest and most skilful young officers in the Union Navy. Second in the class of 1862 at Annapolis (he took his final examination while at sea during the War), Lamson commanded more ships and flotillas than any other officer of his age or rank in the service, climaxed by his captaincy in 1864 of the navy's fastest ship, the USS **Gettysburg**.

Whilst Lamson was in command of the USS **Nansemond** he captured the blockade runner **Margaret and Jessie** on 5th November 1863 in latitude 34°05' North, longitude 76°50' West (see '*The Bulletin*', Vol.44, No.2, September 2000). Lamson then supervised her modification into the USS **Gettysburg**.

In a letter dated 29th January 1864 Lamson states: "*she is longer than supposed, being over 1,000 tons, and will be a splendid ship when ready for sea, which I fear will not be before the middle of March - there are fifteen hundred tubes to be put in the boilers*"

These letters with their richness of description, scope of coverage, keenness of perception and analysis of naval warfare, brilliantly describe the sea conditions and the performance of vessel and crew. They bring to life blockading conditions and the apprehension of blockade runners in the Gulf Stream and off the Atlantic coast of America by night and day and in all kinds of weather.

Lamson was thrilled by the performance of the **Gettysburg** which he described as fast and sea kindly, and he was held in great esteem by his officers and crew who, when he was transferred to another command, all wished to follow him.

The *Gettysburg* seemed to be able to steam at 15 to 15½ knots and at times even faster when not slowed by sea grass which could reduce her speed by 2 to 3 knots, or poor quality coal as described in a letter dated 13th August 1864:

"When iron ships have been at sea for four or five months, a kind of sea grass begins to grow on the bottom which lessens their speed very fast, and it has grown so long on the Gettysburg that she does not run as fast as when we left New York by at least 2 knots

The coal we got at Beaufort last was very poor, so that we were not able to carry as high a pressure of steam as usual

We had a very exciting cruise with pleasant weather except for one heavy gale from the North East during two days which the Gettysburg rode out like a duck in a mill pond."

It seems that the blockading ships had to return to port about every two weeks and they would then remain in port for one week.

'*Lamson of the Gettysburg*' is a very good read, on a par with the fictional exploits of Hornblower, Bolitho and Jack Aubrey.

An interesting sidenote in the American presidential election year of 1864 is that "*Lincoln was decisively re-elected with the electoral votes of all but three Union states. While winning 55% of the civilian votes, he carried nearly 80% of the soldiers' votes. Soldiers from Illinois, Indiana and New Jersey were sent home on leave to vote, delaying attacks on Fort Fisher, the Potomac, Petersburg and Richmond, and it was not until December 1864 that these troops became available and the Civil War could proceed!*" |||||

QUERIES - CAN WE HELP ???

from Norman Powell, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA:

I inherited a telescope which appears to be quite old. It has a wooden barrel with a 'single stage' brass slider. The lenses are set in brass and the trim is also in brass. Inscribed in the slider is "*Capt Wm June City of Boulogne*".

Although living in Albuquerque, I am originally from Birkenhead. This item has been in my family from my earliest recollection (I am 62 now) Any information you could give me regarding the City of Boulogne and/or Captain June would be appreciated.

from Lauchlin MacDonald, Raeford, North Carolina, USA:

I am looking for information about the *Dalton*, one of John Paul Jones' ships which is supposed to have picked up some of my family off the western coast of Scotland. One of the men was Alistair Graeme. I think the ship was a brigantine and was possibly in Nantes, France in October 1777. I have searched for many years and hope that you may be able to help me.

From L.N.R.S. Vice President H. Hignett:

In November the Society received a query asking if there was or had been a nautical school at Farnworth. We asked if the Farnworth in question was at Widnes or Bolton. The reply was that in 1930 a news item stated that six boys were drowned on an outing to Lytham St Annes and were said to be from St Aidan's Nautical School at Farnworth. An article in *Sea Breezes* (Sept.1992) entitled '*Trained for the Sea, but the Navy wouldn't have them*' discussed the concept of the industrial and reformatory schools. The reformatory ship **Clarence** was destroyed by arson in 1889 and thereafter the training school became land based near Widnes and gradually dropped its nautical connections. *Any further information, please, to the Editor.*

JUST FANCY THAT

THE WORLD'S FIRST 'AIRMAIL' SERVICE

The turbine steamer **Bremen** was completed for North German Lloyd in 1929 and operated on the Bremerhaven-New York service. She claimed the Blue Riband on her maiden westbound voyage with a speed of 27.83 knots. A novel feature was the catapult aeroplane carried on the **Bremen** which enabled mails to reach Bremerhaven or New York many hours earlier than if they had been transhipped in the usual way

The catapult plant itself was erected on a wheel-rim and rotated on a pin so that it could be swung round to either side of the ship. Planes up to a total weight of 3½ tons could be launched from the catapult, flew at 118 m.p.h. and carried approximately 440 lb. of mail. A record time of 5 days, 11 hours for mails between New York and Berlin was set on the **Bremen's** first eastbound voyage.



THE OVERNIGHT MERSEY FERRY SERVICES IN THE EARLY 1950s

In December 1953 the Borough of Wallasey sold its ferry-boat **Wallasey Belle** to Mr A.P. Martin of Heswall for £1,250. The vessel cost £13,500 second-hand when purchased by the Borough at the end of 1949, specifically for the night services. The overnight services across the Mersey had been a headache to the local authorities for some years. Rail communications between Liverpool and Birkenhead ceased shortly before midnight and the road tunnel did not permit any passenger service vehicle other than hired coaches. The burden was thus dropped fairly and squarely upon the Boroughs of Birkenhead and Wallasey as ferry operators who thus had to run throughout the night a steamer designed to carry between 1,000 and 2,000 passengers, and consuming a proportionate amount of fuel, to cater for a mere handful of late travellers.

A suggestion that one vessel should serve all three ferry points: Liverpool, Birkenhead and Wallasey, was not acted on, and the last named borough, with what can still be regarded as commendable enterprise, sought a smaller vessel for the purpose. Compromise had to be the order of the day. The boat had to be small enough to effect a substantial reduction in fuel costs and yet be able to cope with the swift flowing Mersey at its worst without discomfort to passengers. A former Admiralty 'Fairmile' launch seemed to supply the answer and the Bourmemouth pleasure craft **Channel Belle** was available and purchased by Wallasey Corporation. Wooden-built at Leigh-on-Sea in 1944, she had been converted for passenger work at Poole. The proposition seemed most attractive, for she could be used in addition for off-season ferry duty in daylight and summer cruising.



The former Admiralty Fairmile launch **Channel Belle** was purchased by Wallasey Corporation in 1949 and re-named **Wallasey Belle**. She was not a success on Mersey ferry service and was re-sold in 1953.

Like so many other ex-Royal Naval rescue launches which became available after the War (almost 700 were reportedly constructed), the **Channel Belle** was built of double diagonal mahogany on oak frames, the whole hull, the bottom of which was sheathed in copper, being fastened together with over two tons of copper nails.

It was intended that the newly purchased launch should be renamed **Gay Venture**, with **Crocus** or **Snowdrop** as alternatives, but **Wallasey Belle** was finally selected. She fulfilled all her planned duties at various times and was particularly busy in the summer of 1950 when cruises to see the aircraft carrier **Ark Royal**, on the stocks and fitting-out, were operated. She only made about 450 night crossings between Liverpool and Seacombe, and it is to be presumed, from observation of her behaviour, that she did not altogether meet the exacting demands of Mersey ferry service. The **Wallasey Belle** was a pioneer, and in some ways, a retrogression. Her diesel engines, the first to be used on Mersey ferry service, gave the Wallasey Ferries undertaking valuable experience in advance of the delivery of the 'full-sized' motor ships **Egremont** and **Leasowe**. On the other hand, her modest dimensions and passenger capacity: 112ft length and certificate for just 250, were reminiscent of the mid-19th century, and her wooden construction sent her back in time further still. She also broke a 50-year old tradition in being an importation from other waters. Not since the Great Eastern Railway steamer **Norfolk** was purchased in the 1890s had a Mersey ferry entered service other than directly from a builder's slipway. |||||

FORT PERCH ROCK IN ACTION

Soon after War was declared in August 1914 the regular troops were withdrawn from Fort Perch Rock at New Brighton and some local Territorials took over. A Norwegian sailing ship approached the fort in mid-August 1914 and was signalled to heave to, but the ship took no notice. Consequently the commanding officer ordered a shot to be fired across her bows.

Too much elevation was given to the gun and the shell sailed over the ship and embedded itself in a sandhill between two houses at Hightown, just to the south-east of Formby Point. Still the ship sailed on and so another shot was fired, with less elevation, which unluckily hit the bows of an Allan liner, lying at anchor.

A launch was then sent to intercept the sailing ship and she was brought to an anchor. The master was conveyed to Fort Perch Rock to explain his conduct. He said that when he left Norway, war had not been declared and owing to bad weather he had been delayed on the voyage, and had received no news on passage. When asked why he did not heave to when the first shot was fired, he replied: '*I think you only make play!*'

The gentleman who lived in one of the houses at Hightown next to the sand hill where the first shot fell, dug it out with a spade, and placing it in a bucket, brought it in to Liverpool to the offices of Mersey Defences, and indignantly demanded an explanation! |||||

FORTHCOMING MEETING

Thursday, 15th February, 2001

THE LOG OF THE SHIP '*HAROLD*', CONGO VOYAGE, 1869

(David Eccles)

to be held in the Education Suite at the Merseyside Maritime Museum at 12.30pm

THE LAIRDSIDE SHIP BRIDGE SIMULATOR

by L.N.R.S. Chairman, Captain M.D.R.Jones

As part of the Liverpool John Moores University, a revolutionary ship bridge simulator has recently been commissioned at the Lairdside Marine Centre on the banks of the Mersey at Birkenhead. The aim is to provide training and experience using simulation based on real life experience. In addition to the training of sea-going watch officers, the unit is designed for the training and familiarisation of river and harbour pilots and those involved with the control of shipping within harbours and ports. The facility can also conduct search and rescue simulated exercises for the training and testing of the various organisations concerned with maritime emergencies.

The Lairdside Ship Bridge Simulator gives high definition displays with 360-degree all-round visual graphics providing weather and sea conditions of any type either day or night, and the manoeuvring characteristics of a large number of vessel types can be simulated and illustrated graphically. The simulator also has the capacity to display a variety of locations such as the River Mersey, the Straits of Dover and Gibraltar, and the ports of Southampton and New York etc in all-round vision with the resultant manoeuvres shown on the adjacent instruments and radar displays, and the operator in full control with the student in control of a particular vessel. Voice communications can also be simulated.

The ship bridge simulator has been developed by Norcontrol of Norway who also produce radar and navigational systems for actual use at sea, and therefore the equipment used in the simulator is the same as is found at sea today, which adds further to the realism. The simulator is housed in a purpose built building close to the main road at the southern perimeter of the Cammell Laird site and can easily be recognised by its curved frontage, this being the main section giving the 360-degree visual display.

Recently, on two occasions, members of the Society have been able to spend a most interesting afternoon at Lairdside on a conducted tour of the facility, and also to gain practical experience on the simulator. In addition to the 360-degree main bridge, the parties were shown the two smaller subsidiary bridges which have the same equipment but with a smaller field of vision, and the unit for the training of port control operators, and the lecture theatres etc. Using the actual simulator the party assembled on the main bridge to participate in the manoeuvring of a large anchor-handling tug from the River Mersey into Gladstone Lock and on into the dock. Six other vessels were involved in the simulation and had to be avoided with the simulated conditions being varied from good visibility to dense fog, and from daylight to full darkness. The simulated sea conditions are said to be realistic enough to produce *mal de mer*! Later the parties divided into three, with each group manning the bridge of a ferry crossing the English Channel simultaneously with many other crossing vessels to contend with. This experience, which took almost an hour to complete, was very impressive, and as with the earlier docking of the vessel in Liverpool, the varied expertise of the Society members ensured a safe conclusion to the operation! |||||

AND FINALLY

THE NORTH ATLANTIC OSCILLATION

In December 1821 the *Manks Advertiser* reported that: "*the theme of everyone's regret is the extraordinary bad state of the weather*". Over 180 years later, the situation does not seem to have changed much, judging by the Autumn of 2000.

The following précis of an article from the *Daily Telegraph* may help to explain just what is happening:

Britain can expect mild, wet and stormy weather until March. The same research also suggests that the recent flooding is less to do with global warming - which has seen relatively cool global temperatures this year - than with recent anomalies in sea temperature in the North Atlantic.

The forecasting of winter climate for months ahead has emerged from the recent discovery of a link between sea surface temperature in the Atlantic and an apparently random weather system, the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO), a see-saw pattern of atmospheric pressure which forms over the ocean.

When the index is positive, as it has been over the recent Autumn months, there is low pressure around Iceland and the reverse off Portugal resulting in strong westerly winds, bringing warmth from the ocean's surface into the continent of Europe, along with storms.

When the index is in its negative state, winters are dry, cold and calm.

About a quarter of the year-to-year variability in the winter NAO can be predicted from Atlantic sea-surface temperatures, notably between Bermuda and Newfoundland. After conducting statistical analysis to reveal the link between sea-surface temperatures and seasonal variations, the Research Centre at University College, London, predicts from measurements taken in September 2000 that until the end of next February there is 70-75% probability that temperature, rainfall, wind speed and storminess will all be above average for the U.K. and Ireland.

Using similar techniques the Research Centre successfully predicted several months in advance the 1999 North Atlantic hurricane season, the 2000 north-west Pacific typhoon season, and the 1999/2000 winter storminess levels across England and Wales.

The oceans hold the key to medium to long-term climate forecasting because water holds much more heat energy than the atmosphere.

Britain owes its rainfall to the prevalent winter weather pattern of the North Atlantic in which a 'stormtrack' of weather systems is funnelled across north-west Europe, squeezed between low pressure over Iceland and high pressure over the Azores. The efficiency with which this 'stormtrack' delivers weather systems depends on the difference between the atmospheric pressures of these two regions, as measured by the North Atlantic Oscillation. |||||

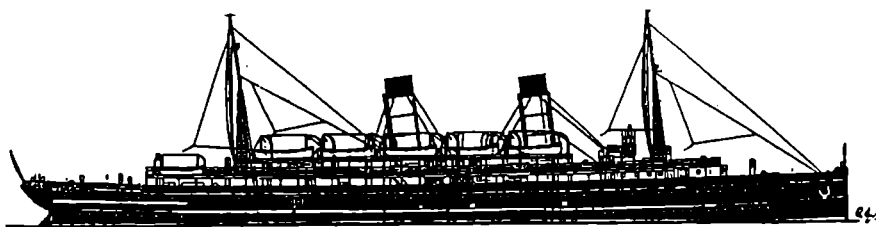
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

THE BULLETIN

Editor : John Shepherd

Volume 44, Number 4, March 2001



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From the Editor:

Editing '*The Bulletin*' is rather like trying to get the proverbial quart into a pint pot! Despite the mid-January "*Bulletin Extra*" there is still a substantial amount of well-researched and well-written material waiting to be published. My own reminiscences as '*A Purser's Clerk on the Queen Elizabeth in 1963*' have been held over to the June issue, which will also include David Eccles' '*Log of the ship Harold on a Congo voyage in 1869*' and the second part of Ron Evans' '*Big Boat in the Bay*' - a record of some of the more unusual visitors to Douglas Bay. *j.s.*

A RATHER THIN WHITE LINE - **(Brocklebanks and The Second World War)**

*A summary of the presentation given on 18th January 2001
by L.N.R.S. Member John Stokoe*

Whilst the full story of the Brocklebank Line spans over 200 years beginning in 1770, this presentation focuses on a comparatively brief period which starts in the mid 1930s.

The title is taken from a piece of Brocklebank history dating back to the Napoleonic War. At that time the **Queen Charlotte** was one of four sailing vessels owned by the Company. She was captured by a French warship, a prize crew was put on board and her own crew taken prisoner. Although she was eventually recaptured, the effect of this enemy action caused the introduction of a broad white band around the complete hull on all company vessels, which thereafter became one of the most familiar characteristics associated with the Company. With this in place, trading vessels resembled naval ships and the broad band, at a level where gunports are normally positioned, acted as a deterrent to the enemy, who would obviously think twice before rushing in to attack. As such it became extremely effective. It was however taken out of use between 1874 and the end of the First World War. Of course, as the story of World War Two unfolds, the previous positive effect was to wear thin and quickly became non-existent when the white band was gradually eradicated in favour of all-over war-time grey.

As early as 1936 when British shipping companies were beginning to consider the likelihood of war, the Brocklebank Line was starting to play a fairly leading rôle in ensuring that its vessels would be suitably prepared. For example, at times of repair and maintenance, opportunity was taken to instal bullet-proof pill boxes on each bridge wing, together with deck reinforcement in readiness for mounting guns. By July 1938, one year before the outbreak of war, almost every Company deck officer had been fully trained in gunnery practice. Also, all radio equipment was brought completely up to date. This state of readiness was quickly recognised in that Brocklebanks would be expected to carry a large number of Convoy Commodores from September 1939.

On the eve of war, the Brocklebank fleet of 25 vessels was scattered throughout the world and within days of the outbreak some found themselves in the front line of action. The first of these is well worthy of note.

The ss **Manaar** (7,214/17) completed loading a full general cargo in Liverpool and sailed for Calcutta on 2nd September 1939. Just four days into the outward passage, and when west of Lisbon, a submarine (later identified as U-38) was sighted on a converging course. The **Manaar** had two means of defence. These were her speed of some 12 knots, and her armament, comprising a 4-inch poop mounted gun. There was an exchange of gunfire which had been initiated by the submarine. As U-38 gained ground and drew closer, the **Manaar** suffered a number of direct hits.

Some of her crew members were fatally wounded and the decision was taken to abandon ship. The U-boat then torpedoed the **Manaar** which eventually succumbed and sank.

Of significance was the fact that Hitler had ruled, in any initial offensive, his U-boats would concentrate on merchant shipping and adhere strictly to the 1930 Submarine Protocol. This specified that vessels were not to be sunk without warning. The Protocol allowed submarines to warn, stop and search vessels. If found to be the enemy, or neutral with contraband cargo, they would be sunk, but only after the safety of the crew had been absolutely assured. Nevertheless, before the end of 1939, there were 34 U-boats deployed and operational in the Atlantic, the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. Atlantic-bound boats had sailed 'north-about' rather than risk detection in the English Channel.

Lieutenant Heinrich Liebe commanded U-38. His version of the affair was that he had put a warning shot across the bow of the **Manaar**. Then, as U-38 approached, the **Manaar's** gun crew opened fire, becoming the first British merchantman to open fire on a U-boat. Liebe dived immediately and sank the Brocklebank ship with torpedoes. In view of the hostile action against him, Liebe had taken the stance that the **Manaar** was excluded from the protection of the Submarine Protocol. Accordingly, he made no effort to assist the survivors. Admiral Donitz was given a personal account of this incident and he was incensed that the **Manaar** had returned fire on the submarine. As a result he determined that assistance to crews should never be rendered in any future encounters in the face of an enemy that was arming its merchant ships and, in effect, turning them into warships. This issue would bring him into conflict with many a U-boat commander in the ensuing years.

Heinrich Liebe remained in command of U-38 until June 1941 with a considerable record of achievement. The **Manaar** had been the first of 31 ships that he sank before moving to a training post with the Baltic fleet. Given his stance towards the **Manaar**, it is perhaps interesting to record that, just five days later, U-38 sank the British tanker **Inverliffey** which blew up in a fireball. At considerable risk to U-38 and its crew, this same commander towed all the lifeboats well clear of the blazing inferno, thus saving many lives.

So, Brocklebanks had lost their first vessel within just days of the outbreak of war. In fact, those remaining few months of 1939 were to become particularly traumatic for the company. Four vessels, the **Magdapur** (9,237/21), the **Marwarri** (8,067/35), the **Matra** (7,911/26) and the **Mangalore** (9,751/20) were mined at various points around the shores of the U.K. The **Mahratta** (6,690/17) ran aground on the Goodwin Sands and became a total loss. Ironically she sank less than one mile from the spot that the previously named **Mahratta** (5,679/1892) was lost in 1909, again inbound with a full general cargo from India. Also, the **Malabar** (7,967/38) was torpedoed by U-34 commanded by Wilhelm Rollmann some 50 miles west of the Scilly Isles.

Moving into 1940, we recall the stirring story of the ss **Masirah**, a vessel of 6,800 gross tons built in 1919. She left Liverpool on 2nd June and not until she was at

sea could her destination be revealed. The crew discovered that they were heading for the Mediterranean with military cargo to be unloaded at Gibraltar, Malta, Alexandria and Aden. As required the **Masirah** discharged at Gibraltar and was ordered to sail for Malta. Her departure, however, coincided with Italy's entry into the conflict. The Mediterranean was no longer safe and the **Masirah** received fresh orders to proceed to the Algerian port of Bone. On arrival she was strafed by Italian planes and was immediately ordered to sea. Fresh orders arrived directing her to Bizerta where she would join eight other British ships at anchor. More orders were received requiring all anchored vessels to proceed in convoy to Gibraltar. Within hours all these vessels were recalled to Bizerta because of reports of U-boat activity off North Africa. Having anchored at Bizerta all were then again instructed to sail for Gibraltar. After some hours at sea, a British patrol boat intercepted the convoy and instructed the **Masirah** to return to port whilst the remainder of the convoy continued on its way. The prime reason for this was that the **Masirah's** cargo was of vital need for Malta. The next evening the **Masirah** left the Bizerta anchorage and headed for Malta. Once at sea yet another message was received indicating that the passage would be far too risky to undertake and she was ordered back alone to Gibraltar. But what of Malta's vital needs?

The following day, Mediterranean Operations issued the **Masirah** with new orders to return to Bizerta to await the formation of a Malta bound convoy. The message itself became a problem as it had been sent out uncoded and would most likely alert the enemy and further heighten the risk to the vessel. The **Masirah** was therefore diverted to Tunis.

The **Masirah** had spent the past two weeks steaming up and down the North African coast, first one way, then the other. Her arrival at Tunis came as a complete surprise to the port authorities. With Italian air attacks on the increase every day, whilst in port the **Masirah** was singled out for high level bombing. Although straddled on a number of occasions, she suffered no damage.

The **Masirah's** stay in Tunis was ended when Captain W. Hill received fresh orders for his ship to sail for Gibraltar with the route at his discretion. She weighed anchor and set course for Gibraltar. However, whilst still in sight of Tunis, she was signalled by Aldis lamp cancelling that previous order and instructed to proceed to Malta alone. The **Masirah** passed Cape Bon and Pantellaria safely and arrived off Gozo the next evening. Before she could enter Valetta Grand Harbour she had to discharge all explosive cargo into lighters and, whilst this was being carried out, she was again bombed by the Italians. Fortunately no damage was incurred.

On arrival in Valetta the local military authorities commandeered all they possibly could from the cargo, including much that was consigned to other destinations. All told, the **Masirah** spent one week in Valetta and then had to return to Gozo to reload the various explosives meant for Alexandria and Aden. After this, albeit delayed by yet further air raids, she was ordered into convoy with three other vessels and steamed east to Alexandria with four destroyer escorts. During this passage, U-boats made several unsuccessful attacks, high level bombardment remained

almost continuous, and there was considerable threat of surface contact from Italian naval units.

The **Masirah** eventually arrived at Alexandria and was subject to four further air raids whilst her cargo was being discharged but yet again she escaped damage. A week later she proceeded through the Suez Canal and joined up with a fifteen vessel convoy which took her on to Aden. The last of her cargo was discharged and she proceeded unescorted to Colombo and Calcutta, having spent more than two months continuously in the front line.

The **Masirah** was already 21 years old. She must have been an exceptionally lucky ship continuing to trade for the Company throughout the war and up until 1954. A rather long story, admittedly, but worthy of full recognition, given the determination of Captain Hill and his crew to fulfil their so frequently varied orders.

Whilst the **Masirah** was being pursued through the Mediterranean, another Brocklebank vessel, the ss **Manipur** (9,242/20) was in Baltimore loading a full cargo prior to joining a U.K. bound convoy which was assembling in Halifax, Nova Scotia. It was mid-summer 1940 and having safely crossed the Atlantic and steamed to within just one day of her destination, she was torpedoed and sunk off Cape Wrath with 14 crew casualties.

Weeks later, on 15th August 1940, the ss **Makalla** (6,781/18) left London bound for Calcutta. She took the 'north about' route and was attacked by enemy aircraft off Duncansby Head. Three bombs exploded between the engine room and poop and the two halves of the vessel were cut off from each other. The order was given to abandon ship with 12 crew members killed in this action.

Some months later in October 1940, the ss **Matheran** (7,653/18) left Halifax in company with 52 other merchant ships. We were now entering the start of the period when German U-boat Wolf Packs were beginning to have real impact. Allied losses were considerable. The convoy had to pass through a heavy concentration of U-boats, and 11 days into this passage the **Matheran** became the next company vessel to be struck by a torpedo. There was no option but to abandon ship immediately and, apart from six crew members who had been killed in the explosion, the remainder were picked up by another convoy vessel, the **Loch Lomond**. The crew however were far from safe. The very next day the **Loch Lomond** herself was torpedoed and for a second time, within a period of two days, the Brocklebank crew found themselves abandoning ship. The survivors from both these crews were picked up by HMS **Jason** and were landed in the U.K. four days later.

All convoys were allocated numbers and letters identifying their port of departure and determining whether in-bound or out-bound. One or two went beyond this level of recognition by becoming famous. One such convoy was HX 84. Its commodore ship was the **Cornish City** and one of the escorts was the **Jervis Bay**. The convoy of 36 ships sailed on 28th October 1940 and Brocklebanks was represented by the ss **Maidan** (7,861/25).

The details of this particular engagement are now summarised. On 5th November the convoy encountered the German raider **Admiral Scheer** and as such

appeared doomed. The **Jervis Bay** broke from convoy formation and turned towards the raider but her 6-inch guns were hopelessly outmatched by the superior fire power of the enemy. The action lasted about one hour until the **Jervis Bay** was shelled into silence and sunk. But her brave action saved 33 vessels in the convoy. Sadly the **Maidan** was not one of these. She was hit by a salvo of 8-inch shells from the **Admiral Scheer** and because of her explosive cargo, she blew up with all hands and no trace of the **Maidan** or her crew was ever discovered.

There was one other famous ship in convoy HX 84, and as it turned out she was to be more fortunate than the **Maidan**. This vessel was the tanker **San Demetrio**. Although set on fire by gunfire from the **Admiral Scheer** and abandoned by her crew, after considerable effort and under harrowing conditions, the **San Demetrio** was reboarded and eventually brought safely into the Clyde.

After some fourteen months of conflict Brocklebanks were having to face up to the loss of ten of their vessels and there was no indication that this serious situation would improve.

Amongst wartime records in Brocklebanks' office the following note was found. *'On completion of loading for the U.K., the ss Mandasor (5,144/20) sailed from Calcutta on 13th January 1941. Eleven days later a wireless message was picked up saying that at the time of transmission she was being bombed. Since which date the vessel was missing and unfortunately presumed lost with all hands.'* The note was written in the early Spring of 1941 and one must also assume that it was accompanied by the sad company task of notifying the relatives of all crew members.

During the summer of 1941 a young man arrived in a Spanish prison for foreigners and was later released and sent to Gibraltar. How this man came to Spain and the full story of what happened to the **Mandasor** was not revealed until the end of the War. It was the **Mandasor's** 62nd voyage and her master, Captain A. Hill, kept a full record. So, here is what happened:

The **Mandasor** did in fact sail alone from Calcutta as indicated and for ten days the passage was without incident. On 23rd January 1941 a large unknown vessel was spotted on a converging course on the port beam and, in keeping with Admiralty instructions for such encounters, the **Mandasor** altered course to starboard and increased speed to avoid her. Once the vessel was out of sight the **Mandasor** was brought back on track. Dawn the next day was bright and clear and the ocean was calm. Early into 3rd Officer Livingstone's 8-12 morning watch, 'action stations' was sounded when a small seaplane was spotted. It flew extremely low over the **Mandasor**, in between her masts, and was seen to be dragging a wire just clear of the water to disable the radio aerials. The plane opened fire with her on-board cannon and the wire carried away both the main and the emergency radio aerials. The plane continued to circle overhead and the 3rd Officer, injured in the foot during the initial attack, returned fire with a machine gun from the bridge rail. The plane then rapidly disappeared over the horizon but, for the **Mandasor** and her captain and crew, this was just the beginning.

A surface raider now appeared heading at full speed towards the **Mandasor**. Although some crew members had already been killed and injured in the air attack, the priority task was to re-establish the radio aerial and warn other shipping in the vicinity. An aerial was successfully erected and a message transmitted and repeated three times but not acknowledged by anyone. This was obviously the message referred to in the shipping office note.

The **Mandasor** suffered heavy shelling from the raider and after some sixty direct hits the master gave the order to abandon ship. The vessel was already well on fire and would be of no use to the enemy. Whilst the crew were taking to the boats the raider maintained fire. The 2nd Officer was killed at this time, and the Radio Officer and an engine room rating each lost a leg. The raider sent over a boarding party to search for food and to set time bombs in the engine room. Those still on board, including the captain, were held at gun-point not knowing what would happen next. The German guards ushered these crew members into the raider's launch and they left the **Mandasor** for the final time.

At this point the raider was revealed as the **Atlantis** which had been well fitted out in its prison quarters with bunks and bedding, washrooms, a library, table tennis, darts boards and so on. The **Atlantis**, otherwise known as Raider No.16, had sailed from Germany in the Spring of 1940 under the command of Kapt. Zur-see Rogge. The **Mandasor's** captain was ushered to the bridge to witness the final moments of his sinking ship. She was still burning and her Red Ensign was still flying. When the time bombs exploded she settled slowly and almost immediately the **Atlantis** was up to full speed and heading away.

Whilst the Brocklebank crew were aboard, the raider continued with her campaign and more prisoners were locked in the quarters. One target was the Norwegian tanker **Ketty Brøvig**, and the **Atlantis** took full advantage of this by refuelling and restoring. The German vessel **Tannenfels** also arrived on the scene. She was to become the prisoners' new home for quite some time. The identity of the **Tannenfels** had been changed to that of the Norwegian vessel **Taronga**. She had been in the Indian Ocean since before the outbreak of war over eighteen months previously and was based mainly around the port of Mogadishu. Food and rations were very poor and the crew was not in a healthy state. Having settled aboard the **Taronga** the Brocklebank crew, along with others, considered the possibility of taking the ship which was well placed for heading to the Cape. The **Taronga's** crew was small and the guards were quite relaxed. A plot was devised but for some undisclosed reason the idea was then ditched. Interestingly, a few days later, the **Taronga's** master indicated in conversation with Captain Hill that he had been kept fully informed of what was being planned and would have been ready to resist.

The **Taronga** headed for Europe and the **Mandasor's** crew were taken off at Bordeaux. After being held there for three weeks they were crowded into railway cattle trucks for a journey to a prison camp in Germany. However, Mr Livingstone, the 3rd Officer, climbed through a carriage flap and jumped into the darkness and watched as the train took his ship-mates into captivity. Although he was eventually recaptured by

Spanish police, news of the fate of the missing **Mandasor** and her crew could at long last be reported.

The **Mandasor** incident had occurred in January 1941. The **Atlantis** continued to wreak havoc in the Southern Ocean until 22nd November when she was challenged by the British Heavy Cruiser **Devonshire**, which had tracked her around the South Atlantic aided by decoded *Enigma* messages. Shells were pumped into her until she was wrecked beyond hope. Captain Rogge, who had skippered her throughout since the outbreak of war, scuttled her and abandoned ship. The **Atlantis** had been at sea continuously for 622 days, covered 102,000 miles and sunk 22 ships having a total of 150,000 gross tons.

One month after the **Mandasor** left Calcutta (January 1941), the **Mahanada** (7,196/14) was sailing from Liverpool to link up with a convoy of 36 ships passing through the North Channel into the Atlantic. Three days out, a U-boat attack developed to the rear of the convoy and next morning enemy bombers were sighted. The surprise and speed of this air attack aided its success and the **Mahanada** was raked from stem to stern with machine gun bullets and a bomb struck No.1 hatch. The ensuing explosion blew away the entire fore'sle head. Engines were stopped and the boats were lowered. The sea was high and the wind was strong. All the crew, with the exception of two quartermasters who had been working in the fore'sle at the time, were accounted for and rescued by HMS **Weston**. The **Mahanada** sank within 24 hours on 26th February, 1941.

A very local incident occurred whilst the large scale air attacks on Liverpool were at their height in May 1941. The **Malakand** (7,649/19) and the **Mahout** (7,880/25) were berthed in the port and the greater part of their cargo was explosives. The **Malakand** was caught by a shower of incendiaries causing fires, which were extinguished by the ship's crew. Within half an hour, the shed alongside received two direct hits and fierce flames enveloped the **Malakand**. The captain was on hand and decisions had to be taken. If she was cut free from the berth she would endanger other vessels in the dock. Scuttling would take far too long to have any effect. The crew therefore remained on board to fight the fires until the order was given to abandon ship. At 07.30 on the 4th May 1941 the **Malakand** blew up with a tremendous explosion and parts of the vessel were later found over half a mile away. Further along the Liverpool docks the **Mahout's** superstructure was also damaged during the raid and she was moved across the Mersey to Birkenhead.

Although the Company's remaining vessels continued to trade there were no further significant incidents for over six months until the ss **Mahseer** (7,864/25), when close to the Barrow Deep in the Thames Estuary on 18th October 1941, struck a magnetic mine and sank almost immediately.

Remember, the original fleet comprised 25 ships. Just 11 of these now remained. Thankfully, the second half of the global conflict was to be less eventful for the Company.

There was a special commemorative plaque in the main officers' quarters on the ss **Malancha** (8,124/37). I recall it from when I sailed aboard her. It had been

given in recognition of the **Malancha's** part in towing the disabled destroyer HMS **Isis** from Jakarta to Bombay, via Trincomalee. She was in company with the **City of Pretoria**, which was given the task of towing a submarine. Despite the high risk of Japanese intervention, and apart from just one parting, remarkably the tow was completely uneventful and over 3,400 miles was covered at an average speed of almost ten knots. The plaque conveyed special appreciation from the Admiralty for having helped save a destroyer from the advancing enemy. Even so, back in 1942 no-one knew whether even Bombay would remain safe.

HMS **Isis** was completely repaired and records indicate active service in the Mediterranean, and being given shared credit, with a Wellington bomber, in the sinking of U-562. Her story ends on 20th July 1944 when HMS **Isis**, along with another destroyer HMS **Quorn**, were sunk by one man 'chariot' midget submarines launched by the Germans against the Allied Operation Overlord forces.

It may have been noticed that the focus of attention for these recent incidents has shifted from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. This is again borne out by this next story which involves some mystery. The ss **Mahronda** (7,880/25) was steaming up the coast of Portuguese East Africa on 9th June 1942. She was on passage from Liverpool to Karachi, delivering supplies to British Forces in the Middle East. Much of her cargo was of explosive content.

The sea was calm. Visibility was exceptional and the **Mahronda** was making a steady 12½ knots alone. Even though there had been no submarine warnings, she continued to maintain double look-outs and zig-zag courses. Then, without warning, two torpedoes broke surface heading for the **Mahronda**. Fortunately both fell short by the time they exploded and there was no damage to the ship. The **Mahronda** increased speed to absolute maximum revolutions and held a steady course with a view to outpacing the submerged attacker. Vigilance and speed were maintained for a further twenty-four hours.

Two days later the **Mahronda** was close to the shore of Mozambique when her look-outs spotted a large surface vessel coming up astern. It was not possible to identify this ship which held station about five miles away all day. Early that evening the **Mahronda** was struck by a torpedo between Nos.4 and 5 holds. These holds, together with the engine room, began to flood rapidly. The unidentified surface vessel was now closing on the **Mahronda** and, at the same time, a small three masted coaster was sighted steaming in the opposite direction. Within minutes a large Japanese submarine surfaced half a mile from the **Mahronda**. It turned towards the coaster and opened fire with its 6-inch gun. Direct hits were scored and the coaster, well ablaze, turned over and sank.

At this point both the large surface vessel and the submarine were within half a mile of one another but made no move against each other. The **Mahronda's** crew were now in the lifeboats and as their ship did not seem to be sinking, the master (Captain W. Hill again) returned on board twice during the evening. After his second visit however, the circumstances changed and the **Mahronda** began to sink. The lifeboats were within sight of the African coast and some lights could be seen ashore.

Although the sea was calm, progress to the shore was rather slow and it was dawn before the survivors landed. Looking out to sea they could still recognise the silhouette of the mystery ship which seemed to have led the submarine to her two victims. During the morning that the **Mahronda's** lifeboats landed, the 2nd Officer's boat followed a small rowing boat through the surf. Once ashore this was found to contain two Germans who had with them a radio receiver. Later enquiries revealed that there were a number of Germans located in that area.

What was important was that all the **Mahronda's** crew were safe. It could also be proved that the original torpedo attack which had taken place two days before the **Mahronda** sank, had been made by a completely different submarine, as records show that it continued to cause problems for other merchant shipping in that vicinity and had been sighted by an aircraft. The mystery ship which shadowed the **Mahronda** never once used her radio to contact other ships or submarines. So, perhaps this mystery ship was just a submarine supply ship also acting as a submarine guide; the advantage to this style of approach would be that the surface vessel would sight Allied vessels a a much greater distance than a submarine could. The small rowing boat was undoubtedly being used to contact the submarine under cover of night. Was this a case of German and Japanese direct co-operation with each other? The incident also demonstrated once again how dangerous the waters between Aden and the Cape were at that time.

We began with a tale about the ss **Manaar** which had been the first company ship to be lost within days of the outbreak of war. We have moved almost full circle as the **Manaar** (II) (8,007/42) was delivered under the Brocklebank wartime building programme. This time we have a story of not one, but two maiden voyages.

It was 14th April 1943 and the **Manaar** had left the Beira Pilot Station, turned south and headed for the Cape on a zig-zag course on the second leg of her long passage home. She was alone at sea and for three days all was well. The night of 17th April was fine and clear (which has become a common denominator in many of the incidents being related).

There were no submarine reports. In fact absolutely nothing had been seen or heard since the **Manaar** left port. At 03.15 a torpedo struck her for'd on the starboard side. The **Manaar** altered course to port and reduced speed. She was taking in water rapidly and her engines had to be stopped. By 04.00 her decks were awash and the crew abandoned ship. When all were safely in the lifeboats they heard the sound of a submarine's diesel engines. The submarine passed close by on the surface and, minutes later, fired a second torpedo at the already stricken vessel. The submarine then returned and hailed one of the boats asking if anyone could speak German. Mr Gray the 2nd Officer responded and after some dialogue with the submarine commander he volunteered to climb up the conning tower. The **Manaar** had still not sunk so the submarine proceeded to shell her and at 07.15 the **Manaar** slipped from view.

At daybreak the motor lifeboat took all the others in tow. The only absentee crew member was 2nd Officer Gray who had remained aboard the submarine which had long since vanished. On the second day the **Manaar's** survivors sighted land. This was

particularly reassuring as the weather was deteriorating and the lifeboats were continuously shipping water. They made for the shore and, after several natives approached them, the crew ascertained that there was a Church Mission just a few miles away. The weather remained atrocious and it rained non-stop for three days. Roads and bridges were washed away making routes impassable. Eventually the **Manaar's** crew were on the move by lorry having survived enemy action, an open boat journey, unknown shores, tropical rains and illnesses and now they were bound for the railhead that would get them to Durban. Everyone, that is, except for 2nd Officer Gray. No word was ever received concerning his fate. This was not discussed in Gibson's monumental volume published in 1953 nor by Duncan Haws in his publication of 1994. It is now possible to fit together one of the final pieces of this mystery, courtesy of Clay Blair's exhaustive study entitled *Hitler's U-boat War*.

The submarine in question turned out to be the large Italian **Leonardo da Vinci** which ironically was also on her maiden voyage to Cape Town and the Indian Ocean. It was a highly successful trip during which she had sunk five other vessels in addition to the **Manaar** including the British troopship **Empress of Canada**. During the voyage her skipper learned that he had been awarded Italy's highest naval honour together with a German *Ritterkreuz*. Not quite the end of this story, though. Weeks later, when entering the Bay of Biscay, the **Leonardo da Vinci** was sunk by the British destroyer HMS *Active*. There were no survivors and in all probability 2nd Officer Gray was lost in this action.

Time and space limit the amount of detail that can be incorporated in this paper. It would however be inappropriate to omit those vessels which were purely managed by Brocklebanks during the war. All told there were 17 of these, and perhaps there lies another fascinating account well worthy of further research.

From 1943 until the end of the war the remaining Company owned vessels, now with the gradual inclusion of wartime replacements, continued to witness much convoy activity in both the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Whilst other ships in close proximity were being torpedoed, sunk or damaged, the Brocklebank Line was spared any further loss following that of the **Manaar**. Company ships also worked in close conjunction with the Royal Navy and contributed meritorious service during landings in Madagascar (Operation Ironclad), North West Africa (Operation Torch) and of course support to the Normandy landings (Operation Overlord).

The final phase of the European conflict was decided on land and, for a year after Normandy, military cargoes continued to be shipped to the East with return passages bringing civil cargoes for the Ministries of Food and Supply. Brocklebanks had lost sixteen ships having a total of 125,000 tons, two-thirds of these being sunk within the first 15 months of hostilities. Remarkably, the latter three and a half year period of the war saw the loss of just two ships, both occurring off South East Africa. Of the total, seven had fallen victim to torpedo attack. Although a number of war historians cite that the laying of mines around the U.K. coast was not totally effective, they certainly had a considerable impact on Brocklebanks by claiming four ships. Just ten vessels survived from the pre-war fleet and a building programme ensured that

eleven brand new vessels would be completed and in service by 1950. This meant that Brocklebanks were able to re-establish their trade routes, at least for the final twenty or so years of Company operations. ||||

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LETTER FROM CHARLES BROCKLEBANK, GIFFORDS HALL, SUFFOLK

8th February, 2001

Dear Mr Tebay,

I would just like to thank the Liverpool Nautical Research Society very much for the summary of John Stokoe's talk - "*A Rather Thin White Line*" - which reached me last month. Having been unable to get to the presentation itself, it was most interesting to read the summary of how the Brocklebank Line survived the Second World War.

This is a grim account of carnage and bravery and a salutary reminder of just how terrible and finely balanced the War had been.

I shall require my three children to read the summary because we should be thankful every day for the victory which the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy won for us !

Yours sincerely,

Charles Brocklebank

LIVERPOOL AND THE CONFEDERACY

by Alan McClelland

Liverpool's close connections with the Confederacy in the American Civil War through its maritime activity have not always received the balanced attention they deserve. In recent years there has been an unfortunate tendency to view the subject through the distorting lens of political correctness. The re-opening of Laird's Graving Dock No.4 with its C.S.N. **Alabama** associations brought the subject to life once again, and the writer pondered the usefulness of drawing attention to some often neglected points:

- Slavery, though highly repugnant to ever increasing numbers of folk in the United States and Britain was not the only issue over which northern and southern states disagreed. Those states which broke away asserted other "states rights", including that to maintain their traditional export trades in raw cotton.
- Once hostilities between North and South broke out Jefferson Davies, no doubt influenced by the spirit of an age in which assertions of national identity were rife in Europe, sought recognition of the Confederacy as a state from the major European powers. In so doing he emphasised a commitment to free trade pleasing to those who feared the Morrill Tariff would cripple the export of raw cotton.
- It was some time before Abraham Lincoln took up the abolition of slavery as a war aim. (The treatment of freed black men by some Union army officers continued to leave much to be desired.)
- By the Declaration of Paris of 1856 Britain and other major powers, but not the United States, had accepted fundamental conventions for war at sea:
 - 1 Privateering was to be abolished.
 - 2 A neutral flag protected the goods of each side in a conflict, with the exception of contraband of war
 - 3 Neutral goods with the exception of contraband of war were not liable to seizure under an enemy's flag.
 - 4 Blockades, in order to be binding, must be effective: that is to say maintained by a force sufficient really to prevent access to the coast of an enemy.
- By attempting to impose a complete blockade on a geographically defined area the Union Government bestowed on the Confederacy the status of belligerent. Hostilities between them became more than a matter of insurrection. Business men

in Liverpool and other neutral trading centres felt themselves entitled to trade with either side, or indeed both! Shipping contraband of war was seen as an acceptable gamble.

- Whatever the niceties of the Foreign Enlistment Act, the **Alabama** was armed and commissioned as a Confederate States warship well outside British territorial waters. She was operated under strict naval discipline, no matter what the origins of her crew, as a commerce raider. (When published after the war, her exploits drew the attention of the Kaiser who commended their study to the German naval high command. She inspired surface raiding in both World Wars.)
- By 1860 Merseyside was pre-eminent as a centre of maritime activity and innovation, particularly in hull construction and rigging. Business was slack however, and there was unemployment amongst skilled tradesmen, labourers and seafarers. Shipbuilding orders were to be eagerly competed for, be they for blockade runners or warships.
- Whilst researching for a particular T.V. project in the 1960s, the writer was told that in days gone by local lore maintained that had it not been for the threat posed to British North America (Canada) by the large battle-experienced Union armies, the post-war 'Alabama claims' would have been contested with greater vigour.

The climate of the times here on Merseyside has unfortunately encouraged a simplistic labelling of attitudes and events of the past. The study of Liverpool's links with both sides in the American Civil War reveals a need for caution, particularly so far as the Confederacy is concerned.

In the early nineteenth century Liverpool based shipowners and merchants took full advantage of the opening up of the Indian trade in 1813, and the loss by the East India Company of its China monopoly in 1834. Competition created a demand for fast passages and therefore for vessels capable of making them in all conditions. (By the mid-nineteenth century it was commonly said that if you wanted a speedy ocean passage, then you should take a Liverpool ship!)

With few exceptions (if any) the Liverpool commercial community welcomed moves towards free trade. In the political controversy which surrounded the repeal of the Navigation Acts in 1849, Liverpool shipowners were most concerned that relatively cheap soft wood vessels purchased by them from North American yards should be treated as British in foreign ports.

In the imbroglio over the ill-fated American Collins Line, which sought to compete with Cunard on trans-Atlantic services to and from Liverpool in the 1840s and 1850s, it was significant and noted that Senators Stephen R. Mallory and Judah P.

Benjamin (eventually to become prominent in the administration of the Confederacy) vigorously opposed increased subsidies for the Collins operations. Benjamin successfully complained that subsidizing the Collins enterprise was '*to build up great cities at one end of the nation, and leave others to contend as best they may for commercial supremacy*'. Senator Robert Toombs of Georgia summed the matter up by commenting: '*If England will carry my letters for 25 cents, and I cannot carry them for less than half a dollar, I will let her have the business.*'

Careful study of the background makes it apparent that attitudes to the American Civil War in influential Liverpool maritime circles demand careful assessment. Numbers of speculators undoubtedly became involved in gambling in raw cotton and blockade running during the conflict, and fortunes were rapidly made and lost. However, there were people who felt, no matter what the misgivings of some over the slavery, that the South had a case worthy of recognition and assistance as a matter of political principle.

Acknowledgement and Sources:

Ian Cook and David Eccles

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"*Sea Breezes*" - various articles over the years

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The Carinthia passing under the Quebec Bridge in July 1966
(photo: John Shepherd)





THE CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

*Maritime Archives and Library,
Merseyside Maritime Museum,*

1st March, 2001

Dear Members,

A member of my family has worked for a number of years on the cross-Channel ferries between Dover and Calais. He lives in Folkestone and whenever we visit I feel that the influence of ferry life is very strong in the culture of both Dover and Folkestone. It seems that apart from the recent influx of refugees, almost everybody in the two towns is in some way involved in the life of the ferries. Looking at our local press here in Liverpool, you get the impression that our port might also be primarily a ferry port for there seems to be an endless stream of announcements of proposals concerning ferry operations in the Irish Sea. The construction of new ferry terminals on both the east and west banks of the Mersey seems to have been under discussion for decades, and only now has tentative work commenced on the first, with increasing doubt as to whether the terminal on the east bank will ever materialise. A new card has recently been played with the promotion of Mostyn in the Dee estuary as a new ferry port. It has always been disregarded by 'big ship men' but it seems that modern dredging will change all that. We have new larger ferries coming to use the Mersey and additional ferry services being introduced, all with much press attention. Sadly it seems that in the end the public of Liverpool will lose a section of the beloved Pier Head in order to make, of course, a car park for ferry traffic. I wonder how much more of the Pier Head they will want in the end. Is there any other maritime news of Liverpool, apart from disturbing reports about local shipbuilding and repair? Perhaps Liverpool always was a ferry port - only a century ago the ferries were much larger and sailed to North America.

As we know, there is a vast amount of backroom work by Members of the Society in helping people from elsewhere to find answers to their questions. One interesting piece of work has been research on behalf of a gentleman in Connecticut in the United States concerning his great-grandfather who was master of a sailing ship over one hundred and thirty years ago. Society Members have been able to provide a lot of information and the project has since developed considerably and has resulted in a strong relationship with our new friend in Connecticut. Members have also recently been helping a professor from the University of Brasilia who is making a study of the trade between Liverpool and the Amazon. This involved research into the rubber industry at the turn of the century when the Amazon basin produced all the rubber in the world, and how the up river city of Manaus became a very sophisticated metropolis. Liverpool shipowners were, of course, at the forefront of these developments. Such research stimulates the mind and provokes our curiosity. Perhaps that is why we do it!

Best Regards,

Michael D Jones

FORGOTTEN LINERS OF LIVERPOOL

No.11 The "BEN-MY-CHREE" OF 1908

by L.N.R.S. Member Ron Evans

BEN-MY-CHREE Official Number: 118605 Signal Letters: H R C Q

Steel Triple Screw Steamer

Tonnage: 2,550 gross; 1,017 net.

Built in 1908 by Vickers Sons & Maxim, Barrow-in-Furness

Dimensions: Length overall: 389-0 ft Breadth: 46-0 ft Depth: 18-6 ft

Triple screw, 3/sets Parsons direct acting turbines: Speed 24.5 knots

Owners: The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company Limited

The **Ben-my-Chree** (3) has recently featured in *The Bulletin* (Vol.43, No.5, Forgotten Liners of Liverpool - the IOMSPCo's **Viking** of 1905) and also in the Society's Diamond Jubilee Book published in November 1998 ('*What's in a Name?*' - the six IOMSPCo. vessels named **Ben-my-Chree**).

The **Ben-my-Chree** of 1908 (literally *Woman of my Heart*, popularly translated from the Manx Gaelic as *Girl of my Heart*) was the third vessel to carry this familiar name in the Company's history.

The success of the **Viking** which entered service in 1905 and the continued increase in passenger traffic, coupled with the increasing age of the fleet in 1908, led the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company to order a second direct drive turbine steamer which would be larger and faster than the **Viking**. The new ship was designed specially for the Liverpool-Douglas service.

The order was placed with the Barrow yard of Vickers Sons & Maxim Ltd, and the **Ben-my-Chree** (3) was launched on 23rd March 1908. Mrs I.T. Cowell performed the launching ceremony.

The **Ben-my-Chree** (3) was the fastest and most powerful vessel ever built for the Company. She was certified to carry 2,549 passengers and her crew of 119 was probably the largest ever employed on such a cross-channel steamer.

8th August, 1908: Trial speed: 26.64 knots. The new **Ben-my-Chree** proved to be the fastest and largest cross-channel ship of her day.

9th July, 1909: Record passage, Mersey Bar Lightship to Douglas Head, 2hrs 16mins, and berth-to-berth 2hrs 53mins, an average speed of 24.12 knots. This record stood until 29th June 1994 when **SeaCat Isle of Man** crossed in 2hrs 20mins, berth to berth.

June, 1911: Douglas Jubilee Celebrations. The **Ben** took part in a 'Round the Island' challenge race with an early aircraft (pilot Graham White), but the tiny aircraft had to land frequently to make adjustments and the **Ben-my-Chree** emerged the victor!

11th July, 1913: The Royal Opening of Gladstone Dock, Liverpool, by King George V and Queen Mary. The Royal Party on board the **Galatea** reviewed the many ships assembled in the River Mersey. The **Ben-my-Chree** headed the line of cross-channel steamers and vessels of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board.

1915: Requisitioned by the Admiralty for conversion to a seaplane carrier with a large hangar aft. The **Ben-my-Chree** made aviation history when an aircraft launched from her decks

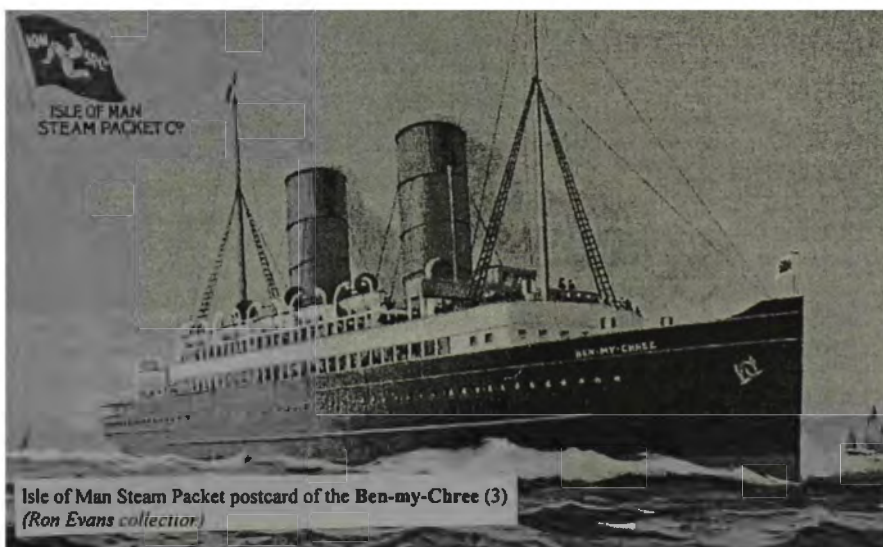
torpedoed and sank a 5,000ton Turkish supply ship. A more detailed description of the wartime history of HMS **Ben-my-Chree** follows this brief chronological history.

11th January, 1917: Sunk by Turkish gunfire at Castellorizo, Turkey.

1920: Salvage steamer **Vallette** raised the wreck and towed the hulk to Piraeus. In 1923 the hulk was towed to Venice for demolition.

In an appendix to this article entitled '*The Search for Speed*' (previously included with the description of the **Viking**), comparison is made with many vessels in the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company's fleet. The appendix includes further particulars from the Company's records of the **Ben-my-Chree** (3), and an indication of where the development in cross-channel steamers was to lead.

Turbine machinery was more economical in space than paddle steamer machinery as the appendix illustrates, allowing passenger accommodation to be increased. For the first time in the Company's history the first-class dining saloon in the **Ben-my-Chree** (3) was forward on the lower deck, rather than aft, with seating for 115 passengers.



In the early 1900s large posters and coloured postcards illustrated and advertised many of the ships of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company, some of which, as above, rather exaggerated their potential speed and power, more reminiscent of Cunard liners than cross-channel steamers. However as the pace of the Industrial Revolution increased, so the public obsession with speed grew greater. Records were there to be broken and there was great excitement on board when a record might be in the offing, taking into account the weather conditions, passenger loading, the trim of the vessel and the quality of the fuel.

Wagers would be made amongst the passengers, watches would be carefully examined and knowledgeable passengers would read the log being trailed astern, recording the distance travelled. Alleged racing off the Rock Light with the Liverpool and North Wales excursion steamer *La Marguerite* even raised a question in Parliament! Today, maintaining sailing schedules at 'economic speeds' seem to be the main objectives of shipping companies, rather than breaking records.

The Douglas Harbourmaster Log records: 'on 15th July 1908 the new steamer *Ben-my-Chree* arrived at Douglas on her maiden voyage from Liverpool, 3hrs 5mins.' Thus began six years of record breaking service, usually on the Douglas-Liverpool route, but during the Scottish holidays between Douglas and Ardrrossan, often calling at the Queen's Pier, Ramsey.

The new *Ben-my-Chree* also introduced during this period occasional day trips between Queen's Pier, Ramsey and Liverpool. Winter lay-up for the larger vessels was at Barrow-in-Furness, rather than at The Tongue in Douglas inner harbour.

Draft Measurements: Company records show draft measurements to monitor the vessel's performance as follows:-

Date	Place	Loading Conditions	Draft Fwd.	Draft Aft	Draft Mean	Displacement (tons)
23.03.1908	Launch	As launched.	6'2"	8'4"	7'3"	
27.07.1908	Victoria Pier. Depart Liverpool.	1500 pass. Aft ballast tank full. Fwd. ballast tank empty.	13'4"	13'7"	13'5½"	3360
07.08.1908	Victoria Pier. Arrived Liverpool.	Pass. landed. Ballast tanks emp. Coal 110 tons. Boilers full.	13'1½"	12'10½"	13'0"	3227
11.08.1908	Victoria Pier. Depart Liverpool.	1360 pass. Aft ballast tank full.	13'0"	13'10"	13'5"	3360
18.07.1913	Victoria Pier. Arrived Ardrrossan	Full compliment of 2549 pass. Coal 90 tons.	13'4"	14'0"	13'8"	3433
23.08.1913	Victoria Pier. Depart Liverpool.	Full compliment of 2549 pass. Coal 100 tons.	13'6"	13'6"	13'6"	3380

Machinery

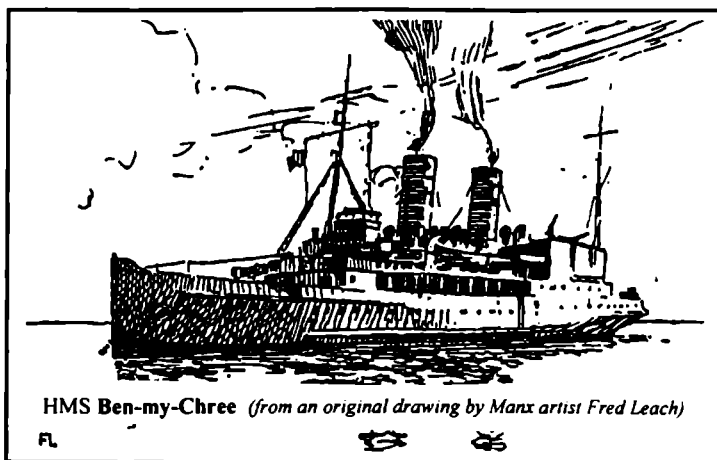
Engines, by the builders Vickers Sons and Maxim, were direct drive turbines driving triple screws, the centre shaft being directly coupled to the high-pressure turbine, which exhausted into the low-pressure turbines on the wing shafts.

The nominal horsepower was 2,000 and the indicated horsepower 14,000, which was much greater than in reciprocating engines. Four double-ended Scotch boilers working at 170lbs pressure supplied steam. The *Ben-my-Chree* could carry 210 tons of coal in her bunkers and consumed 11.75 tons per hour steaming at 23½ knots. Of course this consumption would increase considerably as her speed increased. There were 32 furnaces to these boilers and it is estimated that 16 to 18 stokers/ firemen/trimmers were required to serve them. Ventilation to the boiler room was reduced when the *Ben-my-Chree* was converted to an aircraft carrier, and when on service in the Mediterranean, temperatures were reported to have reached 140 degrees Fahrenheit!

The Ben-my-Chree (3) at War, 1915-1917

Requisitioned by the Admiralty on 1st January 1915, the *Ben-my-Chree* was immediately put into the hands of the shipbuilders Cammell, Laird & Co. at Birkenhead for conversion to a seaplane carrier. Very considerable structural alterations were made as described on the attached drawings. The conversion work was finished quickly and the *Ben-my-Chree* was commissioned on 15th March 1915. She joined the Harwich Force in early April,

bringing the Force up to its three-carrier strength including two other ex cross-Channel steamers, the **Engadine** and the **Riviera**.



The carrier force attempted three strikes on 3rd, 6th and 11th May against shore installations in Germany, but on each occasion the attacks were frustrated by the weather. The **Ben-my-Chree** tried to launch an aircraft from her rails during the 11th May attack but it was not successful. She left for the Mediterranean later in May and arrived in Malta in June 1915 to support the Gallipoli operation in spotting for naval gunnery and in launching torpedo attacks on Turkish vessels. On 12th August her aircraft torpedoed a 5,000-ton Turkish transport. This was the first successful torpedo attack against a ship with a torpedo dropped from the air.

On 17th August another target was sunk at Ak Bashi Liman and on the same day one of the **Ben-my-Chree's** aircraft, forced down by engine trouble and whilst taxiing on the water, torpedoed and sank a Turkish tug-boat.

With the abandonment of Gallipoli the **Ben-my-Chree** was transferred to Salonika and the Aegean, and operations along the Turkish coast were introduced to prevent the Turks from threatening the Suez Canal.

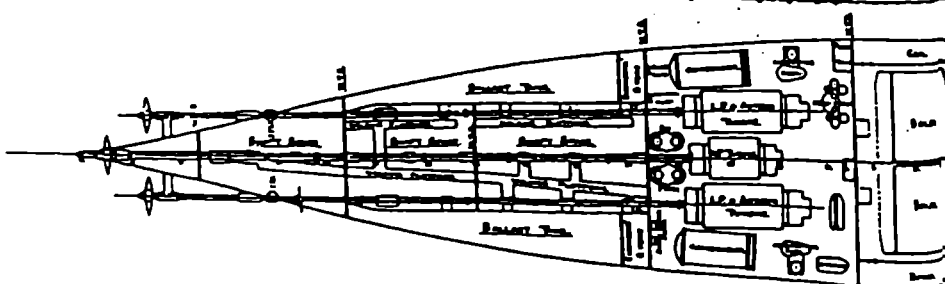
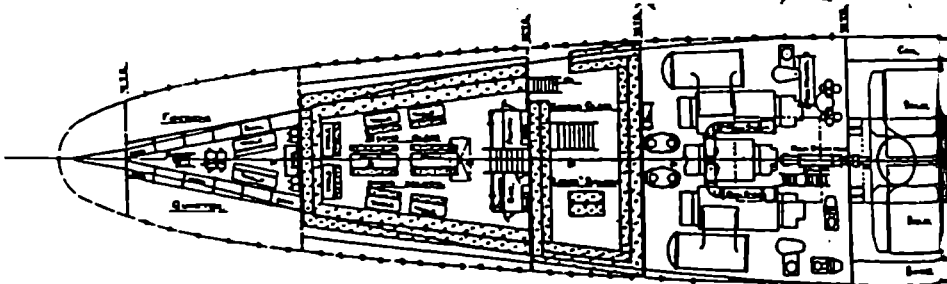
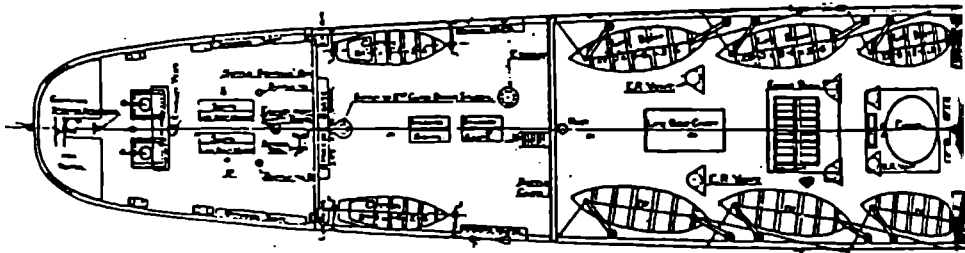
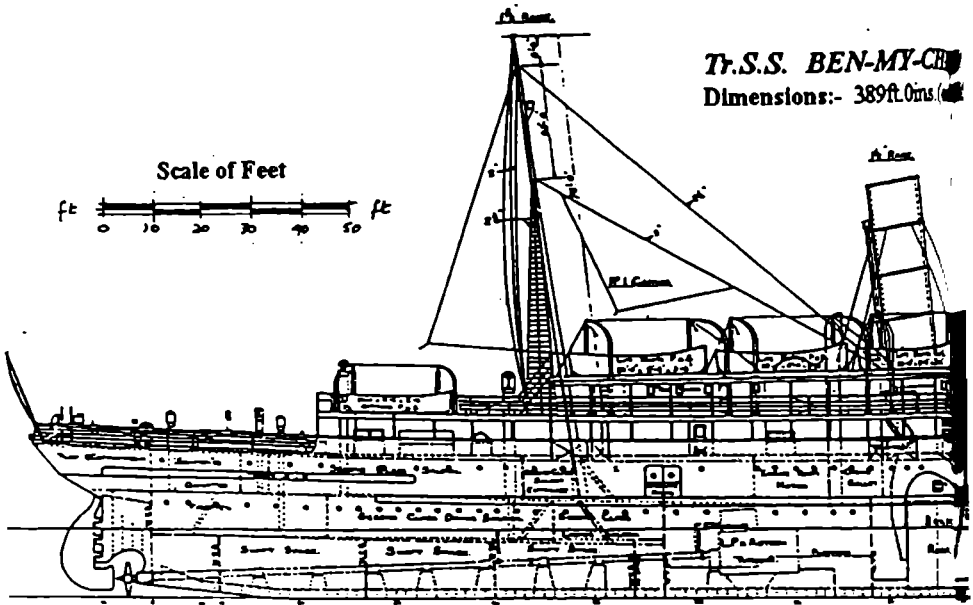
In January 1916 the **Ben-my-Chree** was transferred from the Eastern Mediterranean to Port Said (carrying two Shorts and two Sopwith Schneider Cup floatplanes) in response to reported Turkish troop movements in Palestine, and after May 1916 she operated off the coast of Sinai and Syria.

On 27th December 1916 aircraft from the **Ben-my-Chree** and two other carriers, the **Ann** and the **Raven II**, bombed bridges over the Jeihan and Seihan rivers, between Tarsus and Alexandretta.

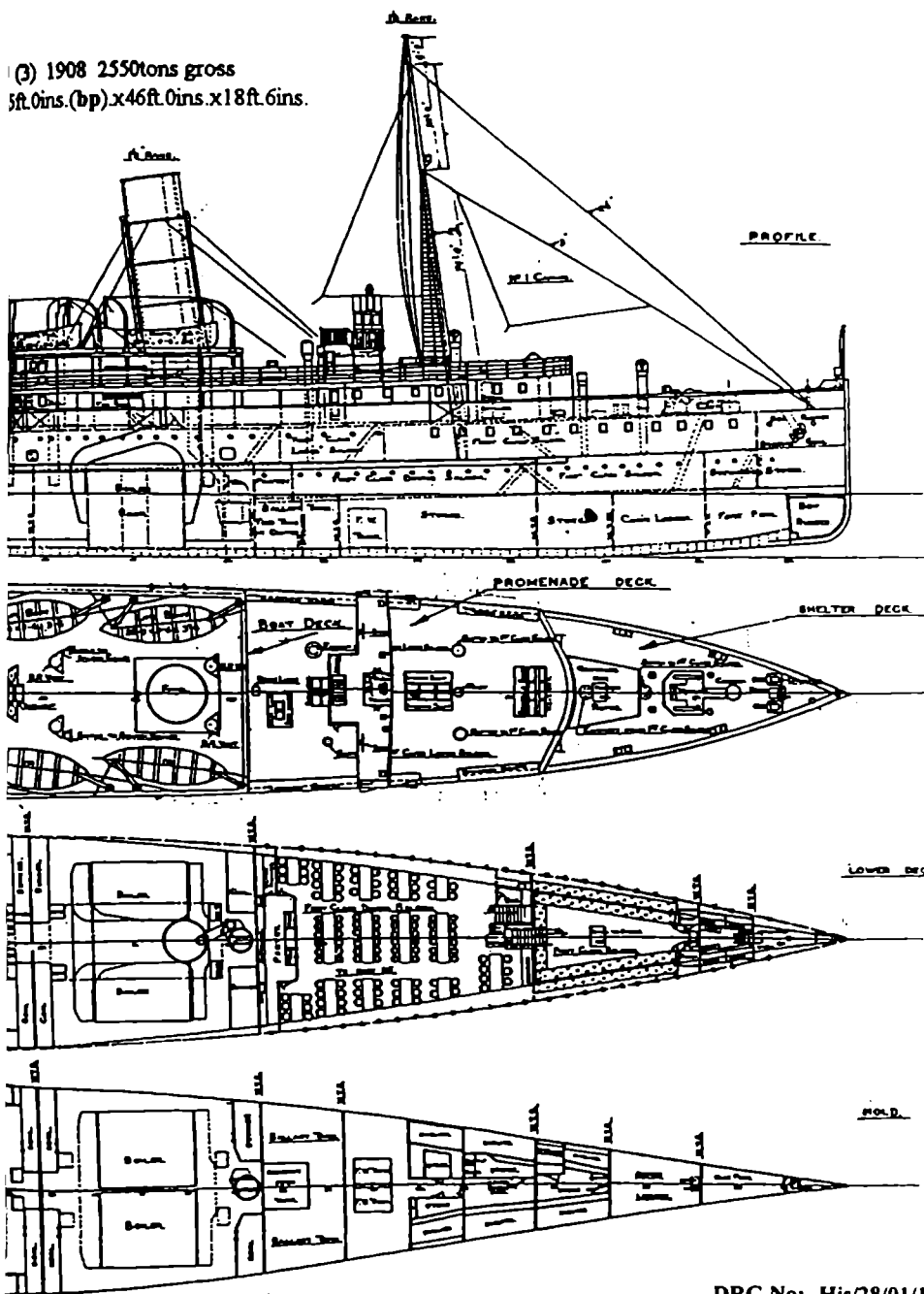
Many books and press reports describe the **Ben-my-Chree's** involvement in the East African Campaign in 1916 to destroy the German cruiser **Königsberg**, hidden in the Rufiji River in East Africa. These stories are not substantiated by official records and possibly arose as aircraft similar to those used by the **Ben-my-Chree** in the Mediterranean, i.e. the Short 827,

Tr.S.S. BEN-MY-CH
 Dimensions:- 389ft Ours

Scale of Feet
 ft 0 10 20 30 40 50 ft



(3) 1908 2550 tons gross
 5 ft. 0 ins. (bp) x 46 ft. 0 ins. x 18 ft. 6 ins.



DRG No:- His/28/01/1
 by:- *R. Evans*

were used in sinking the **Königsberg**, operated from the Armed Merchant Cruisers **Laconia** and **Himalaya**.

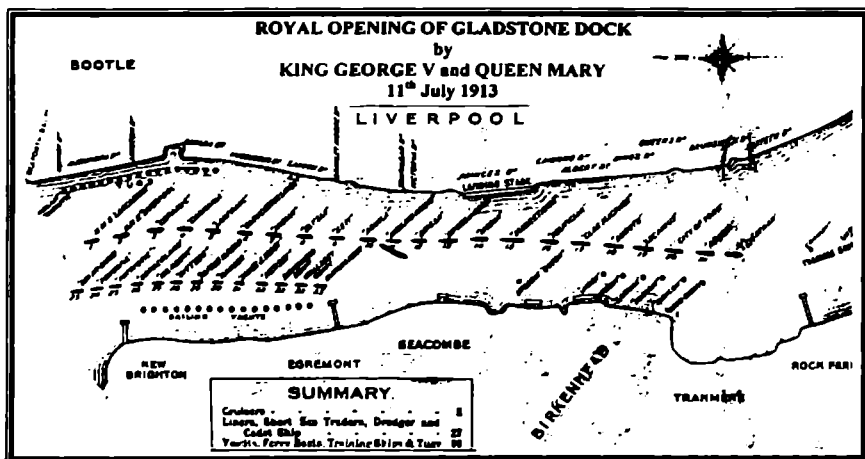
The **Ben-my-Chree** spent the whole of her service from arriving in Malta early in 1915 to her sinking in January 1917 in the Eastern Mediterranean, only venturing into the Red Sea via the Suez Canal on one occasion late in 1916.

On 11th January 1917 Turkish shore batteries at Castellorizo sank the **Ben-my-Chree**. She had to be abandoned when the fire on board went out of control and she continued to burn until 13th January even after coming to rest on the bottom, and her bombs continued to explode. All 250 of her crew were able to get safely ashore and only four were wounded.

The post-loss court martial emphasised the fire danger from apparently (but not entirely) empty tins of petrol and from wooden decks soaked in oil and petrol, and as a result special fire precautions were taken in later carrier design.

The **Ben-my-Chree** was salvaged in 1920 and taken to Piraeus for breaking up. Her sinking in action was a great loss to the Manx people and was remembered in a verse from a locally composed song entitled '*The Steamers Three*' which ran:

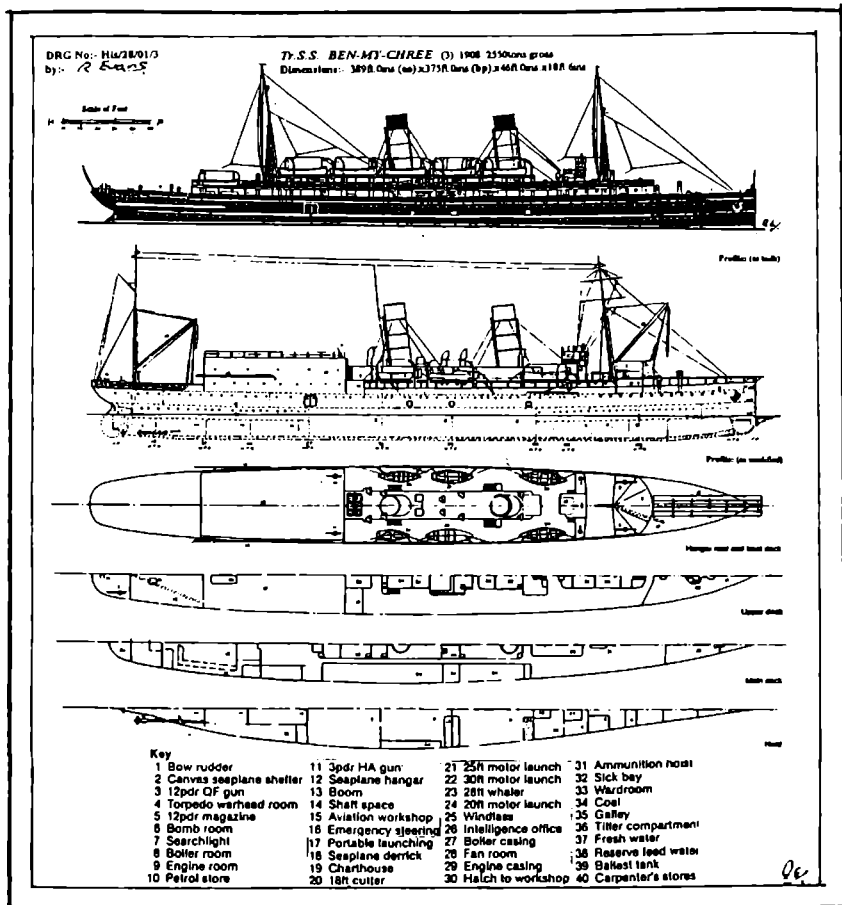
*My heart is sad for the Ben-my-Chree
She was sunk by the foe in the open sea
God bless the souls of her gallant crew
They were good Manx sailors, faithful and true.*



Ben-my-Chree (3) at the Royal Review, Liverpool.

(Liverpool and the Mersey)

Drawn up on the River Mersey for the Royal Visit on 11th July 1913 was a splendid assembly of ships. Two long lines of ships stretched from the new Gladstone Dock to Princes Landing Stage. Two cruisers, **HMS Liverpool** and **HMS Lancaster** headed the long line of liners and cargo ships, which included the **Mauretania**, **Ceramic**, **Carmania**, **Empress of Ireland**, and other famous liners of Liverpool. The **Ben-my-Chree** headed the other line of short sea traders, Mersey Docks and Harbour Board vessels and Mersey Ferries. The Royal Party reviewed the assembled ships from the **Galatea**.



Lower profile of the *Ben-my-Chree* illustrates modifications by the Admiralty as seaplane carrier *HMS Ben-my-Chree* reproduced from a drawing by Robert Nailer, with acknowledgement to *British Carrier Aviation* by Norman Friedman.

Particulars of *HMS Ben-my-Chree*

01.01.1915: Requisitioned by the Admiralty from the Isle of Man Steam Packet Co. Ltd.

02.01.1915: Converted by Cammell Laird & Co. Ltd., Birkenhead, into a seaplane carrier.

Displacement (standard as Navy List):- 3888 tons.

Dimensions:- Length (oa) 389.0 ft. (bp) 375.0 ft. Beam 46.0 ft. Draught (deep fwd.) 16.0 ft.

Flight deck dimensions:- Length 60.0 ft. (Trackway/rails only 12.0 ft. wide, no deck). Never used successfully.

Performance:- NHP: 14,000. Speed: 24.5 knots (continuous 22.0 knots). Fuel: 500 tons (coal). Endurance 1764 (nm).

Armament:- Four 12pdr 18cwt (130rpg) and two 3pdr Hotchkiss anti-aircraft guns (55rpg).

Complement:- 250.

Aircraft:- Forward: Two single seat wheeled Bristol Scouts armed with anti-Zeppelin Ranken darts.

These aircraft were dismantled for rapid assembly and were fitted with floatation bags for recovery.

Aft: Three Short 184 Folders each to carry one 14 in torpedo or one 520 lb bomb or four 112 lb bombs.

Modifications:- Large heated and weatherproof hanger aft, fitted with a testing and repair workshop.

First ship fitted with a portable flying-off trackway over bows with a canvas shelter for aircraft.

Large derrick with twin booms on quarterdeck distinguished her from other carriers fitted with electric cranes.

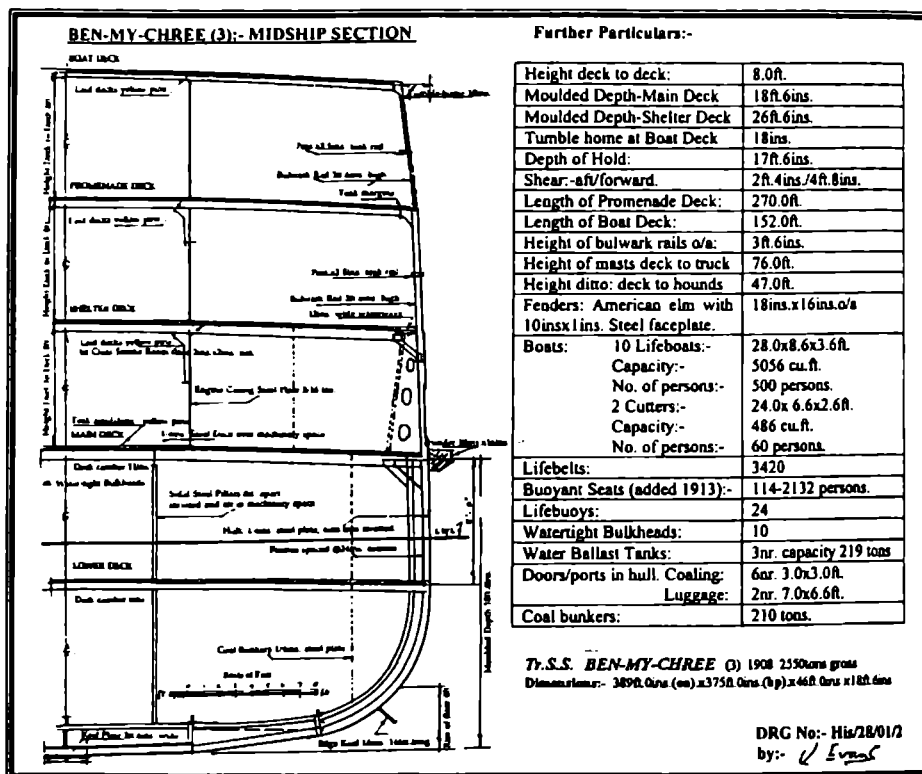
Single fore mast with derricks, mainmast added later above hanger, twin booms on hanger aft for aircraft handling.

Lifeboats were replaced with two 18 ft cutters, three motor launches, 20 ft., 25 ft., and 30 ft., and one 28 ft. whaler.

Searchlights were fitted to either side of bridge deck.

Disposal:- Sunk by gunfire at Castellorizo 11.01.1917. Raised 1920. Scrapped at Venice 1971

FORGOTTEN LINERS OF LIVERPOOL – BEN-MY-CHREE (3)



SHIPBUILDERS MODEL

A shipbuilders model of *Ben-my-Chree (3)* to a scale of 1:48 was located prior to 1997 in the Isle of Man Steam Packet Offices, Douglas. When the Company was taken over by Sea Containers, Engineering records and plans were transferred to the Manx Museum, Douglas. The shipbuilders model is now located in the *House of Manannan*, Manx Museum, Peel.

SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

General arrangement drawings are reproduced from original shipbuilder's drawings, courtesy of the present shipbuilders, VSEL, Barrow. In order to present these drawings in A4 format, the Boat Deck, Shelter Deck, and Main Deck plans have been reformatting into a single general arrangement plan. The Midship Section has been retraced for clarity, with further particulars added. Profile drawings by the author are to a scale of 1:900. The plans and particulars of *Ben-my-Chree (3)*, after conversion to a seaplane carrier, are reformatting from drawings by Robert Nailer, *British Carrier Aviation*.

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Ron Evans January 2001

FORGOTTEN LINERS OF LIVERPOOL – BEN-MY-CHREE (3)

Appendix:- Further Particulars of Vessels from Company Records:- The Search for Speed.

With the increasing demand for the rapid transportation of mail and passengers, hull design, propulsion and engine development, all contributed to ever faster ships. The introduction in the early 1900's of Direct Drive Turbines enabled the Steam Packet to reach its zenith in terms of fast steam packet ships. The *Viking*, *Ben-my Chree* (3) and *Manxman* (1) were some of the fastest steam packet ships ever built.

The paddle steamers had also reached the optimum in their development, the *Empress Queen* being the last paddle steamer built for the Company and the largest and fastest paddle steamer built for any cross channel steam packet service. Comparison from the Company records illustrates the criteria, which were under constant review to keep in the forefront of the rapid changes taking place, in the constant search for speed.

History has turned full circle in that today nearly 100 years later similar comparisons might be made in diesel engines, gas turbines, and HSS vessels for the fast car and passenger vessels of the future.

The Search for Speed:- A comparison of various types of vessels from the Company records.(1897-1930).

Name	<i>Empress Queen</i>	<i>Viking</i>	<i>Ben-my-Chree (3)</i>	<i>Manxman (1)</i>	<i>HMS Amethyst</i>	<i>Ben-my-Chree (4)</i>	<i>Lady of Mann</i>
Built	1897	1905	1908	1904	1905	1927	1930
Tonnage, Net/reg	849	827	1017	835	-----	1043	1258
Gross	2140	1957	2550	2030	3000(displ.)	2586	3104
Under/deck	1597	1418	1733	1413	-----	1824	2029
Dimensions:-							
Length o/a	372'0"	361'0"	389'0"	341'0"	373'9"	366'0"	371'0"
Length b/p	360'1"	350'0"	375'0"	330'0"	360'0"	355'0"	360'0"
Breadth (mld)	42'3"	42'0"	46'0"	43'0"	40'0"	46'0"	50'0"
Depth (mld)	17'0"	17'3"	18'6"	18'0"	-----	18'6"	18'6"
Draught (light)	12'9"	10'3"	13'0"	11'7"	-----	11'9"	11'5"
" (loaded)	13'5"	11'2"	13'8"	13'10"	14'6"	13'6"	13'3"
Displ. (light) tons	2640	2130	3227	2236	-----	2925	3130
" (loaded) tons	-----	2409	3433	2825	3000	3475	3630
Block coefficient	0.52	0.511	0.501	0.512	0.51	0.55	0.54
Machinery:-							
Engines	compound diagonal	direct drive turbines	direct drive turbines	direct drive turbines	direct drive turbines	geared turbines	geared turbines
NHP	1290	1100	2000	1300	-----	1317	1880
IHP	10,000	10,000	14000	10000	17,500	12,400	12,700
Boilers	4/19.2x16.0	4/19.6x15.0	-----	3/22.0x15.7	-----	4nr.	4nr.
Working pressure	140psi	160psi	170psi	200psi	260.6psi	220psi	220psi
Furnaces	32 (3.5dia.)	24(3.10dia)	32	15 (3.0dia.)	-----	-----	-----
Fire-grate area	645sq.ft.	590sq.ft.	754sq.ft.	400sq.ft.	493.5sq.ft.	-----	-----
Heating surface	23,516sq.ft.	20,040sq.ft.	27,446sq.ft.	12,500sq.ft.	25,968sq.ft.	-----	-----
Coal consumed	9.5tons/hr.	8.75tons/hr.	11.75ton/hr	7.4tons/hr.	11tons/hr.	oil fired	oil fired
Bunkers	176tons	196tons	210tons	-----	300tons	oil	oil
Engine/boiler rm.	128ft.	118ft.	-----	-----	-----	110ft.	112ft.
Propulsion	paddles	triple screw	triple screw	triple screw	triple screw	twin screw	twin screw
Propeller diam.	-----	7ft.0ins.	7ft.2ins.	2/5'7"1/6"2	6ft.8ins.	-----	-----
Pitch.	-----	6ft.6ins	7ft.0ins.	2/5'0"1/5'7	2/5'9"1/6'7	-----	-----
Speed:-							
In service	20.5kts.	22.5kts.	23.5kts	22kts.	-----	21.8kts.	21.8kts.
Maximum	22.0kts.	23.5kts.	24.5kts.	23.14kts.	23.63kts	22.5kts	23.5kts.

This comparative schedule "The Search for Speed" has been prepared by the author from marine engineering records of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company kindly provided by the Superintending Engineer, Mr Mike Casey (now retired), in October 1995. These records are now in the archives of the Manx Museum, Douglas.

Ron Evans January 2001

THE FALL AND RISE OF THE 'LOCKSLEY HALL'

by L.N.R.S. Member Gordon Bodey

LOCKSLEY HALL Official Number: 63202 Code Signal: J G P T
Iron Ship (Bk) Gross Tonnage: 1,356 Nett: 1,293 Registered: London
Length: 227·0 ft Breadth: 37·8 ft Depth: 22·3 ft
Built by T. Royden & Son, Liverpool, August 1869
Owned by Edgar Lowden & Co., Liverpool. Master: D.Halliday

The Fall

The **Locksley Hall**, one of the '*San Francisco Grain Fleet*', sailed from San Francisco on 3rd October 1886 carrying 42,439 cents, i.e. approximately 1,900 tons of bagged wheat with a reported value of £56,625. Her provisional destination, as was customary, was given as Cork, whence she was routed on to Liverpool. On arrival in the Mersey just before midnight on 26th February 1887, the 16,700 mile voyage had taken 146 days. The **Locksley Hall** also had three passengers on board on arrival. It may be assumed that some adverse weather was encountered *en route* as a similar passage by the **Eaton Hall** (Captain Lindsay), some eighteen months previously, took 123 days to her arrival off Queenstown.

At the time of the **Locksley Hall's** arrival in the Mersey, the iron screw-steamer **Regulus** (Captain C. Hocken), 1,419 tons gross, was lying to an anchor in mid-river opposite the north end of the Liverpool Landing Stage. She was awaiting the tide and had all hands on deck standing by. The **Regulus** was inward-bound for Garston from Cartagena carrying 1,850 tons of iron ore for the Wigan Iron & Coal Company.

The iron ship **Brenda** (Captain J. Holmes) of 1,281 tons had unloaded a cargo of rum, sugar and some logwood from Demerara at Prince's Dock, and having reloaded she had been cleared outwards for Calcutta by 21st February. She too was lying to an anchor in mid-river on the evening of 26th February 1887 with the central part of the Liverpool landing stage to starboard and the Alfred dock entrance to port. An officer and two men were on watch and she had a pilot on board. It is assumed that the **Brenda** was to sail on the ebb tide.

Both the **Regulus'** and the **Brenda's** heading was North by East. The night was fine and clear, the sea calm and the wind S to S.S.E., force 2-3. High tide was at approximately 1.45am.

At about 12.30am the **Locksley Hall**, having come up the river under the tow of the tug **Hercules**, had rounded - supposedly - opposite the Victoria Tower (at the Salisbury dock entrance), something over ¾ of a mile to the north of where the **Regulus** lay at anchor, preparatory to moving across the river into Waterloo Dock. This course of action had been agreed between Captain Halliday and the pilot, Mr R. Edwards, after he had boarded at Point Lynas. By 12.45am the **Locksley Hall** was

heading, under tow at about 4 knots, E.S.E. across the river and thus passing at right angles across the bow of the **Regulus**. However, she was, at this point, some ¼ mile or so higher up the Mersey than she should have been to enter the dock as planned (via the Prince's Half-Tide Dock). She was also almost upon the **Regulus**.

At 12.48am, by the account of the pilot on board the **Regulus**, Mr James S. Holmes, the **Locksley Hall** came across their bow and '*hacked*' them '*carrying away the stem and injuring several plates in the bow.*' He ordered the chain to be slacked away immediately they were '*hacked*'. The **Locksley Hall**, having torn away her starboard quarter in the collision, was now in a sinking condition.

However, all was not yet over. Somehow the **Locksley Hall** managed to slip past the **Regulus** and was, within minutes, carried athwart the bow of the **Brenda**, which, according to a Lloyd's report: "*had her bowsprit, jib boom, headgear, anchor, 90 fathoms of chain and the stock of a second anchor carried away.*" This occurred at 1.10am by the reckoning of the **Brenda's** pilot, Mr E. Callwood. At this point the **Locksley Hall** promptly sank beneath the bow of the **Brenda**. She was now at rest, on a fairly even keel, athwart the river and, more importantly, in a position which would provide the Dock Board with a serious and costly problem and the **Locksley Hall** with a second life. She lay about 700 yards to the north of the line of the recently opened Mersey Railway tunnel running beneath the bed of the river.

In the midst of what must have been a very chaotic and frightening half hour for the passengers and crew of the **Locksley Hall** facing the sudden prospect of being pitched into an ice-cold Mersey in total darkness, Captain Halliday hailed the tug **Columbus** (which, fortuitously, may have been standing by to assist the **Regulus**), and she went alongside and took off the pilot, the three passengers and all of the crew with the exception of the Captain, the Chief Officer and a seaman who were taken off by a river gig. No injuries were reported to any of the three crews involved in the incident.

The **Regulus**, having slacked her chain by some considerable amount, dragged her anchor down to Egremont on the ebb, with the water gaining. At 3.am the crew managed to get the anchor up and she was then kept in shallow water until low tide when she was steamed into Tranmere Bight.

On the following tide both the **Regulus** and the **Brenda** were docked at Birkenhead with the assistance of the tugs **Hercules** and **Columbus**. The underwriters had steam pumps put aboard the **Regulus** immediately she was docked.

A meeting of the Pilotage Committee took place on Tuesday 1st March 1887 at which the Captain and the Chief Officer of the **Locksley Hall** were present, as was the vessel's pilot, Mr R. Edwards. Statements were given as follows:

1) Richard Edwards, 1st Class Pilot, No.2 Boat.

'[I] boarded at Point Lynas and [we] came up [the river] in tow of the Hercules. Gave orders in the presence of the Captain to turn her. Had 40 fathoms of tow rope out. The tug had no power when the vessel came broadside on.' [Safe practice would have required that the strain should have already been taken by the tug before this point and that it had been ascertained, if possible, that the river was clear of

other vessels, anchored or otherwise, in the path of the turning vessel.] 'Could have turned the vessel at the Rock [Perch]. Did not shorten hawser as it was short enough. Gave order to try to turn just south of Seacombe [something less than ¼ mile beyond the agreed turning point]. Tug did not turn when told to. Could see no anchor lights on the *Regulus*; only port or starboard light about.'

2) Captain David Halliday, Locksley Hall

'Fine night. The pilot told me he would turn her about the Victoria tower. Had about 40 fathoms of hawser out. Passed the remark to the pilot that it was a nice short rope. Saw some vessels at [the Perch] Rock but did not pay [them] attention. Had agreed with the pilot that they would turn the vessel at the Victoria tower.'

Account for the accident: 'When broadside on saw a light. Could not make out what it was. Tug did not keep ahead all the time - tug must have slipped hawser when the collision took place. Meant to dock that tide. Understanding with the pilot to run no risks. Had drifted a good way to leeward before she struck. Our ship had good lights. Could not say whether the lights of the *Regulus* were burning brightly.'

3) Chief Officer, Locksley Hall

'[I] was on [the] fore-castle. The pilot hailed the tug to slew the vessel round, and finding the tug did not do so [he] asked again, "why the h--l don't you slew her round?" [I] saw the *Regulus* two or three minutes before the collision took place. Could have let go the anchor, but [that] would not have prevented a collision. Saw the *Regulus*' bright light. Between [the] first order from the pilot and [the] second order sufficient time had elapsed for the first order to be acted upon. The *Regulus* struck us (sic) fore part of mizzen rigging. Had about 45 fathoms of hawser [out]. Tug kept steadily going all the time. Pilot called out to a second tug [*Columbus*] to come alongside. We did not slip the tug [*Hercules*] and no one knows what became of her.'

In his report sheet, Pilot R. Edwards stated the cause of collision as: 'the tug not turning as told, and when ordered, would suit his own time, and he did so, and when he did we did not observe the steamer until it was too late to clear her. Also the steamer not carrying her regulation lights.' The last assertion, however, was refuted in the report sheet of Mr Holmes, pilot on the *Regulus*.

The reports of each of the pilots having been read, and the above testimonies having been heard, it was resolved: 'To recommend that Richard Edwards, First Class Pilot, No.2 Boat, be suspended for a month and that the matter be brought up again at [the end of] that time.' At that next Pilotage Committee meeting on Tuesday 29th March, it was resolved: 'To recommend that Edwards' first-class licence be withdrawn and cancelled, and that a second-class licence be granted to him in-tieu thereof.'

A letter to the Editor, published in the *Daily Post* on 9th April 1887, questioned the justice of the latter recommendation, pointing out that an action had previously taken place in the Admiralty Court before Mr Justice Brett in which the

owners of the **Regulus** sued the owners of the **Locksley Hall**. The letter stated that the Court had found the tug to have been responsible. [No transcript of the case has been located, but in a similar case - **Bland v Ross (the Julia)** - the responsibility for the mischief (stated as a point of law) was placed wholly on the tug.] However, the Board obviously had reservations about the pilot's competence regardless of the tug's culpability.

The Wreck

The day after the sinking it was decided to place a watch vessel as well as a wreck buoy at the site. A fortnight later a notice was issued regarding the removal of the wreck buoy, moored to the southward of the wreck, and the substitution of a watch vessel.

As early as the second day after the collision the problems created by the wreck were looming large and already taxing the minds of the interested parties. On the one hand the Dock Board would have liked, as was the usual practice, to have had the wreck blown up as soon as possible once all salvable cargo, fittings and materials had been removed; particularly so in this case in view of the wreck's location for, apart from the potential hazard presented to shipping passing up and down the Mersey (far more numerous than today's traffic), there was the added hazard that the wreck presented difficulties for vessels wishing to manoeuvre to enter or leave Birkenhead docks, and for liners which had to manoeuvre across the river to moor at the Liverpool landing stage. On the other hand the Board was precluded from this course of action by the fact that the Mersey Railway Company, fearing the effect that such action might have on its rail tunnel, took the matter to the Chancery Court to prevent the Dock Board adopting this course.

By the end of the first week following the sinking, the Liverpool Salvage Association's **Hyena** was engaged on the wreck in some dismantling of its structure, but it had been decided that the masts would be left in place unless a decision was taken to blow it up.

The first efforts by the Association at recovering the cargo took place on 8th March using two specialist vessels. This work proceeded steadily, but by 24th March only 100 tons or so (possibly about 150 bags per working day) had been removed due to there being only one hour a day - at lowest water - when it was considered safe for divers to work. (Another report states 400 tons but this would seem most improbable in view of the limited working time available). Bad weather on some days prevented any work being done at all such as on 23rd March when it was described as '*boisterous*'. Recovery consisted of the divers slitting open the sacks and inserting a suction pipe from a surface vessel. It was announced on 26th March that: '*such work had only taken place to allow the removal of sufficient of the cargo as would keep the ship intact by preventing the bursting of the decks by the swelling of the grain. As this was now accomplished the work would cease.*'

An advertisement was placed in the local press on 4th April by the Secretary of the Marine Committee of the Dock Board, inviting tenders for raising and removing the wreck of the **Locksley Hall** and the removal of her remaining cargo.

As it was now proposed to raise the vessel, a diver was sent down on 14th April to examine the site and the state of the vessel. He reported that the action of the current was so strong that it had already cleared a pathway for itself under stem and stern, and that he could walk under the vessel fore and aft without difficulty. The **Locksley Hall**, being 'broad-bottomed', lay evenly on the rock of the river bed; albeit with something of a list. It was deemed imprudent that any more cargo be removed. Large accumulations of sand had formed on either side, and sand was now working its way into the vessel in larger quantities raising the prospects of great difficulty if allowed to continue.

By 26th April not a single response had been received to the advertisement for local tenders to salvage the wreck. It was now popularly believed that the Dock Board would take it upon itself to conduct the recovery in view of the fact that it had been decided that no explosives would be used on the bed of the river. There was even talk of '*two special vessels being built for the purpose*'.

Having failed to attract any local interest in tendering for the recovery of the vessel, on 2nd May the Marine Committee discussed an offer from Mr W.M. Bullivant of the London firm of Bullivant (Wire Hawser Makers) who were credited with '*raising six ships last winter*'. Mr Bullivant proposed forming a consortium with '*certain friends and gentlemen*' under the title of '*The Locksley Hall Salvage Association*' and it was resolved:

'To recommend that the Committee be authorized to accept the offer of Mr Bullivant to raise and remove the vessel for the sum of £15,000, subject to the proper arrangement of details and to the work being carried out within a period of Two and a Half Lunar Months, dating from the 2nd inst.' This was agreed by the Board on 5th May, and on 9th May a memo from the Solicitor submitting a copy of the Agreement between the Board on the one part and Messrs. Bullivant & Company, Messrs. Henry Fletcher, Son & Fearnall, and Messrs G. & I. Rennie on the other part, was read. All was signed and sealed on 12th May, 1887. (In addition, the Board would eventually have to pay, besides sundry sums, the net amount of £5,738-17s-9d. (£5,738.89p) to the Liverpool Salvage Association for its services in the salvage.)

The Rise

Bullivants had produced twelve steel hawsers specially for the job, of which four were in place by 27th May. Sand clearance and getting hawsers under the flat bottom presented the greatest problems but even these tasks proceeded smoothly, albeit slowly, with all preparations completed by 12th June. No particular difficulties were reported during this time. The raising was accomplished by attaching the hawsers to four hulks (pre-positioned, two on either side of the wreck) at the lowest state of the tide on Monday 13th June 1887. In the early afternoon the **Locksley Hall** was lifted

slowly from the depths by the rising flood. From here she was towed to Tranmere by the paddle tugs **Toiler** and **Despatch** where she was beached. She was reported to be in very good condition despite her fifteen-week immersion.

Work went on until 25th June in order to complete the terms of the contract (which included the removal of the remainder of the cargo) to the satisfaction of the Water Bailiff and the Marine Surveyor. By this time, emptied and partially patched up, the **Locksley Hall** had been beached above Rock Ferry Slip, the bulk of the ship now being about 15ft above the high water mark.

Whilst she was at Rock Ferry, the Board had instructed Messrs C.W. Kellock & Company to dispose of the vessel by Public Auction '*as she now lies*' and this duly occurred on 25th August. She now underwent further patching up by the Liverpool Salvage Association to make her watertight, and on 8th September the **Locksley Hall** was towed across the Mersey to Herculanum Graving Dock where, over the ensuing weeks, she was repaired and refurbished.

Needless to say, this saga engendered some adverse public comment. One was that: '*It is but little credit to the authorities that a great port like Liverpool should have been obliged to seek the assistance of outsiders in the matter of raising this ship*' - no local firm wanted the job. A second comment was to the effect that Bullivants had made the task look relatively easy and implied that the sum paid for the job was excessive and that easy money had been made!

Mr Bullivant, who personally supervised the salvage with Mr Wood, Bullivants' superintendent of operations - provided a singular footnote to his stay.

As Honorary Secretary to the training ship **Worcester** he availed himself of an invitation to visit the training ship **Conway** moored in the Mersey above Rock Ferry. Whilst on board he was approached - against all the proprieties of the day - by two cadets (Messrs Craven and Chase, then acting as senior petty officers), asking if he would use his good offices to help to institute an annual boat race between crews from both ships; to be rowed alternately on the Thames and the Mersey. About two years later the first race took place and a good many more were to take place in the ensuing years.

On completion of repairs to the **Locksley Hall**, the vessel was renamed **Carvoeira** (variously shown as **Carvoura**) in the ownership of A. Singlehurst & Company (in whose hands she was registered until 1913/14), and registered at Para, Brazil. On 7th November 1887 she sailed from Liverpool for Para under the command of Captain Trick and remained there until 1924 - 37 years after her 'loss' - and by then some 55 years old.

The trading history of the **Carvoeira** after her arrival at Para is not known. No call sign was listed after 1887 and no ownership from 1915, although she continued to appear in the Register until 1923/24. Most notably, Captain Trick held command up to 1922. She was reported as being used as a store ship on the Amazon, but again the details are not known.

The **Regulus**, duly - and swiftly - repaired and under Captain Hocken, left the Mersey in ballast on 29th March 1887. Besides the pilot taking the vessel outward to

the Bar, the captain had agreed to give another pilot (John Hughes of No.9 Boat) a lift to Point Lynas - a practice forbidden to the pilots by the Pilotage Committee - and was subsequently billed for a pilotage charge on to Point Lynas. Captain Hocken wrote scathingly to the Board from Sulina, Romania (on the Black Sea) on 23rd April, 1887. In his letter he said: *'I have never taken a pilot to Point Lynas in my life and I am only too glad to get rid of them when out of the river!'* He went on to demand that the pilots produce the card on which he had crossed out the line about the Point Lynas tariff with his own pen, and goes on to say: *'It is nothing better than a swindle that ships should be made to pay for services that were never rendered'*, and that, *'he would think twice about doing favours in the future.'* Whether the fee was remitted is not known!

The **Regulus** continued in the ownership of the Red 'R' Steamship Company (Stephens & Mawson, managers - as opposed to owners up to 1889) from 1889 to 1898. After this date she was owned by the Regulus Steamship Company (Harvey & Co.), registered at St. Johns, Newfoundland, and continued so until 24th October 1910 when she went ashore in a raging storm and thick fog some twelve miles from St. Johns after suffering a broken tail shaft. All nineteen of her crew were drowned and she was declared a total loss.

The **Brenda** was not delayed long by her injury. On 12th March 1887 she sailed for Calcutta, arriving there on 6th June. She continued in the service of Sandbach, Tinne & Co. until 1901 when the firm sold all of its five ships and moved out of shipowning. The **Brenda** was bought by the Italian firm of G.Lauro and renamed **Laura** (Official Number: 1789, code sign: QDNG) and registered at Castellamare.

On 1st February 1904 the **Brenda** sailed from Newcastle, N.S.W. for Tocopilla, Chile under the command of Captain Castagliola, with a cargo of coal. She was not heard of again. She had a crew of seventeen. ||||

Sources

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THE BALTIC LIGHTHOUSES. A VOYAGE FROM KIEL TO ST. PETERSBURG ON THE ss "PHILATELY"

by L.N.R.S. Member Captain R. Flamman

This article is a précis of the talk given to the Society on 16th November, 2000

This voyage on the ss **Philately** (not in the Harrison fleet list!) from Kiel in Germany to St. Petersburg in Russia along the coast of the Baltic Sea is intended to show some of the varied and interesting lighthouses along the route.

The countries involved are Germany, Poland and the so-called Baltic states - Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia - which after Word War Two were under the control of the U.S.S.R.

Some of the Baltic lighthouses have been used on the postage stamps of East Germany and the U.S.S.R.

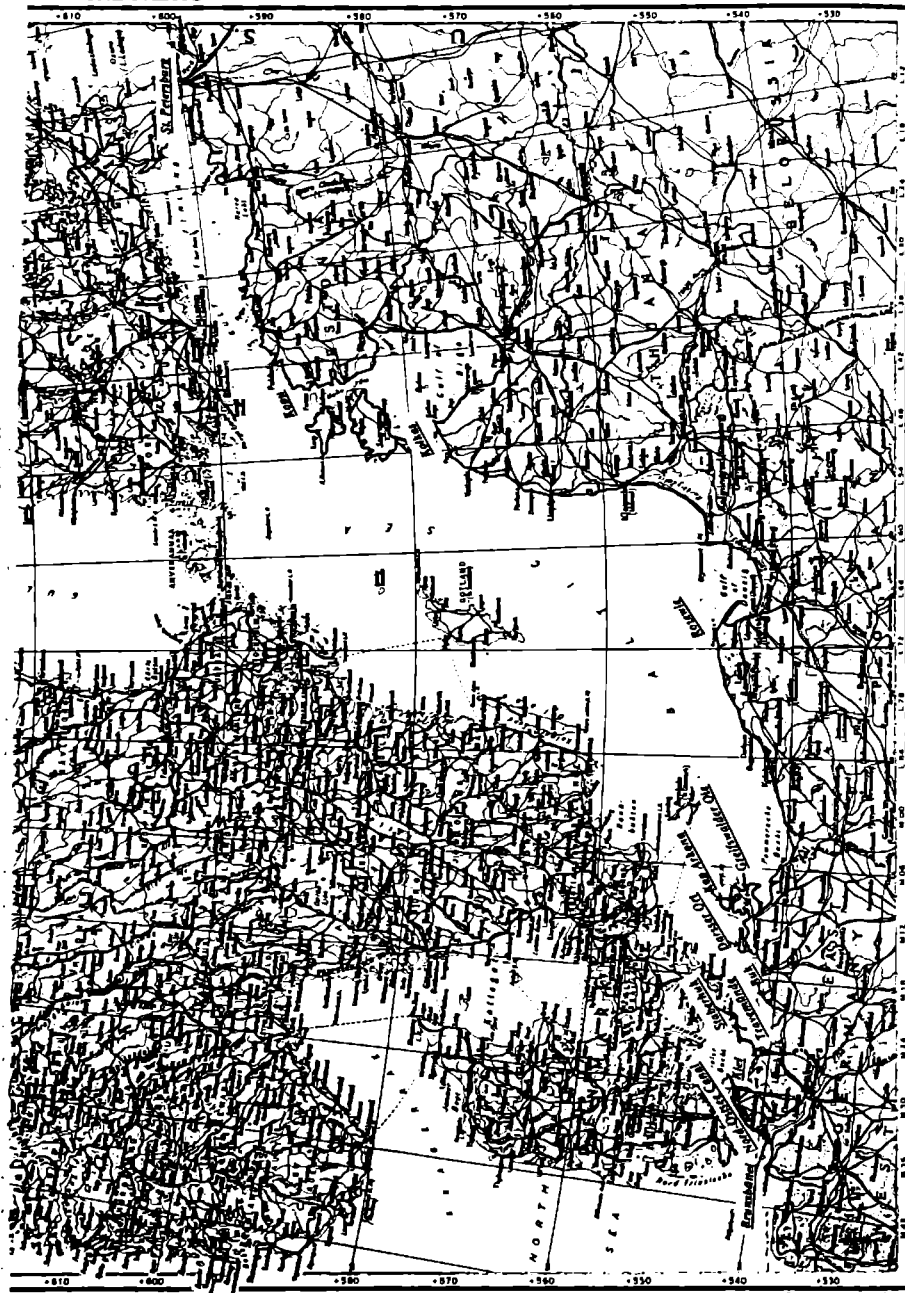
The Baltic Sea as it is known to the English is not the name used by the other maritime countries in the area. They refer to it as the Ostsee (the East Sea). It was given this name by the Danes who control the narrow waters between Denmark and Sweden known as the Sont and the Kattegat. The sea off Denmark's west coast is known as the West Sea and so the name Ostsee is appropriate.

We now have an idea where we are, so let us start with the German town and harbour of Kiel. There is much of very great interest at Kiel as far as shipping and the German Navy are concerned. Kiel also gave its name to the 54 mile-long canal connecting Holtenau, near Kiel, in the Baltic with Brunsbüttel on the River Elbe at its western end, giving access to the North Sea. The principal reason for the canal's construction was to provide a quick and safe route from the Baltic to the North Sea for the German Kriegsmarine. The canal avoided the narrow passage between Denmark and Sweden and gave access to the open waters of the North Sea and the Atlantic.

The locks at Holtenau at the Kiel end of the canal are of two dimensions, similar to those on the Manchester Ship Canal. The canal has had several names in its 106-year history. When Kaiser Wilhelm II performed the opening ceremony on 21st June 1895 it was given the name 'Kaiser Wilhelm Kanal' but following the First World War when the Kaiser left Germany for Doorn, near Utrecht in the Netherlands, the canal became known as the Kiel Canal (Kieler Kanal). However the town of Brunsbüttel objected to this and so the name was once again changed to Nord-Ostsee Kanal. When ships enter the canal at Brunsbüttel, a very impressive lighthouse can be seen on the north side. Most of the space in the base of the lighthouse has now been turned into a museum. To the left of the lighthouse is a statue of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Kiel itself is situated on the River Eider which flows into the Kieler Forde (Firth) which in turn flows into the Baltic. The outlet is very narrow and well marked by buoys. Once into the open waters of the Baltic navigation becomes easier, and so after setting course in a north-easterly direction, which after a while becomes more easterly, we are making for the Island of Fehmarn. After rounding the island we soon

THE BALTIC



see two lighthouses on our starboard side. The first of these is of low power and we then pass Staberhuk (54°24'N, 11°19'E) on the south eastern extremity of Fehmarn. This lighthouse has a very interesting history and it is known locally as the 'English' lighthouse for the following reasons:

At one time the island of Helgoland (Heligoland), lying some thirty miles to the north-west of Cuxhaven, was British. In 1814 the island was exchanged for some colonies in East Africa. Helgoland is one great block of rock but has good berthing on its eastern side. The British built a lighthouse on the island but when the Germans took over Helgoland they decided that a better lighthouse was needed and they replaced it with a new light in 1902. So, what happened to the 'old' one? The Germans removed the top section of the original Helgoland lighthouse and as a new lighthouse was required on Fehmarn, this top section was incorporated in the new Staberhuk, Fehmarn, lighthouse. Thus the name 'the English lighthouse' came into being.

We are now making our way to Travemünde at the mouth of the River Trave. The town is situated some 65 miles east of Kiel and is the outer port of Lübeck, an old Hansa town and harbour. The history of the Hanseatic League is another story and does not come into our 'Lighthouse History'; however it was an important period in the history of Baltic shipping.

The Travemünde lighthouse dates back as far as 1225. After the Danish occupation came to an end in Mecklenburg in 1534 the lighthouse was destroyed, but five years later it was rebuilt by Dutch stone masons (without the use of scaffolding). The building is today known as 'The Round Yellow Tower' and is 345-feet high and the tallest lighthouse in the Baltic.

Leaving Travemünde we proceed eastward heading for the island of Poel. Here stands a very beautiful lighthouse with its very top (the crown) painted in red followed by a white gantry. There then follows a brown section after which the tower is painted pure white with a red band. This lighthouse has been depicted on a set of five stamps issued by the East German Post Office. The stamps show all the colours and include a small map (chart) to show the position. This lighthouse on the island of Poel is called Timmendorf (53°59'N, 11°26'E) and was built in 1872. Its original height was 17.4 metres (57 feet), but in 1931 the height was increased to 21 metres (69 feet). The construction of the lantern is as follows, and is in sections:

- White, with a visibility of 16.5 miles
- Red, with a visibility of 13.5 miles
- Green, with a visibility of 11.0 miles

These sectors are to indicate where danger lies (red), hold course (white) and safe (green). On top of the lighthouse is a steady white light, and this makes Timmendorf unique in lighthouse history.

Another lighthouse on the island of Poel is situated at Gollwitz on the Bay of Wismar. The original lighthouse was erected in 1929 and is named after the nearby village and is positioned to cover the well-buoyed channel. Gollwitz lighthouse has four light sectors and they work in conjunction with the Timmendorf lighthouse. The present Gollwitz lighthouse dates from 1953.

The next lighthouse of interest is at Buk (54°09'N, 11°40'E) and it stands on the Bastorfer Berg which is 234 feet high. The lighthouse itself is not very tall, hence the name '*dickerchen*' which means 'the little fat one'. Once the structure was red, but later a white band was added,

We are now approaching Warnemünde, a town of some importance as it is the main harbour for Rostock, which is situated ten miles inland and stands on both banks of the River Warne. The first tower at Warnemünde was built in 1348 and was a round structure with a type of crane holding a lantern lit by a wood fire. This was destroyed in 1487 but a new tower was built in 1588; this in turn being rebuilt in 1826. The present lighthouse dates from 1898 and has been powered by electricity since 1919. Warnemünde was once the terminal for a train ferry linking the town with the Danish capital of København. The whole of the train was loaded onto the ferry, which had a double set of railway tracks. The River Warne is also known as 'Warnow' in local dialect.

The next lighthouse we pass is at Wustrow, originally dating from 1911 and built entirely of wood. It has been updated several times up to 1933. The tower is only 30 feet in height and is built 6 feet above the water line. Before an electric lantern was installed on 18th December 1933, the platform was used to contain an open fire with a tall chimney so that sailors could see the smoke from it.

Further up the coast is the fine and strong looking lighthouse of Darsser Ort (54°29'N, 12°31'E), 105 feet in height and built during 1847/48. It originally had large lens-shaped mirrors popular with the French at that period, and the light was lit with a mixture of paraffin and kerosene feeding a wick. Electricity was installed in 1936 and Darsser Ort became fully automatic in 1978. During the period from 1950-1989 when Germany was divided into West and East the building was not very well maintained but it has now been restored to its full glory.

We are now approaching the long and narrow island of Hiddensee, some ten miles long and half a mile wide, which lies close to the west coast of the island of Rugen. There are two lighthouses on this small island, one in the north and one in the south, situated at Gellen and Dornbush. Plans were drawn up for a lighthouse at Dornbush in the 1850s, but it was not until 19th November 1888 that the light was commissioned. The structure was originally a round white tower and had a round domed top. In 1927, due to some subsidence of the foundations, three iron rings were added, two at the lower part of the tower and one near the bottom of the dome. With a height of 284 feet it was the second highest lighthouse on the Baltic coast

As mentioned before we are now close to the island of Rugen, and on its north-eastern tip stands the Kap Arkona lighthouse (54°41'N, 13°26'E). The land it stands on is Wittow and forms part of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. The original Kap Arkona lighthouse was designed by the Prussian architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (who was involved in the planning of other Baltic lighthouses) and building started in 1826 being completed on 10th December 1827. A new tower was built in 1902, being round in structure and having a height of 115 feet. The light had a range of 25 miles. The East German Post Office issued a set of five coloured stamps showing Kap

Arkona as 'the most important lighthouse on the coast', and including a chart of the area. The original lighthouse is now a museum and both are depicted on the postage stamp. In 1993, following German unification, another large stamp was issued showing the two lighthouses, stressing their importance. Many ships in the German Merchant Navy have been named 'Arkona' or 'Kap Arkona'.

To the south-east of the island of Rugen is a large shallow water area known as the Greifswalder Bodden, named after the town of Greifswald (an old Hansa town). To the east of this area is the small island of Oie on which stands the lighthouse of Greifswalder Oie ($54^{\circ}15'N$, $13^{\circ}55'E$). It has a range of 26 miles, at one time the strongest light on the East German coast. Originally there was a burner using plant oil and later paraffin. The wick not only produced the light but the heat turned and rotated twelve spotlights. In 1913 special lenses were introduced.

We are now leaving the German coast and arrive off Poland. The first harbour is Swinoujscie, or better known in the German as Swinemünde. The lighthouse was built in 1828 and designed by Karl F. Schenkel. It stood at the end of a one mile long breakwater or mole and its tower was 40 feet high. A new lighthouse, 184 feet in height, was built in 1857/59, more inland on the east side of the River Swine.

From here we proceed along the long low Polish coast which is 180 miles long and has 17 lighthouses with visibilities ranging from 18 to 28 miles. The lighthouses are so placed that the light from one to the next overlaps and so give the mariner a good guide on this dangerous coast. The principal light is at Rozewie ($54^{\circ}50'N$, $18^{\circ}20'E$) with a range of 26 miles. This is for the approach to Gdansk (in the German Danzig).

The coast further to the east passes through Russia which was once German East Prussia. Following the second World War this was ceded to the U.S.S.R. After Lithuania, Latvia is the next country with a Baltic coastline. To enter the harbour at Riga it is first necessary to navigate the dangerous Strait of Irbenskiy, at the entrance to which stands the Kolkas lighthouse ($57^{\circ}43'N$, $22^{\circ}38'E$). The lighthouse is built on a man-made island surrounded by rocks for protection from the shifting ice. It was built in 1917 with a range of 20 miles. The Sorve lighthouse is only ten miles away, but stands on the island of Saaremaa, at entrance to the Gulf of Riga. The first tower at Sorve was wooden-built in 1645 and was 114 feet high. This was replaced by a stone tower built in the early 1800s which lasted until 1941 when it was destroyed by the Germans. In 1960 a new concrete lighthouse was constructed which was 171 feet high and had a light with a range of 19 miles.

Before rounding the coast of north-west Estonia and setting a more easterly course, we have to pass the lighthouse at Kopu. This lighthouse is constructed of stone and was the oldest light when Estonia was under the rule of the Russian Czars. Construction took place between 1505 and 1531 and the walls are some ten feet thick. The tower is 118 feet high and stands on a hill so the light is 345 feet above sea level. Kopu lighthouse is a preserved building and still in use.

As we enter the Gulf of Finland the next lighthouse is the Tallinn Lighthouse, marking the approach to Tallinn, the Estonian capital. It is situated in the open sea near

the dangerous Tallinnamadan sandbank, some 19 miles from the harbour. The tower is 102 feet high and the light is visible for 15 miles.

There is one more lighthouse to be seen before we enter St Petersburg. This is at Kotlinskij and was built in 1719 on the order of Czar Peter I (Peter The Great). The original tower was built of wood and there was a failed attempt at a stone tower in 1736. A more successful stone tower was built in 1810. In 1970 the lighthouse was again reconstructed and given the name of Tolbukhin after a Russian colonel who won a battle against Swedish invasion. The tower is 98 feet high and the light is visible for up to 29 miles.

St. Petersburg was built by Czar Peter I. In many ways it resembles Amsterdam, being constructed in a semi-circle and with many canals. The old harbour is well within the city boundary, and to guide shipping two 96 foot high columns were designed and erected by the architect Thomson in 1806.

These columns are called the Rostral Columns, or in the Russian '*Rostralnye Kolonij*' and are of a Roman type, the columns showing the prows of ships captured from the enemy. In bygone years oil was poured into copper pots and set on fire, being given the name '*flaming torch*'. In 1957 gas jets were installed and now the columns are only lit on national and public holidays. |||||

READERS' LETTERS

from Graeme Cubbin:

MORE ABOUT THE 'GLADIATOR'

Congratulations once again upon an interest-packed *Bulletin*! I have followed with close attention the fortuitous series of articles on Civil War blockade runners contributed by such erudite correspondents as Ron Evans, Charles Dawson and others, in recent *Bulletins*. Having a sort of vested interest, I wondered idly whether or when T. & J. Harrison's *Gladiator* would be mentioned? Sure enough, in the January *Bulletin Extra*, there she was, a fine profile of the ship at the foot of page 11, and her details listed in the Table on page 9.

However, I was rather disconcerted to note that she was listed under the aegis of David MacBrayne, the Glasgow shipowner, when, in fact, the ship did not join the Scottish company until 1887, long after the Civil War was over.

The *Gladiator* was the first screw steamer to be built to the order of T. & J. Harrison, and she was launched at the Stockton-on-Tees yard of M. Pearse & Co. on 29th October 1860. With her Liverpool-built consort, the *Cognac*, (launched from Vernon's yard two days later), she was intended to ply the coal-and-brandy trade route between the U.K. and the Charente region of Western France. However, the outbreak of the American Civil War in the Spring of 1861 brought a flock of agents from the Confederate States to England seeking suitable tonnage to import arms and merchandise, and run the Federal blockade of Southern ports. Harrisons were evidently persuaded to part with the *Gladiator*, and, passing through the hands of several front

companies and agencies to confuse the opposition, she was eventually fitted out to Confederate requirements, and loaded by Caleb Huse, of Fraser Trenholm & Co., with a valuable cargo of arms, munitions and supplies for the Army of Virginia. She passed Gravesend outward bound on 10th December 1861 and arrived at Nassau on 9th January. During the next two-and-a-half years she was to make several voyages from the U.K. to Nassau and Southern ports (bringing cotton home) until April 1864, when she was re-purchased by Harrisons from Fraser Trenholm to resume her rôle in the domestic brandy trade.

We do not know whether Harrisons retained a profitable share in the ship during her blockade-running days, but she was a sufficiently aggravating thorn in the flesh of the Federal authorities as to cause Harrison's name to be entered in a 'Black Book', along with other illustrious names like Bahr Behrend, Henry Fernie, Lamport & Holt and Cunard, kept assiduously by the U.S. Consul in Liverpool. However, by 1867 the U.S. authorities must have relented, for on the 16th January of that year, the **Gladiator** entered the port of New Orleans to load a cargo of cotton.

The **Gladiator** continued to serve Harrisons for another 14 years, notably inaugurating, in October 1864, a regular service between Liverpool and Brazil which was to endure for 75 years.

In July 1878 the ship was sold to Monsieur C. de Pothonier of Liverpool and Marseilles. Five years later, he in turn sold her to Layborne & Legge, of Liverpool, who kept her until December 1887, when she was bought by David MacBrayne of Glasgow. There is some confusion as to her final demise. Duncan Haws claims in Vol.15 of his *Merchant Fleets* series that the **Gladiator** was wrecked in a storm off Mauritius, whereas I am persuaded that she was wrecked in a storm off the south-west coast of Spain - quite a difference! However, we are both agreed on the date of that calamity - 12th December, 1893. |||||

from Ron Evans:

Re: OUTWARD BOUND FROM LIVERPOOL IN WORLD WAR II

(by Brian Potter - Bulletin Extra, January, 2001)

A recent publication '*The Allied Convoy System 1939-1945*' by Arnold Hague may assist Brian Potter in identifying the convoy in which he sailed for the Middle East early in 1942. I enclose a copy of Appendix 5 (*see page 40*) listing the WS troop convoys leaving the Clyde. **WS15** seems the most likely convoy which sailed/formed on 12th January 1942 and comprised 23 ships. The convoy divided into three parts in the Indian Ocean on 26th February 1942 and the Suez ships dispersed off Aden on 1st March 1943.

The convoys usually formed off Oversay in the North Channel, made up of ships that had sailed from up to four ports in the U.K. Brian may also be interested in my brother's reminiscences of the escort group which operated out of Freetown at the time of **WS15**, possibly providing escort between Gibraltar and Cape Town. (*page 41*)

Convoy	Sailed/Joined	Ships	Comment
WS 1	29/06/40	3	AQUITANIA, MAURETANIA and QUEEN MARY from UK to Ceylon, arrived 29/07/40, where troops were transferred to smaller ships for passage to Suez under a different designation
WS 2	05/08/40	16	Sailed from Liverpool and Clyde to S Africa. Twelve ships went on to Suez, dispersing 14/09/40. Three, plus an additional ship, went to Bombay arriving 15/09/40
WS 3A SLOW	03/10/40	5	Sailed from Liverpool, finally joined WS 3B FAST on 03/11/40
WS 3B FAST	07/10/40	6	Sailed Liverpool and the Clyde, and was joined on 03/11/40 by WS 3A SLOW arriving at Suez 16/11/40
WS 3C	01/11/40	2	Formed at Capetown for Suez. At Aden joined convoy BN 8 to arrive Suez 23/11/40
WS 4	02/11/40	17	Formed off Oweray, dividing into Fast and Slow sections 11/11/40, re-forming 17/11/40 at Freetown and arriving at Suez 22 and 23/12/40
WS 4B	18/11/40	10	Sailed as a single convoy and arrived Suez 28/12/40
WS 5A	18/12/40	25	FAST section sailed 19/12/40, combined at sea. Attacked by HIPPER 25/12/40, no loss. Convoy scattered. 5 ships for Gibraltar arrived there, remainder proceeded to Freetown where convoy re-formed. Finally arrived Suez 16/02/41
WS 5B	12/01/41	20	Delayed in Moeltre Bay 8 to 11/01/41. Arrived Suez 03/03/41
WS 5BX	24/02/41	4	4 ships of WS 5B sailing from Mozambique to Bombay arriving 03/03/41. Then two further ships but under the same designation, from Bombay to Singapore arriving 11/03/41
WS 6A	09/02/41	29	Joined by WS 6B at Freetown, finally dispersing off Penm 15/04/41 to arrive Suez as independent ships
WS 6B	17/02/41	4	Sailed to join WS 6A at Freetown
WS 7	24/03/41	21	Convoy divided off Mozambique, Suez ships dispersing off Penm to arrive at Suez 06/05/41
WS 7X	01/05/41	4	Detached from WS 7 on this date, to arrive Bombay 05/05/41
WS 8A	26/04/41	15	Included five ships for Malta in Op TIGER. All other ships arrived Suez 13/06/41
WS 8B	22/05/41	7	Dispersed off Aden 04/07/41 for Suez
WS 8X	31/05/41	3	Finally dispersed off Aden 11/07/41 to arrive Suez 15/07/41
WS 8C	09/08/41	19	Auxes invasion convoy. Sailed Clyde to Scapa Flow, returning Clyde 13/08/41 on cancellation of operation
WS 9A	03/06/41	15	Some ships detached as WS 9AX, remainder dispersed off Aden 21/07/41 for Suez
WS 9AX	18/07/41	3	Ships detached from WS 9A for Bombay arriving 22/07/41. Then onward to Colombo arriving 30/07/41 and Singapore arriving 05/08/41
WS 9AZ	11/07/41	3	Formed at Durban from ILE DE FRANCE, MAURETANIA and NIEUW AMSTERDAM, dispersed off Aden 18/07 for Suez
WS 9B	30/06/41	12	Some ships detached as WS 9BX, remainder dispersed off Aden 14/08/41 for Suez
WS 9BX	13/08/41	2	Ships detached from WS 9B for Bombay, arriving 16/08/41
WS 9C	13/07/41	9	Principally ships for Malta in Operation SUBSTANCE, arriving Gibraltar 20/07/41
WS 10	03/08/41	19	Divided in S Africa with Suez ships dispersing 23/09/41 off Aden
WS 10B	06/09/41	5	Bombay ships sailing from S Africa after detaching from WS 10. Arrived Bombay 20/09/41
WS 10X	16/08/41	6	Dispersed off Aden 27/09/41 for Suez
WS 11	31/08/41	19	Divided Fast and Slow after sailing, re-formed at Freetown. Convoy dispersed off Aden 19/10/41 for Suez
WS 11X	17/10/41	12	Twelve ships that detached from WS 11 on 17/10/41 to arrive at Bombay 22/10/41. 6 ships then went on to Colombo arriving 31/10, the convoy then went on to Singapore arriving 06/11/41
WS 11X	17/09/41	15	Using the same designation as above, consisted of ships for Malta in Operation HALBERD, and small LSTs for Gibraltar arriving 25/09/41
WS 12	01/10/41	24	Detaching some ships in the Indian Ocean, Suez ships dispersed off Aden 20/11/41
WS 12J	17/11/41	3	Three ships detached from WS 12 to arrive Colombo 23/11/41
WS 12V	24/11/41	2	Two ships from Colombo to Singapore arriving 28/11/41.
WS 12X	10/11/41	6	Six USN transports that embarked British troops at Halifax NS for Suez. Sailed via Trinidad with USN escort to arrive Capetown 09/12/41. Sailed with a RN escort 13/12/41 for Bombay arriving 27/12/41
WS 12Z	13/11/41	16	Divided into three parts in the Indian Ocean
WS 12ZA		3	Three ships from WS 12Z for Suez, dispersing off Aden 04/01/42
WS 12ZB		8	Eight ships from WS 12Z for Bombay, arriving 06/01/42
DM 1		4	Four ships from WS 12Z for Singapore arriving 13/01/42
WS 14	09/12/41	28	Divided into three parts off S Africa on 19/01/42
WS 14A	19/01/42		Suez ships which dispersed off Aden 22/01/42
WS 14B	19/01/42		Bombay ships which arrived 28/01/42
DM 2	19/01/42		Batavia ships which arrived 03/02/42
WS 15	12/01/42	23	Divided into three parts in Indian Ocean 26/02/42
WS 15A	26/02/42		Suez ships which dispersed off Aden 01/03/42
WS 15B	26/02/42		Bombay ships which arrived 04/03/42
DM 3	26/02/42		Singapore ships which were diverted to Colombo and some then to Bombay to arrive 04/03/42 and 06/03/42 respectively
WS 16	17/02/42	21	Divided in Indian Ocean 03/04/42 into two sections
WS 16A	03/04/42	3	Ships for Suez dispersing off Aden 06/04/42

THE STORY OF TWO CORVETTES

by Ron Evans

HMS **ARMERIA** Pendant No. K187. Job No.J3444. Built by Harland & Wolff 30.03.1941

HMS **BELLWORT** Pendant No. K114. Job No.J1160. Built by John Brown 26.11.1941

Displacement tonnage: 980tons (standard) Length overall: 208-25 ft. Breadth 33-25ft. Depth: 11 ft.

This is the story of two Corvettes, HMS **Armeria** and HMS **Bellwort**, in World War 2, during the period 1941-43, based on the reminiscences of my brother, who was a wireless telegraphist on HMS **Armeria** during this time. My brother is now 85 and has communicated his reminiscences to me over the telephone and I have added some details from various sources.

HMS **Armeria** and HMS **Bellwort** were Modified Flower Class corvettes each with a crew of 98 and during the period 1941-43 formed part of a South Atlantic escort group based at Freetown, Sierra Leone. The base ship for escort groups at Freetown was the old Union Castle liner **Edinburgh Castle** and the corvettes carried out many operations together, and in Royal Navy parlance were '*chummy ships*', so that my brother's reminiscences of HMS **Armeria**'s operations also apply to HMS **Bellwort**.

The main operations of the escort group were in escorting north-bound convoys from Cape Town to the U.K. via Freetown, code named SL convoys, and south-bound convoys from the U.K. to Cape Town, also via Freetown, code named OS convoys. Certain tankers in the convoys were allocated to the specific duty of replenishing the escorts. In some cases tankers were based at Gibraltar as will be seen later in this story.

In November 1942 HMS **Armeria** and HMS **Bellwort** escorted convoys for the invasion of North Africa. Whilst the escorts were covering the invasion of North Africa, the troopship **Viceroy of India** was torpedoed by U407 on 11th November 1942 in position 36°26'N, 00°25'W. There were 450 survivors and just four of the crew were lost. The **Viceroy of India** was taken in tow by HMS **Boadicea** before she sank in position 36°24'N, 00°36'W. Both HMS **Armeria** and HMS **Bellwort** almost sank an L-Class British submarine, part of Force H off Gibraltar, which they thought was a U-boat until they were quickly informed otherwise!

On 25th November 1942 in the South Atlantic, west of Freetown, the Dutch liner **Polydorus** began a two-day running battle with U176. Six torpedo attacks on the **Polydorus** failed but she sustained severe shell damage before being sunk on 27th November 1942. Eighty survivors were rescued by the Spanish steamer **Eola** (4,409/29) two days later. Both HMS **Armeria** and HMS **Bellwort** had been detailed to pick up survivors. The **Polydorus** (6,248/25) had been on a voyage from Liverpool to Freetown initially in convoy ON 145. This convoy had left Liverpool on 15th November 1942 via the North Channel and the **Polydorus** left the convoy in mid Atlantic to proceed unescorted to Freetown.

HMS **Armeria** escorted the tanker **Cedardale** across the Atlantic to Trinidad from Gibraltar early in 1943 before returning to the U.K. The **Cedardale** (8,132/39) was a Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

It was probably at this time that HMS **Bellwort** was damaged and towed by a merchant ship from Lagos to Cape Town for repairs. My brother served in HMS **Armeria** until 19th March 1943 when he returned to the U.K. |||||

THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday, 15th March

"WARTIME TURN-ROUND OF SHIPS IN PORT: LIVERPOOL'S KEY RÔLE"

(Mr H. Hignett)



Thursday, 19th April

"A YEAR WITH THE CARINTHIA"

(John Shepherd)

Thursday, 17th May

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

*All Meetings are held in the Education Suite at the Merseyside
Maritime Museum and commence at 12.30pm.*

THE MONDAY FACILITY

Members' access to the Archives and Library at the Merseyside Maritime Museum on Mondays continues in 2001 as follows:

MARCH : Mondays 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th

APRIL : Mondays 2nd, 9th, 23rd and 30th

MAY : Mondays 14th and 21st

JUNE : Mondays 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th

JULY : Mondays 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th

WRITING FOR 'THE BULLETIN'

Articles for possible inclusion in 'The Bulletin' are always welcome and should be sent to the Editor at the address given on the inside front cover.

In the interests of accuracy a draft of the article will be sent to the author for proof reading, before the article appears in 'The Bulletin'.

An ideal length is between four and six close-typed A.4 pages, although short 'fillers' are also very welcome.

If you have any comments to make about material already published in 'The Bulletin', then please send a letter for inclusion in the 'Readers' Letters' section.