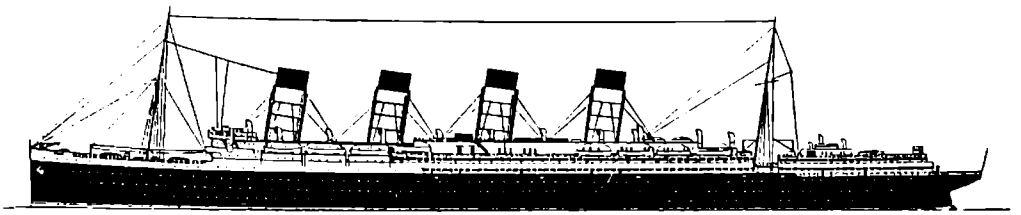
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

THE BULLETIN

Volume 47, Number 1, June 2003

Editor : John Shepherd



The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

Membership and All Correspondence:
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society.
Maritime Archives and Library,
Merseyside Maritime Museum,
Albert Dock,
LIVERPOOL, L3 4AA, U.K.

Above: The last passenger liner to be built on Merseyside, the **Windsor Castle**, passes the Rock Lighthouse, New Brighton, on her way to her sea trials in June 1960.

Front Cover: The **Mauretania** of 1906

FIFTY YEARS AGO

The training ship HMS **Conway** stranded in the Menai Straits near Telford's suspension bridge in April 1953 whilst being towed to Liverpool by the Rea tugs **Dongarth** and **Minegarth**. The tow rope parted near the notorious Swellies Rock and the **Conway** grounded and broke her back.

THE FORMER WEMYSS BAY STEAMER *"ADELA"* CONTINUES HER SUMMER SEASON BASED AT SOUTHPORT IN 1890

part 2 of an article by David Docherty

A Blackpool Interlude

The reference to the disregard with which the Blackpool Pier Company treated its published timetable would hardly have come as a surprise to the residents of Southport. During August 1890 a Mr Smethers of Bolton had written to the press on a similar theme. The *Southport Visitor* had refused to print his letter on the grounds that it was *"as plump a libel as ever was penned"!* Either Mr Smethers toned down his language or the editor of the *Southport Guardian* was less sensitive for he printed the letter in full on 20th August. Mr Smethers' complaint was that he, along with 200 other people, had each paid one shilling for a three-hour non-landing cruise on one of the Blackpool Pier Company's steamers to view the North Pier at Blackpool. In the event the cruise lasted less than one hour, went nowhere near Blackpool, and when the passengers complained about their treatment all attempts to gain a partial refund of their fares were frustrated. Mr Smethers went on to state that he had been informed by a Southport resident that events of this nature were 'a common occurrence' and summoned up his experience as follows: *"The fact is, Mr Editor, there was not a man to be found in conjunction with the steamboats or the Pier who could interest himself in the least in securing justice to those hardworking people who were indulging in a brief holiday in your pleasant seaside resort, and whose day's pleasure was marred or completely spoilt".*

Perhaps the editor of the *Southport Visitor* felt guilty about his treatment of Mr Smethers for a week later the tenor of this complaint was supported in a letter which appeared under a *nom de plume*. The anonymous writer had taken the regular Sunday afternoon excursion to Blackpool advertised by the Blackpool Pier Company. This trip was supposed to allow passengers one hour ashore at Blackpool and the writer complained that the boat had only gone part of the way before turning round and returning to Southport. He went on to comment: *"Now if this had been the first occasion of obtaining the people's money, and giving no satisfactory answer, I would hardly trouble you to insert this, but one of my friends said he had been ten times and he had been landed once or twice only ..... he did not seem so much concerned about this disappointment as he was naturally accustomed to it".*

Further confirmation that these were not isolated cases came at the Blackpool Pier Company's Annual General Meeting held in November 1890. During the course of the meeting one of the shareholders, a Mr William Yates, stated that he had heard complaints from people who had gone on the steamers for an hour's sail but who actually had only about half an hour. These reports are a warning against having too idyllic a view of the pleasure steamers that sailed from Britain's hoilday resorts in the final years of the nineteenth century. While the period 1880 to 1900 saw remarkable

improvements in the standards offered by pleasure steamer operators, it is clear that in 1890 there still remained considerable room for improvement. It also reminds us that, sadly, improved standards of service were not necessarily the key to success for, despite these complaints, the Blackpool Pier Company was a very successful company.

Blackpool's other pier, known in 1890 as the South Pier but now as the Central Pier, was owned by the South Blackpool Jetty Company. Advertised as 'the People's Pier' it had a very different character to the North Pier. Charging a toll of just one half penny, its pleasures were less sophisticated and revolved around facilities provided for open-air dancing. As a steamer pier it was less convenient than its northern rival due to tidal limitations. These had become so severe that during 1890 plans for an extension into deeper water were under active consideration.

Despite these tidal restrictions, three steamers are known to have been associated with the South Pier in 1890. The smallest of these - even smaller than the **Cambria** - was the **Winnie** which had been built in 1881 and was registered in the name of Christopher Nickson. During July 1890 she was advertised to sail between Blackpool and Preston on Sundays but apart from this little is known about her activities. There is no evidence that she was a regular caller at Southport. The **Wellington**, which was actually owned by the South Jetty company, had been built in 1871 and was of similar size and design to the **Clifton** - they may have been sister ships. She was used on the shorter distance cruises from Blackpool while the third of the South Pier steamers, the **Bickerstaffe**, concentrated on long distance excursions.

The **Bickerstaffe** was Blackpool's youngest steamer having been built in 1879. She was jointly owned by John Bickerstaffe and his father Robert. The Bickerstaffe family were closely involved with several Blackpool enterprises including the South Pier. Robert Bickerstaffe had been one of the key promoters and supporters of the pier in its early years and his nephew, who was also called Robert, managed the pier. John Bickerstaffe was a shareholder and in 1890 was also Mayor of Blackpool.

While far from being an attractive ship the **Bickerstaffe** seems to have been sturdy and was regularly used on excursions from both Blackpool and Southport to the Isle of Man and North Wales. Her passenger facilities offered some improvement on the other Blackpool steamers in that she possessed a deck shelter on the after deck. She also benefited from having a well known and popular captain in the person of Thomas Seed. Earlier in the year Captain Seed had received a special presentation following the rescue of the crew of a sailing vessel which had got into difficulties during a severe storm in 1889. From the reports of the presentation it is clear that he was appreciated and respected within Blackpool.

None of the South Pier fleet was based at Southport and the excursions offered from Southport were haphazard. Some cruises advertised during 1890 were clearly arranged to fit in with trips run from Blackpool to Southport, while others may have been run simply because the tides did not suit the running of excursions from the South Pier. The first of these appears to have taken place on 29th May 1890.

There were three other companies sailing from adjacent ports which may have drawn potential custom from the Southport Pier steamers. Two of these, the Liverpool,

Llandudno and Welsh Coast Steam Boat Comapny, and the New North Wales Steamship Company were noted in part one of this article. (*'The Bulletin'*, March, 2003). Southport had a good railway service to Liverpool and both companies advertised their services in the Southport press.

The other company which may have had an indirect effect upon sailings from Southport was the Preston and West Coast Steamship Company. This was the trading title adopted by a group of Preston gentlemen who purchased a steamer named **Great Western** from the Great Western Railway Company at the beginning of June 1890. While the registered owner of the ship was a Mr Nathaniel Miller, the prime mover behind the venture seems to have been a Mr J. Frame. The **Great Western**, (which should not be confused with the tug **Great Western** owned by W. & T. Jolliffe) had been built in 1867 for the railway company who had used her on cross-channel services from Milford and Weymouth. Her new owners proposed to place her on a new service linking Preston, the Isle of Man and Glasgow. Twice weekly sailings to Douglas were instituted on 7th June 1890 and from 1st July onwards the midweek sailing was extended to Glasgow. While the venture ultimately proved unsuccessful, the **Great Western** appears to have provided a reliable service from Preston during the summer of 1890. She was subsequently sold to David MacBrayne on 3rd April 1891 for service in the Western Isles, and was renamed **Lovedale** in 1893.

The **Great Western** and the Birkdale, Southport and Preston Steamship Company's **Adela** were very different types of ship and their operators were clearly not aiming for the same traffic. The same cannot be said, however, with regard to the **Great Western** and the **Cygnus**. Both had been built for cross channel trade and were provided with facilities for accommodating passengers on overnight sailings. As we have seen Thomas Holden had considered running the **Cygnus** from Lancashire resorts to the Clyde and from Preston to Douglas. The formation of the Preston and West Coast Steamship Company, which was not announced until April 1890, must have had an effect on his plans. The **Cygnus** did make one one trip from Preston to Douglas but she proved to be slower on the passage than the **Great Western**. The trip was not repeated and the lack of other available routes to ply may have been a factor which led to the **Cygnus** competing more directly with the **Adela** as the 1890 season wore on.

The Season starts in earnest

In the 1890s it was generally reckoned that the holiday season proper began with the Whitsun Bank Holiday which, in 1890, fell on 26th May. It seems that the Birkdale, Southport and Preston Steamship Company regarded the month of May as an experimental period before they got down to business in earnest and the haphazard pattern of the **Adela's** sailings continued over the Whitsun weekend and during the last few days of May.

The final sailing of this pre-season period can be reckoned to have taken place on Sunday 1st June when the **Adela** sailed from Southport to Blackpool and Barrow. From Monday 2nd June the Birkdale, Southport and Preston Steamship

Company introduced a regular programme of sailings. Given that regular sailing schedules of this nature were unusual for pleasure steamers sailing from Lancashire's holiday resorts it is worth reproducing the programme in full:

Day	Depart	Time	Details
Monday	Southport	10.00 am	Llandudno allowing 4 hours ashore and arriving back in Southport at 8.00 pm
Tuesday	Southport	10.30 am	Non landing cruise to Blackpool.
	Southport	2.30 pm	New Brighton and Liverpool allowing 2 hours ashore.
Wednesday	Southport	09.30 am	Llandudno allowing 4 hours ashore, Beaumaris allowing 2 hours ashore and Menai Bridge.
Thursday	No regular scheduled sailing. Special sailings were, however, often arranged.		
Friday	As Monday's schedule.		
Saturday	Southport	10.30 am	One and a Half Hour Sea Cruise
	Southport	12.00 noon	Single trip to Liverpool
	Liverpool	3.00 pm	Two Hour Channel Cruise
	Liverpool	6.00 pm	Two Hour Channel Cruise
Sunday	Liverpool	10.30 am	Llandudno allowing 4 hours ashore and Menai Straits, arriving back at Liverpool at 8.00 pm

It will be seen that this schedule had two main features. The first was an emphasis on long distance sailings as opposed to shorter cruises. While this may have been due to problems in securing rights to land passengers at Blackpool at reasonable rates, it meant that the short-distance traffic from Southport was left to the **Cambria** and the Blackpool companies. It would follow, herefore, that the **Adela's** potential clientele was limited to Southport residents and holiday makers staying at the resort rather than day excursionists. For the day-tripper seeking a two-hour sail the **Adela** had little to offer.

The other feature was the way in which the **Adela** abandoned Southport at weekends. The decision to operate the **Adela** from Liverpool on Sundays was an astute one in that neither of the principal companies sailing to North Wales from Liverpool ran their steamers on a Sunday. Having stated this, the fact that both the **Cambria** and the **Cygnus** tended to offer Sunday excursions from Preston whenever tidal conditions permitted suggests that the passenger traffic from Southport was not all that it might have been.

Whilst the **Adela** did not have to contend with the likes of the **St Tudno** (or even the **Bonnie Princess**) on her Sunday sailings from Liverpool, she was not without competition. There was an established Sunday service to North Wales run by a Mr W.H. Dodd who owned two paddle tugs which were primarily used for towing but

were used for pleasure trips during the summer season. These tugs had become something of a fixture on the Sunday run from Liverpool to North Wales and in 1890 Mr Dodd's tug **Columbus** was advertised to take the sailing. She was slower than the **Adela** and provided inferior accommodation, but the fares were lower than on the **Adela**. This fact alone would doubtless have been a strong argument for many in favour of travelling by the **Columbus**.

Even when it came to the short afternoon and evening cruises operated from Liverpool on Saturdays the **Adela** was stepping on someone else's toes! In this case it was the owners of the **America**, a former Mersey ferry which had been built in 1863 as the **Cheshire** for the fleet of the Birkenhead Improvement Commissioners. She was sold out of the Birkenhead fleet in 1888 and in 1890 was registered in the name of Mr J. Bell who used her as a tender to Atlantic liners and on short pleasure trips from Liverpool. Her normal schedule was to offer a daily two-hour cruise at 6 p.m., with an earlier cruise at 3 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Wherever the **Adela** found herself, her operators never had things quite their own way. While the competition might well have been inferior it was always present.

The **Adela's** sailings from Southport and Liverpool followed much the same pattern for the remainder of the 1890 season. Such permanent changes to the programme as were made can be better described as refinements rather than alterations. The first of these was the abandonment of the Wednesday sailing to the Menai Straits with effect from the week commencing Monday 14th July. This sailing now terminated at Llandudno and followed the same timings as the Monday and Friday sailings. It is possible that this change was made due to timekeeping problems on this long sailing - one contemporary account of a trip made to the Menai Straits by the **Adela** implies that by the time she returned to Southport she was running very late.

The Monday, Wednesday and Friday sailings to Llandudno were further modified to leave Southport at 9 a.m. rather than 10 a.m. with effect from Friday 15th August. This change, offering an earlier return in the evening, was made because the hours of daylight were growing shorter.

On Saturday 16th August the non-landing cruises from Liverpool at 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. were replaced by an afternoon sailing to Llandudno leaving Liverpool at 2.30 p.m. and arriving back at Liverpool at 8 p.m. Unfortunately this new venture does not seem to have been a success as it was repeated only on 23rd August and thereafter the **Adela** made no afternoon cruises from Liverpool.

Other modifications to the **Adela's** schedule were made in response to particular events. On Saturday 21st June the Lancashire Miners' Association held their annual 'demonstration' - a cross between a day's holiday and a political rally - in Southport. Anticipating that more miners would be intent on enjoying the holiday rather than listening to speeches, the **Adela's** normal Saturday schedule was abandoned and sea cruises were operated as required by demand from 7.30 a.m. until 9 p.m. On the following day an early morning positioning run (on which passengers were carried) to Liverpool ensured that the **Adela** could take her Sunday excursion to North Wales.

Relatively few alterations to the **Adela's** excursion programme indicates that the policy of the Birkdale, Southport and Preston Steamship Company was to provide a regular and consistent programme of excursions. While the public may have appreciated the dependability of this arrangement, a more flexible attitude towards the sailing programme which responded to the changing pattern of passenger traffic might have proved more profitable.

A Chapter of Accidents

While there may be no such thing as bad publicity, the **Adela** must have come close to disproving this adage during the course of June and July 1890. On four occasions Southport's local papers - and often those from further afield - had cause to report the ship in a less than flattering light.

The first of these incidents might easily have been overlooked but for the fact that one of Southport's papers felt that it had to offer an explanation for the **Cambria's** absence from Southport. On 14th June the *Southport Guardian* commented on the disappointment reportedly being experienced by that ship's patrons and explained that this was due to her undergoing repairs following an accident involving the **Adela**. Details of the accident were sparse but it seems that it occurred on Saturday 7th June and involved the **Adela** running into the **Cambria** whilst the latter ship was lying alongside Southport pierhead. Damage to the **Cambria** seems to have been extensive. The *Southport Guardian's* report indicated that she was not yet ready to resume sailings and would be out of service until 17th June.

The explanation offered was that the accident had occurred *'either through a miscalculation on the part of the officer in charge or through the engines not being thoroughly under control'*. While the first explanation is quite plausible the **Adela's** engines did, during the course of her career, acquire a reputation for failing at the wrong moment. As we have noted the **Adela's** engine was second hand, having been built in 1872 for the **Lady Gertrude** - a steamer that had been wrecked when her engine failed to reverse while she was approaching a pier. A similar incident is also said to have occurred later on in the **Adela's** career while she was approaching Brighton Pier, though fortunately disaster seems to have been averted on this occasion. Whatever the cause the **Cambria** seems to have come off worse - there is no evidence that there was any significant loss of sailings on the part of the **Adela**.

The next accident occurred during the early hours of Sunday 6th July. The previous day the **Adela** had made her normal afternoon and evening cruises from Liverpool and after disembarking her passengers from the evening cruise, had anchored off the landing stage. During the night a strong wind blew up and at about 3.30 a.m. the **Adela** slipped her anchor and was found to be drifting down the Mersey. With no steam raised the **Adela** was at the mercy of wind and currents until her progress was arrested when she collided with a barque.

The collision resulted in severe damage to the **Adela's** stern, and whilst she was able to move under her own power there was no possibility of her making her

scheduled sailing to North Wales. After raising steam she returned to the landing stage. Later that morning some 300 potential passengers arrived for the **Adela's** advertised sailing to Llandudno and dispersed with 'great disappointment' after finding the trip cancelled. During the afternoon the **Adela** was taken into a graving dock and repairs commenced. She returned to service at Southport on the following Thursday.

The most dramatic of the four accidents which befell the **Adela** during June and July was still to come. On Wednesday 23rd July the **Adela** made what the *Southport Guardian* described, with remarkable understatement, as an 'exciting trip.' From the report that followed it would seem that the term 'terrifying' might have been more appropriate.

The morning of 23rd July opened with a strong wind blowing from the west which caused the sea to run very high. Conditions were so severe that the managers at both the Blackpool piers sent messages to Southport intimating that no passengers could be landed and consequently excursions to Blackpool by the **Cygnus** and 'one of the other vessels' (presumably the **Clifton**) were cancelled. The piers at Blackpool are very exposed to a westerly and the cancellation of these trips was not surprising.

The **Adela** was scheduled to make her usual Wednesday excursion to Llandudno and as the pier at the Welsh resort enjoyed good shelter from the west, the **Adela's** captain evidently considered it practical to attempt the voyage. The **Adela** sailed at 11 a.m. (about an hour late) with some 120 passengers on board. What happened next was described by the *Southport Guardian* in the following words:

"If it was 'bumpy' off the pierhead, it was far more so when the vessel had got beyond the shelter of the Horse Bank, and further along some heavy seas broke over the vessel. One result of these was to smash portions of the bulwarks to atoms on the starboard side near the bows, and also near the paddle box. Another result was to flood the engine room and for a time the fireman had to work up to his knees in water. Had the water risen three inches higher the fires would have been extinguished and the vessel would have become practically helpless. There were a goodly number of long faces visible among the passengers, some of whom were greatly alarmed at the position in which they found themselves. Before sighting Llandudno the captain decided that his best course would be to make for Liverpool. The vessel's course was altered and the landing stage was reached at half past two o'clock - three and a half hours from Southport".

On arrival at Liverpool about 100 passengers decided to take the train back to Southport, but a few were determined to return by boat. Whilst rough, the run back to Southport did not prove to be as bad as the outward journey and the **Adela** was tied up at around 6.30 p.m. so ending an excursion during which several passengers doubtless felt that disaster had only been narrowly averted. The *Southport Standard*, ever anxious to spring to the defence of a Southport enterprise, was determined to put a brave face on the event. While conceding that the journey should not have been attempted, it commented that *"the results of the voyage only confirm the good opinions already formed of the seaworthiness of the boat"*. Those who had made the

voyage may not have seen matters in quite the same light! Damage to the **Adela** was slight and she was back in service on Friday 25th July.

Compared with the drama of 23rd July, the final incident to mar the **Adela's** record with the public had more an element of farce than tragedy. This incident took place a week later on 30th July. The events of the previous week had clearly not been too off-putting for on this ocaasion the **Adela** carried about 90 passengers and again Llandudno was her destination. In contrast with the previous week the weather was described as 'beautifully fine' although a strong wind did rise later in the day.

The departure from Southport was, once again, an hour late at 11 a.m. - punctuality does not seem to have been one of the Birkdale, Southport and Preston Steamship Company's strong points. The first problem to disrupt the day was a diversion to Liverpool to take on board coal. The **Adela** and other steamers operating from Southport were normally coaled from a flat anchored in the 'Bog Hole', one of the channels adjacent to Southport Pier. For some reason the **Adela** had not been able to obtain an adequate supply, making the diversion to Liverpool necessary. After the diversion the voyage was resumed and the **Adela** arrived at Llandudno at 5.30 p.m. - just as the **Cygnus**, which had also made an excursion from Southport, was commencing her return trip.

Passengers were given an hour ashore and at half past six the return passage commenced. This passed without incident until approaching Southport pier at ten o'clock. By now the sea was quite rough and this, combined with a high tide and the fact that the **Adela** seems to have had a poor reputation for manoeuvrability, meant that the pier officials refused to allow her to land passengers until the tide had fallen. (This would have exposed sandbanks which in turn would have provided shelter). The **Adela** had to stand off the pier until 3.30 a.m. the next day when her passengers were at last allowed to land. Apart from the delay, the passengers were reported as not having suffered much discomfort. As one newspaper stated: *"There was plenty to eat on board, but nearly all the drinkables were consumed"*.

The doubts about the **Adela's** manoeuvrability seem to have stemmed from the fact that, unlike several of the pleasure steamers operating from Southport, her engines were not 'disconnected' - in other words her paddles could not work independently of one another. This feature was very common in paddle tugs and the comment betrays the origin of many of the steamers which were running from Blackpool and Southport at the time.

The succession of accidents was accompanied by a succession of captains. During the course of the 1890 summer season the **Adela** saw at least four changes of captain. As already noted she started the season under the command of John Sims. He was replaced in early June by John Bibby who was in turn succeeded in early July by William Holden. In mid-August, however, the cycle was completed when it was reported that John Sims was back in charge. It seems likely that some of these changes were made in response to the accidents that befell the **Adela** during June and July.

After the excitement of 30th July the **Adela** seems to have setled down to a more peaceful existence and we read no more in the Southport papers about accidents

and disasters. We now need to look at how the **Adela** fared in relation to the other companies plying from Southport pier in 1890.

Competition Continues

The accidents that befell the **Adela** were one clue that matters were not going well for the Birkdale, Southport and Preston Steamship Company. A clearer indication that the company was finding the going difficult occurred in early July when fares bertween Southport and Llandudno were reduced by sixpence (2·5p) from a return fare of 4/6d (22·5p) to 4/- (20p) in the saloon, or from 3/6 (17·5p) to 3/- (15p) steerage. These reduced fares came into force on 10th July and suggest that passenger numbers were not coming up to expectations.

Having had to reduce fares, the directors must have been heartened by the withdrawal of the **Cambria** from Southport shortly afterwards, following a final sailing on Tuesday 15th July. The competition provided by the **Adela, Cygnus** and the Blackpool companies had proved too much for the Southport Steamship Company. The **Cambria** was immediately chartered to Thomas and William Redhead, her former owners who were major shareholders in the Southport Steamship Company, and she returned to her former haunts, sailing from Rhyl. The charter fee was reported as being £300 for the remainder of the season, and this was considered to be more than the **Cambria** was likely to earn if she remained at Southport.

The summary way in which the decision to redeploy the **Cambria** was made gave rise to criticism on the part of the shareholders of the Southport Steamship Company. Two of them, both of whom wrote to the *Southport Visitor*, were already anxious about the non-appearance of accounts for the previous year and felt that this was further evidence that their interests were being neglected by the company's directors. While there seems to have been every reason for their concern, the charter of the **Cambria** to Rhyl went ahead and Southport saw no more of this steamer.

After the **Cambria's** departure the **Cygnus** remained and during August engaged in increasingly direct competition with the **Adela** on the Southport to Llandudno route. On occasions the **Adela** was the faster ship and racing developed between the two steamers.

On Friday 1st August the **Cygnus** was the first to leave Llandudno on the run back to Southport and was followed, depending on which account one believes, by the **Adela** either half an hour later or once the **Cygnus** was about two miles off Llandudno Pier. The **Adela** managed to overhaul her rival as the two steamers came within sight of Southport Pier and was the first to arrive off the pierhead. However, as the **Adela** was manoeuvring before making fast, the **Cygnus** had *"crept up the channel, got a bow rope on to the pier, and turning in her own length, assisted by the rope and the tide, made fast amidst the cheers of her crew, and landed her passengers first"*. Having landed her passengers the **Cygnus** pulled away from the pier to allow the **Adela** to berth - a process which took some forty minutes and was effected with great difficulty due to the tide.

The following day the **Cygnus's** sailings were advertised in one of the local papers unde the heading 'The Safe Lander'. While the **Cygnus** had achieved a highly visible victory the fact remained that the **Adela** had carried by far the larger number of passengers to Llandudno and there is no reason to suppose that the pattern was reversed thereafter. During the first half of August the **Cygnus** was advertised as sailing to Llandudno on most Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The month of August saw one further complication for the **Adela's** operators with the arrival of a further competitor on the Sunday sailing from Liverpool to Llandudno. This was the **Galatea** which had been purchased on 2nd April 1890 by two familiar names, Thomas and William Redhead, from the Corporation of Trinity House. Built in 1868 the **Galatea** was a paddle steamer and had been used by Trinity House as a yacht. The first reference to the **Galatea** occurred in the *Llandudno Advertiser* which listed her, during May, as one of several pleasure steamers which could be expected to serve Llandudno during the forthcoming season. It reported that the ship had frequently been used for the conveyance of royalty!

Passenger certificates were issued for the ship on 24th June 1890 and subsequently advertisements started to appear in Liverpool newspapers for a series of ten-day cruises from Liverpool to the Scottish Islands. The first of these was due to leave on 19th July but most were cancelled due to a lack of interest on the part of the public. The **Galatea** was next advertised to operate cruises from Liverpool to Douglas or Llandudno at weekends and it is likely that the novelty of travelling on a ship that had been 'patronised by royalty' attracted custom that might otherwise had sailed on the **Adela**.

Sailings from Liverpool by the **Galatea** were not advertised after August, and during September the Birkdale, Southport and Preston Steamship Company at least had the consolation of having outlasted many of its competitors. The Blackpool based companies remained, however, and in any case the summer seasn was fast drawing to a close. The last sailing from Southport taken by the **Adela** took place on Wednesday 10th September, leaving the two Blackpool companies to see out the remainder of the season. The final sailing of the 1890 season from Southport to Llandudno was taken by the **Bickerstaffe** on 22nd September, whilst the **Clifton's** sailings to Blackpool continued into October.

The End of the Dream

The **Adela's** final sailing merited no particular comment on the part of the Southport press and the ship seems to have slipped away almost unnoticed. She presumably returned to the Clyde and she did not return to the Lancashire coast. The obituary of the Birkdale, Southport and Preston Steamship Company can be found in a brief letter that the company secretary, E. Doward, wrote to the Registrar of Companies on 28th May 1892. It reads as follows:

"Sir, referring to yours of the 20th inst. ..... The Birkdale, Southport and Preston Steamship Company Limited has done no business since about October 1890. The

company hired a steamboat to run on the coast for the summer months but it turned out a failure. I may say I unfortunately did act as secretary but have been unable to get the slightest remuneration for my services, on the contrary cannot get a penny piece of a considerable sum of money I advanced."

The Registrar of Companies proceeded to dissolve the company and notice of this appeared in the *London Gazette* on 9th May 1893. So ended an attempt on the part of Southport entrepreneurs to work pleasure steamers for 'Southport's advantage'.

Given that the **Adela** was as good as any of her competitors while sailing from Southport and superior to most of them, it is worth asking just why the company failed.

The 1890 summer season was marred by poor weather which doubtless discouraged potential custom. In July the *Southport Visitor* wrote despairingly: *"there has been little to talk about ... except the weather, which at times has been boisterous enough for March, wet enough for April and cold enough for February. June was bad enough, but July has been worse".*

A further problem for the **Adela** was the fact that the competition made up in quantity what it may have lacked in quality - too many steamers were chasing too few passengers for any of the Southport-based companies to be successful. The Blackpool companies would also have had to face this problem, but for them Southport was a sideline - the bulk of their income came from traffic originating at Blackpool.

For the **Adela** this need to compete for the available traffic must have been made all the more difficult by the poor image created by the accidents in which she was involved during the course of the season. Indeed the succession of accidents, the turnover of captains and the emphasis on longer distance excursions at the expense of the potentially more profitable short distance trips suggest that the management was not all that it could have been. Some of the difficulties may of course have been due to bad luck but the people behind the company seem to have lacked any real experience of running steamboats. The Board of Directors, for instance, was made up of local tradesmen and included two wine and spirits merchants, a butcher, a dairyman, a hatter and an engineer.

We should not, however, be too hard on the men behind the Birkdale, Southport and Preston Steamboat Company for they fared no worse than their opposite numbers in the Southport Steamship Company or Mr Holden. The real failure was that, rather than establishing one soundly based company, the desire to provide Southport with locally controlled pleasure steamers was dissipated through internecine competition.

Conclusion

The **Adela** was not to return to Southport and neither were the **Cambria** or the **Cygnus**. Having decided to charter the **Cambria** to Thomas and William Redhead the affairs of the Southport Steamship Company declined rapidly. During August the company and the Redheads were involved in what seems to have proved inconclusive

litigation and on 19th September an Extraordinary General Meeting of the company confirmed a resolution that the company be wound up. Peter Scarlett was appointed liquidator by the shareholders.

During this time the **Cambria** contiuned to run from Rhyl and was still operating pleasure cruises along the North Wales coast at the end of September. At the end of the season she was laid up while Mr Scarlett sought a purchaser for what was the company's only asset. The task proved difficult but eventually the **Cambria** was sold to a Mr W. Whittle of Southport for £650 on 6th October 1891.

When it is remembered that the Southport Steamship Company had purchased the **Cambria** for £3,500 just over two years earlier it is clear that either Mr Whittle got a bargain or that Mr Scarlett and his associates had paid far too much for the ship in the first place, or that the **Cambria** had been very poorly maintained. During the period that she was owned by Whittle it seems that the Redheads continued to be involved with the **Cambria**. While she does not appear to have been used for passenger carrying during 1891, passenger certificates were issued for the **Cambria** on 13th April 1892 and these show Thomas Redhead as the ship's operator. On 25th May 1892 Mr Whittle disposedof the vessel to Richard Lovett of Margate.

After this the **Cambria** went through several changes of ownership. In 1894 she was sold to French owners but returned to the British flag in 1900 when she was purchased by the Scarborough Harbour Commissioners. At Scarborough she was used for both towage work and pleasure sailings until sold in 1913. She eventually found her way to the Firth of Forth where she was employed by a succession of owners until broken up in 1935. On the Forth she was primarily used as a tug boat but is understood to have seen occasional use as a pleasure steamer with special parties.

The owner of the **Cygnus**, Thomas Holden, was also in financial difficulties and in July 1891 Alfred Tolhurst, who had a mortgage on the vessel, sold her to David MacBrayne of Glasgow. Initially MacBrayne used her on his service between Glasgow and Inveraray but in 1892 the **Cygnus** underwent a major overhaul which included a complete remodelling of her appearance. She emerged from this process with the new name of **Brigadier** and under this name was to be found on MacBrayne's West Highland routes until wrecked in 1896.

With all three Southport companies out of business the Blackpool steamers had things all their own way during 1891. In time the two Blackpool based concerns were to build more modern steamers and provide Southport and Blackpool with pleasure steamers that approached the standards available in other parts of the country.

Meanwhile the **Adela** found new employment in the fleet of the Brighton, Worthing and South Coast Steamboat Company. This company, which was formed in January 1891, purchased her from Captain Campbell on 19th March 1891 and on 17th April she was renamed **Sea Breeze**. The first visit of the **Sea Breeze** to Brighton took place on Thursday 7th May 1891 when she was berthed at Brighton's West Pier to allow the press and invited guests to inspect her. Her first public sailing between Brighton and Worthing took place on the following Wednesday.

As had been the case at Southport a year earlier her arrival at Brighton gave rise to a great deal of interest and many favourable comments were made about the standard of her accommodation when compared with the other ships then in use for pleasure sailings from Brighton.

It is a revealing comment on the relative standards pertaining to pleasure steamers on the Clyde and other parts of the country that a steamer, which while on the Clyde could be described as a 'common-place boat' was, in other parts of the country, viewed as a major step forward in comfort and accommodation.

Notes on Sources

- Records of the Registrar of Companies and the Registrar of Shipping and Seamen held at the Public Records Office, Kew.
- Contemporary newspaper reports including those contained in the *Belfast Evening Telegraph; Blackpool and Fleetwood Gazette; Brighton Examiner; Liverpool Journal of Commerce; Llandudno Advertiser; Rhyl Record; Preston Guardian; Lytham Times; Southport Guardian; Southport Standard* and *Southport Visitor.*
- Lloyd's Register of Shipping and Mercantile Navy List
- List of vessels for which passenger certificates have been issued by the Department of Trade held by the Department of Trade and Industry Marine Division.

The Blackpool Steam Navigation Company's ***Minden*** *(ex Birkenhead ferry* ***Bidston*** *of 1903) was aquired in 1933 for pleasure sailings from Blackpool's North Pier.*

THE END OF SANDPUMP DREDGING IN THE MERSEY

by the Editor

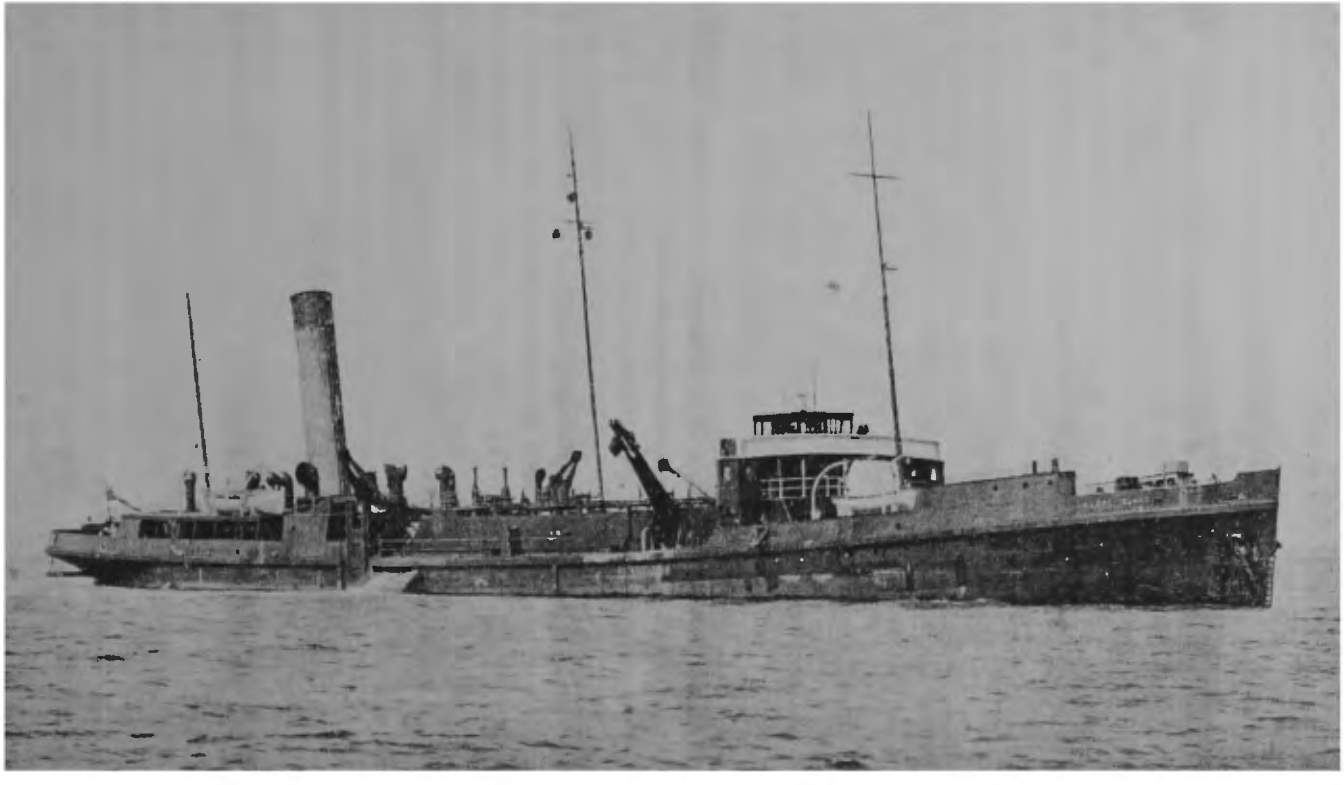
The decision by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board in mid 1962 to sell its big sandpump dredgers marked a turning point in the Board's new policy for dredging the Mersey channels which began in December 1960. Up to that date the Board had used sand pumps for some 70 years in the clearance of sand from the estuarial channels and in 1960 owned three vessels of this type, the **Leviathan**, the **Hilbre Island** and the **Hoyle**.

Worried, however, by the steeply rising costs in maintaining the dredging programme, coupled with the fact that siltation in some of the Mersey channels appeared to be on the increase, the Board commissioned the Hydraulics Research Station of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research to carry out an extensive investigation of conditions in the estuary. One result of this was a decision to experiment with a different method of dredging by using a new trailing suction dredger. Thus, in December 1960, the powerful new dredger **W.D. Mersey** (2,860 tons), owned by the Westminster Dredging Company of London, began work on contract to the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board.

It was then found impracticable to combine the new method of dredging with the use of the old sand pumps and so the **Leviathan**, **Hilbre Island** and **Hoyle** were withdrawn from service and laid up at Birkenhead. By February 1962 it had become obvious that the work of the **W.D. Mersey** had produced such remarkably good results that dredging by trailing suction was infinitely superior to the former method. The three old vessels were therefore placed in the hands of brokers and offered for sale.

The first to go was the **Hoyle** (3,145 gross tons), a twin-screw sand pump hopper dredger completed by Cammell Laird at Birkenhead in February 1935. Her buyers were the Cardiff firm of Davies, Middleton and Davies who formed a new subsidiary known as In Situ Concrete Limited for the manufacture and delivery of ready-mixed concrete. The **Hoyle**, which had a capacity of about 3,500 tons of sand, was used in the supply of sand to the concrete making plant. Given the circumstances, her new name, **Sand Galore**, was particularly apt.

Next to go was the **Hilbre Island**, very similar to the **Hoyle**, but dating from 1933. She was also built by Cammell Laird and was in continuous service in the Mersey channels until withdrawn in 1961, after which she lay idle alongside the **Hoyle** in Morpeth Dock, Birkenhead. A month after the sale of the **Hoyle**, the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board announced that they had accepted an offer for the **Hilbre Island** for the Scheepswerf en Machinefabriek v/h A.V.D. Grijp of Sliedrecht, who were apparently buying the vessel as a trading proposition. Soon afterwards, while the **Hilbre Island** was being prepared for towing to Holland, it was rumoured that she was being offered for re-sale, which seemed to point to the transaction being simply speculative.



Photo, Mersey Docks and Harbour Board

THREE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED TONS OF SAND IN UNDER AN HOUR from a maximum depth of 65 feet can be removed by the sand dredger *Hilbre Island*. This vessel, seen above at work on the approaches to the Port of Liverpool, was built for the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board at Birkenhead, in 1933. She is a twin-screw vessel, with a hopper capacity of 70,000 cubic feet, a gross tonnage of 3,141, a length of 331½ feet, a beam of 54 feet and a depth of 21 feet.

There remained the problem of finding a buyer for the huge **Leviathan** which, in 1962, was 53 years old. Like her much smaller consorts she was also built by Cammell Laird, but unlike them she had a hopper capacity of 10,000 tons of sand which she could fill by means of her four 42-inch diameter pumps in 50 minutes. The **Leviathan** had twin screws driven by a pair of massive triple expansion engines, and had accommodation for a crew of 44. The vessel's capacity was divided into six hoppers - three on the port side and three on the starboard side - and at one time she could justifiably claim to be the largest dredger in the world.

The **Leviathan**, however, could only dredge whilst at anchor and this is where she differed from the modern trailing suction dredger which moves slowly ahead while working, thus effecting a skimming action on the area dredged, instead of digging large holes. The **Leviathan** worked hard in the Mersey but also had spells of idleness, one of which lasted for several years in the early 1930s, when she occupied a berth in the Morpeth Branch Dock, Birkenhead. Before she was brought back into service on that occasion she underwent an extensive refit during which her accommodation was moved from the forward end of the ship to the after end and greatly improved. The **Leviathan** was again laid up during the early part of the Second World War, but in 1944 she was brought out to assist in the assembly of the Mulberry Harbour off the Normandy Beaches, during which period she also acted as an anti-aircraft ship. The **Leviathan** was a coal burner until 1952 when her boilers were converted to burn oil fuel.

The successor to the sand pump dredgers, the **W.D. Mersey**, was completed in October 1960 by L. Smit at Kinderdyk, Holland. She had twin screws with a speed of 11 knots. A third Smit-Bolnes oil engine, located between the two main engines, drove the dredging pump and she carried on her starboard side a 36-inch diameter trailer pipe which could dredge to a depth of 65 feet 8 inches. Hopper capacity was 3,500 cubic yards, which is the equivalent to about 5,000 tons of spoil. The **W.D. Mersey** had a crew of 21. A feature of the **W.D. Mersey** was that she was able to work effectively, safely and economically in exposed waters in the approach channels subject to heavy wave action and swells of up to ten feet. Automatic hydraulic swell compensators held the trailer pipe on the seabed while the ship rolled and pitched and the **W.D. Mersey** could go on working in weather which would have driven the older sand pumps into port.

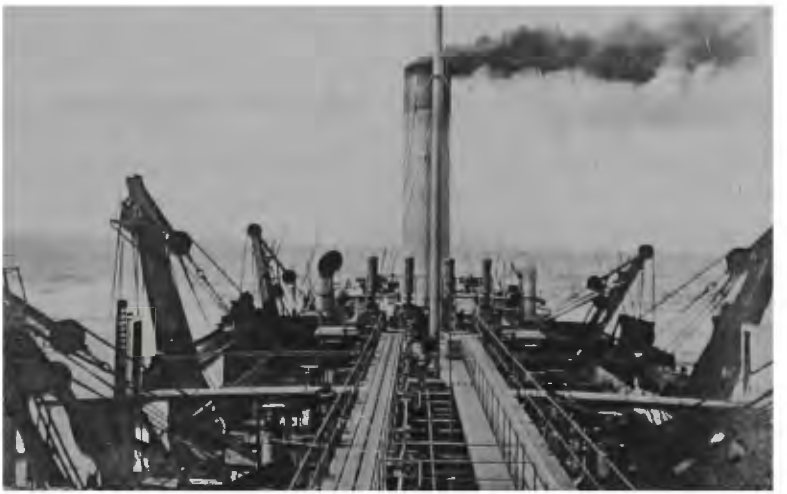
LIFE IN THE *"LEVIATHAN"*

A letter from Harry W. Bristow which appeared in *Sea Breezes*, September 1962.

I was a member of the first crew of the **Leviathan**. I was in fact offered the post of engineer-mechanic to take charge of a new 35-ft motor surveying launch which was kept in patent davits on the deck of the **Leviathan**, on the starboard side opposite the engine room door.

When not required to run the new launch I was employed on day work as engine attendant in the pumping and propelling engine rooms. I took up my appointment during the first week of April 1909 from my home town of Chatham, Kent, coming up to Liverpool to join the **Leviathan** on Good Friday.

I was soon dubbed *'The Southerner'*, but the officers and crew were all very friendly disposed towards me during my time in the dredger which ended in September 1910 when I left to join the Port of London Authority as a motor engineer in a new twin-screw surveying launch then building at Southampton. It was with genuine regret that I left my shipmates in the **Leviathan** but I kept in touch with them and visited them whenever I was in Liverpool up to 1913.



Looking aft from the bridge of the **Leviathan**.

Photo: John Shepherd collection

The **Leviathan's** motor launch was a beautiful craft, 35 feet long and teak built. Built on the Thames at Weybridge, Surrey, by a son of the well-known Coates family, cotton machine manufacturers of Greenock, the launch had a speed of 7½ miles per hour. Mr Coates in fact came to Liverpool to see me about the craft as some of the officials of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board were not satisfied with this speed. However, he was unable to get any more out of the launch and I was left to carry on with my job. Whenever the launch came to the Liverpool Landing Stage with the Chief Marine Surveyor and other officials it always aroused much interest among the crowds of spectators, stage employees and ferry crews.

During the summer of 1909 the launch went out for surveying duties beyond New Brighton with the Chief Marine Surveyor on board. These outings, I recall, were always very pleasant in that fine summer. After I had been on day work for six weeks and when not out with the launch, the **Leviathan's** chief engineer, Mr John Wright, a native of Liverpool, said he would have me in the propelling engine room in the second engineer's watch and instruct me in the running of the triple-expansion engine.

I was soon competent to run the port engine and duly placed in the second engineer's watch (Mr Gallagher). In the period 1909/10 the **Leviathan** carried a crew of 58 all told, including an elderly Maltese cook and his assistant.

The Chief Marine Surveyor and his personal steward lived on board the **Leviathan** from Monday afternoon to Saturday morning when they were landed at either Princes Landing Stage or Woodside Stage.

Our sleeping quarters forward were cramped for the bunks were in tiers of three. For the six weeks I was on day work from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., with time off for meals, there was no spare bunk for me. At night time I had to occupy the bunk of one of the men who was on duty until 2 a.m. When he came off duty I had to get into the bunk of another man going on duty at 2 a.m. This was all done without any grumbling on either side.

It was a happy **Leviathan**. There was no wireless on board when I was in her and when she was in dock every three months for a boiler blow down, oil lamps had to be used, and at weekends too. Every thirteenth weekend I took my turn for the weekend watch from Saturday afternoon until 8 a.m. on Monday when the crew came on board.

The enginemen and firemen were catered for by one of the cranemen who charged us six shillings a week for our food. Our watches were long, six hours off and six hours on, with four on and four off dog watches.

It was stated that the four pumps could load 10,000 tons of sand in fifty minutes. In my eighteen months in her she never did this, although she achieved it on her trials in March 1909 when the coal was hand picked. It was a good working week when the **Leviathan** dredged thirty-five full loads, a huge total of 350,000 tons of sand. For this my wages were £2-5s-0d (£2.25p) a week: I never drew more.

In 1959 I wrote to the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board about my service in the **Leviathan**. The Assistant Engineer-in-Chief told me that the crew then totalled 88, in three watches or shifts. |||||

DRAM GOOD PRICE FOR *'WHISKY GALORE!'* RELIC

A small piece of wood, a souvenir of arguably Britain's most famous shipwreck, has been sold at auction for more than three times its asking price.

The wooden panel, from a cask of Ballantine's Liqueur Whisky, part of the cargo on board the ss **Politician** which sank off Eriskay in February 1941, fetched £1,300 at Bonham's in London .

The story fired the imagination of author Sir Compton Mackenzie, whose book *'Whisky Galore!'* was based on the islanders' attempts to retrieve the ship's precious cargo of 22,000 bottles of whisky.

The framed panel was among 200 lots sold by the Harrison Line at Bonhams in London on 21st January 2003.

It is not known to whom the panel was sold.

CLIMAX IN THE ATLANTIC, 1943

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

From *'Hitler's Naval War'* by Cajus Bekker

- For a war against the sea power of Britain, the U-boat was the most important, if not the sole weapon available.
- The U-boat strength, however, was inadequate to win decisive successes against the enemy's supply lines, even when the forces defending these were weaker than it was. By 1942, when the number of U-boats increased enough for them to be deployed in packs, they encountered an enemy now rich in expertise, and from 1943 onwards, superior in power.
- Though their Commander-in-Chief, Dönitz, constantly stressed the need to concentrate the whole U-boat force exclusively against the vital Atlantic convoys, it was depleted time and time again in favour of secondary theatres of war like the Mediterranean and the Arctic.
- So long as more Allied ships were being sunk than produced, the German chances of ultimate success were good. Firstly, however, the U-boat claims were exaggerated; secondly, Allied production even at the worst period, nearly kept pace. By mid-1942 new tonnage was already exceeding that sunk by U-boats, and by July it was exceeding the tonnage accounted for by all Axis forces. Accordingly, the only period when the Germans had any prospect of winning was in the first two years of the war.
- Though outstanding individual successes by experienced U-boat commanders and crews are generally associated with the earlier part of the war, this was by no means exclusively the case. Such successes continued to be achieved during the much bigger convoy battles of the later climactic period, against a defence force better trained and many times stronger, and thus deserve a proportionately higher rating.
- The victory of the Allied convoy defence forces in the spring of 1943, though hotly contested, was won largely due to the superiority of their technical equipment.
- U-boat tactics of attacking on the surface by night, though initially an unpleasant surprise for the British, lost much of their effectiveness owing to the enemy's constantly developing radar. Not the least of the restrictions on U-boat surface operations was the increasing use of radar-equipped aircraft.
- Yet an even more decisive cause of failure was the obligatory signals procedure imposed by Dönitz for his U-boat packs, which required the frequent transmission of sighting reports. This was a gift to the enemy who, equipped as he was with mobile high frequency 'Huff-Duff'[1] direction finders, could instantly take a bearing on any transmitting U-boat and at once proceed to attack. This weapon

was all the more effective for the fact that the German operations staff failed repeatedly to recognize the evidence of its existence.

- By and large, the U-boats' adversaries outmatched them in versatility and adjusted themselves to the conditions of the convoy battles with superior technical resource. In 1943 the Germans were fighting with the same types of U-boats and armaments as early in the war. Though Dönitz always pressed for new developments such as electrically-propelled U-boats, which were fast even under water, these all came too late.
- While the British authorities never waivered in their conviction that the war would be decided in the Atlantic, the German High Command, with its mind focused on the continent, was slow to reach the same conclusion. By the time the crucial importance of the U-boat Arm was recognized, the war was already lost.
- In May 1943 the Battle of the Atlantic had in fact been lost by Germany. A later attempt to re-open the offensive only served to show that despite the weapons by then available, the Allied technical lead could no longer be overtaken. Yet it is strange to put on record that right up to the end of 1943 - and even after - U-boat Command remained blind to one of the basic reasons for its defeat. On 14th May 1943, after the attack by twenty-five U-boats on convoy SC 129 had been beaten off, U-boat Command puzzled over the reason for the defeat, which was by no means clear from the W/T transmissions. The reason, of course, lay in the transmissions themselves - in the fact that every U-boat signalling near the convoy was at once located by 'Huff-Duff'[1]. Each transmission was indeed tantamount to inviting the enemy to come and attack, with full instructions as to how to reach the target. U-boat commanders who had already expressed the opinion that an attack immediately following a transmission could be no mere coincidence had hardly received a hearing. All German thinking centred on British *radar* - supposedly the universal evil that inspired all the enemy's surprise attacks, on the surface as from the air. During April and May 1943 German naval intelligence intercepted and deciphered enemy signals to the effect that destroyers and other convoy-defence vessels had been equipped with *High Frequency D/F* (Huff-Duff). Here was information which, if properly evaluated, would have been of inestimable worth to the U-boats by putting them on their guard concerning their own vulnerability. But not one officer on the staff of U-boat Command, nor a single expert of the German naval signals department, paid the slightest attention or drew the correct inference. A danger that should have been obvious - without which many, if not most of the counter-attacks against the U-boats would not have been possible - succeeded in escaping the attention of the entire German Navy. |||||

[1] *Refer to 'Huff - Duff, Britain's Secret Weapon' by Ray Pugh, which appeared in 'The Bulletin', December 1999, page 25. Ray Pugh was closely involved during the war with the development of 'Huff-Duff'. Ray was Editor of 'The Bulletin' for many years. He died in December 2000.*

LOG BOOKS OF THE *"ARCHIBALD RUSSELL"*

by Dorothy Laird

from Lloyd's Register, 1929/1930:

Official Number : 777 Signal Letters: T P Q R
Steel 4-masted barque Gross Tonnage: 2,354 Nett: 2,048
Built by Scott's Shipbuilding & Engineering Co. Ltd., Greenock, 1905
Owners: G. Erikson Registered at Mariehamn, Finland
Length: 291·3' Breadth: 42·9' Depth: 24·0'

Two of the logbooks of the **Archibald Russell** have survived her. The official logbooks of a Finnish ship are not, as is the custom in Britain, handed back to their equivalent of the Mercantile Marine Office on the completion of a voyage. Instead, they are kept on board the vessel for at least three years, after which they may be put ashore in the owners' offices for safekeeping, but very often they remain on board the ship.

The **Archibald Russell** was a large four-masted barque of 2,354 gross tons, built by Scott of Greenock in 1905 for J. Hardie & Company of Glasgow for the coal trade. She was bought in 1925 by Gustaf Erikson of Mariehamn, in the Aland Islands, for £5,500 and sailed for him in his established trades - outward from Scandinavia to South Africa or Australia with timber when such a cargo was available, and then homeward from the Spencer Gulf with bagged wheat for the U.K.

The two logbooks which have survived cover periods from November 1929 to September 1930, and then from March 1931 to January 1932. Furthermore, in the blank pages at the end of one volume, an English hand has added weather observations from the interned ship at Hull and Goole in 1942 and 1943. The **Archibald Russell** was broken up in 1949.

The logbooks bear certain signs of wind and weather, and an inquisitive spider has paid for his temerity as a permanent exhibit. The cord which binds the leaves is sealed in red wax with a fouled anchor and the crest of Mariehamn Mercantile Marine Office. A big double page is given over to each day's records, of which the most picturesque item is the ship sketch on which each sail carrried or taken in is shown by means of letters for the fore-and-aft sails, and numbers for the squaresails. So it is possible to see at a glance what kind of weather the ship was encountering.

On the very first day of the first log an event of some importance in a sailing ship occurred: land was sighted. The **Archibald Russell**, 67 days out from Kramfors, Sweden, to Port Adelaide, sighted Ilha da Trindade in the South Atlantic (20°30'S, 29°20'W) at 5.55 a.m. on Sunday 29th November 1929, and at 8.10 a.m. bearings neatly 'fixed' the ship. Ilha da Trindade lies within the south-east trade winds, but the

gentle breezes on which the **Archibald Russell** was making a logged speed of 6 - 8 knots (good under the circumstances) were from the east-north-east.

It is easy from the logs to reconstruct the life on board the **Archibald Russell** under the command of Captain K.G. Sjögren. The crew scraped rust and painted the yards - peaceful, trade wind occupations. Then sail was changed and the bleached thin tropic sails were lowered and up went the heavy canvas for the approaching westerlies. It was not one of the old ship's best passages and she crossed the Greenwich meridian and 40 degrees south on the same day, 77 days out from Kramfors. It was the 82nd day at sea before she passed from the South Atlantic to the South Indian Ocean in 42 degrees south, still carrying all sail except the royal and topgallant staysails. On 19th December the **Archibald Russell** passed an iceberg and then she ran into squally rainy weather before the strong wind gradually drew ahead. It was tough luck on the steward and cook who had enough to bother them in their Christmas preparations without the ship bouncing about in a heavy head sea.

LEFT: Archibald Russell, a typical Clyde 4-masted steel barque built in 1905 for John Hardie & Co, was the last square rigger built in Britain for the cargo trade.

The **Archibald Russell** eventually made Port Adelaide 110 days out and she lay there for a month discharging her cargo, presumably of timber, though it was never specifically named in the log. Then, with dry ballast on board, she painfully beat her way out of Port Adelaide round to Port Lincoln in the Spencer Gulf. On her first day she wore ship no fewer than six times and altered course on innumerable occasions. At Port Lincoln she loaded 47,621 sacks of wheat and sailed on Saturday 15th March 1930 into a headwind and heavy head sea. Part of the main upper topgallant blew out 28

days into the voyage, but, in spite of the inner buntline carrying away, the rest of the sail was saved. The **Archibald Russell** rounded the Horn in 57° 17′ south, 43 days out from Port Lincoln, in light south westerly winds, and three days later the first land since Australia was sighted. This was the East Falkland Island and with his position satisfactorily fixed, Captain Sjögren altered course nearer to the land.

The south-east trades were picked up in 22 degrees south; the equator was crossed in 24 degrees west and the south-east trades faltered and died away in 3 degrees north. On Tuesday 1st July 1930, 108 days out, the Fastnet Light was sighted and in spite of some difficulties in contacting a pilot, the **Archibald Russell** called at Queenstown and received orders for London. She arrived off Gravesend on 13th July 1930 and after discharging her cargo set sail for Mariehamn on 4th August, arriving there ten days later. She had a very short stay in her home port and on Tuesday 2nd September left for Helsingör. Captain Sjögren was still in command, but R.K. (presumably the mate as he signed all the log entries in port) had left the ship and J. Fredriksson was now chief officer, and P. Sommarlund second mate. This first logbook came to an end in Copenhagen on Friday 12th September 1930.

The opening page of the second logbook finds Captain Harold Lindfors in command, although the mates are the same. The date is Thursday 19th March 1931 and the **Archibald Russell**, having loaded wheat in Australia, is 42 days out from Port Lincoln to Queenstown for orders and already well round Cape Horn. Ilha da Trindade, the old friend of the first log, was again sighted and in the vicinity the **Pamir** and the **Viking** were passed, both outward bound in ballast. It was here that the **Archibald Russell** recorded her worst day's progress - 8·1 miles from noon to noon. (Her best was 282 miles when running her easting down on her first outward run to Australia). She arrived at Falmouth, the alternative 'order port' to Queenstown 95 days out, a good passage. At Falmouth ordinary seaman Savio reported sick - not surprisingly as a footnote states that he fell from the fore shrouds on to the fiferail by the mast and injured both legs. Orders were again for London where the old barque arrived on 9th May 1931.

After taking on ballast at West Thurrock, the **Archibald Russell** set sail on Wednesday 10th June for Mariehamn on a slow and misty passage across the North Sea which took nine days. There, first mate J. Fredriksson whose handwriting had become so familiar in the logbook, signed off, and he was replaced by A. Söderland who was considerably more chatty in his entries! On 4th July the **Archibald Russell** sailed from Mariehamn to Kotka. Light winds and fog suddenly changed to a force 7 headwind so that the crew had to hustle the sail off her and wear ship four times in the course of one afternoon. In Kotka the donkeyman fell from the roof of the boiler house (for the light donkey engine) and hurt himself badly enough to be off work for a fortnight.

On 7th August the **Archibald Russell** set sail for East London with timber. Force 8 winds are recorded in the Finnish Gulf and the ship was brought down to lower topsails. At Copenhagen they paused just long enough for one of the seamen to dash ashore to the dentist. Then the most unusual incident of the two logbooks took place. On 6th September, 18 days out from Copenhagen towards East London, in 34

degrees North, 18 degrees West, a strange sea meeting took place between the **Archibald Russell** under full sail and the German airship **Graf Zeppelin**, which passed her to starboard at a distance estimated at only 200 metres. The barque arrived at East London on 8th November, 81 days out from Copenhagen and sailed again on 18th November to discharge the remainder of her cargo at Lourenço Marques (Maputo). She had an uncomfortable passage with force 7/8 head winds and a high head sea and arrived on 3rd December after a 14 day passage. There was a certain amount of crew trouble in port and three seamen were logged for coming aboard 'in an intoxicated condition', two of them later finding their way into the log again for being absent without leave.

The **Archibald Russell** had great difficulty leaving Lourenço Marques on 22nd December when she was repeatedly forced to anchor because of headwinds and adverse currents. Again and again Captain Lindfors tried to get clear of the lee shore in hard squalls estimated at force 7/9 and he lost the fore and mizzen lower topgallants and the gaff. The whole of the night before Christmas Eve was spent in heavy squalls and the next morning a tug came alongside - to take the pilot off!

The steward had been laid up since an operation in East London almost seven weeks earlier; now the third mate, the cook and the donkeyman were sick. The master was obviously far from pleased with his ship's positiion on a lee shore, and a 'good anchor watch' is recorded. It was not until 30th December 1931, after daily attempts to claw off the land, that the **Archibald Russell** was able to draw clear of the coast and the relief of all on board can easily be imagined. At 3 p.m. Inkara Point disappeared over the horizon astern and the anchors were catted home.

So ends the **Archibald Russell's** second surviving logbook recording voyages of almost 75 years ago, and of a way of life, alas, as dead as the dodo. |||||

THE MONDAY FACILITY

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

JUNE : 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th

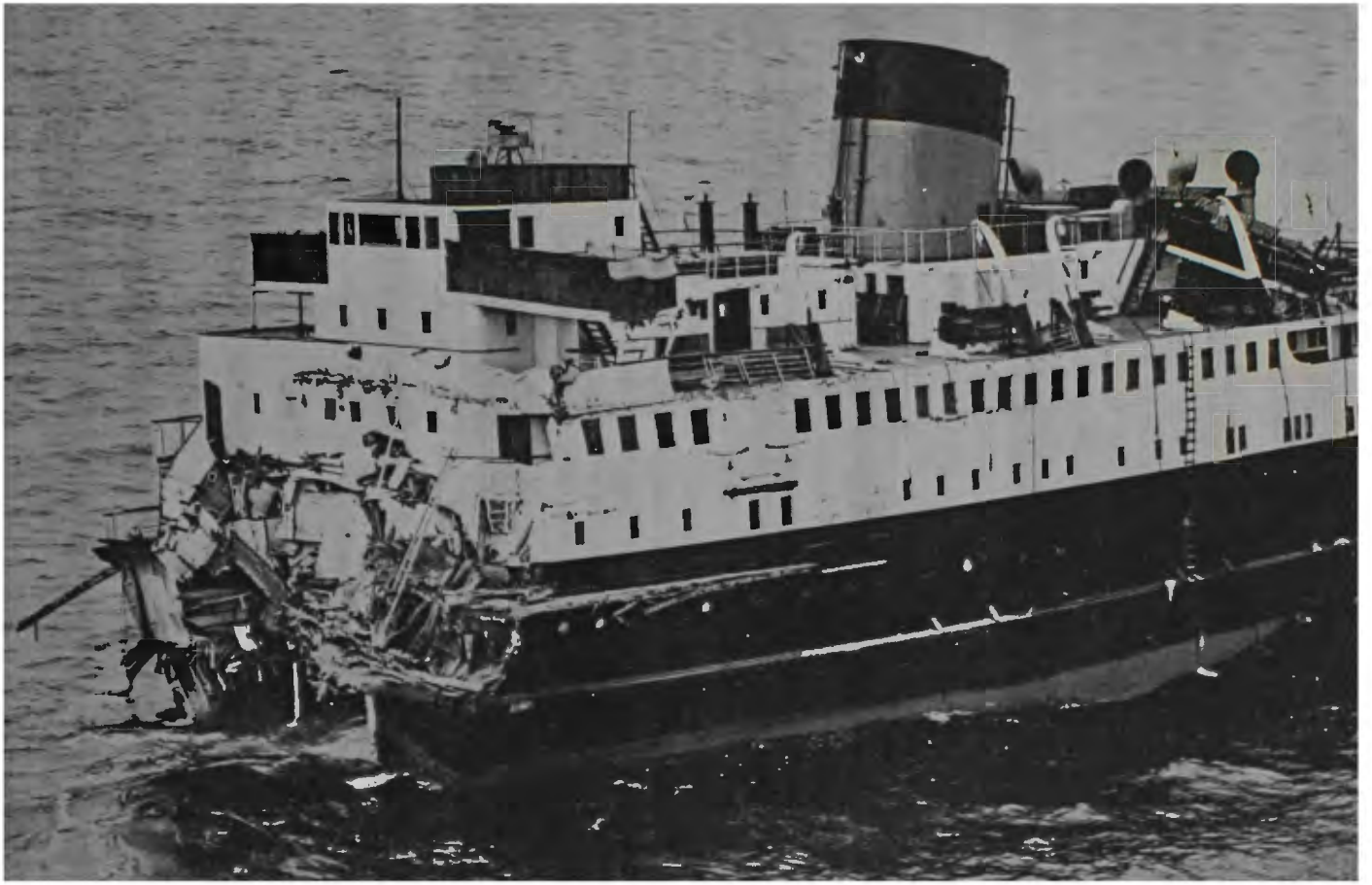
JULY : 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th

AUGUST: 4th, 11th and 18th

SEPTEMBER : 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th

OCTOBER : 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th

NOVEMBER : 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th



MID-CHANNEL COLLISION BETWEEN BRITISH RAILWAYS' FERRY *"DUKE OF YORK"* AND AMERICAN SHIP *"HAITI VICTORY"* ON 6th MAY, 1953

Collisions in the English Channel are commonplace events and occur even today, despite all the modern aids to navigation that are available. Readers will no doubt recall the **Tricolor**, now lying on her side in one of the busiest shipping lanes in the Channel. Despite marker buoys and 'Notices to Mariners' two other vessels have already managed to strike the partly submerged wreck.

Fifty years ago one of the more spectacular collisions occurred when the British Railways' ferry **Duke of York**, on her normal run from the Hook of Holland to Harwich, was in collision with the American ship **Haiti Victory** about 46 miles off Harwich at 4.15 a.m. on 6th May, 1953.

The **Duke of York** was struck on her port side forward of the bridge, the bow section breaking away and sinking almost immediately. The after part was towed back to Harwich after the passengers had been transferred to rescue vessels. Eight passengers lost their lives in the collision.

The **Haiti Victory** was built in 1944 by the Permanent Metals Corporation at Richmond, California. A vessel of 7,607 gross tons, she was owned by the United States Department of Commerce.

The **Duke of York** was built by Harland & Wolff at Belfast in 1935 for the London, Midland & Scottish Railway's Heysham-Belfast service. On the outbreak of the Second World War she was used initially as a troopship, both on the Irish Channel and the English Channel. She was involved in Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of Dunkirk, at the end of May 1940. In 1942 the **Duke of York** was requisitioned by the Admiralty and converted into a Landing Ship Infantry (LSI) and carried ten landing craft. She was renamed HMS **Duke of Wellington** to avoid confusion with the battleship HMS **Duke of York**. On 6th June 1944 (D-Day) she was present in the first wave of the Normandy landings.

After being decommissioned in September 1945 after VJ-Day, she had to wait in the queue to be refitted, and it was October 1947 before she returned to the Heysham-Belfast route.

In 1949 the **Duke of York** was transferred to B.R. Eastern Region ownership and in September returned to her builders for a major refurbishment. Her two funnels were replaced by one 'modern' funnel.

After the collision of 6th May 1953 the **Duke of York's** stern section was towed from Harwich to Palmer's Yard at Yarrow where a new 90ft raked stem bow was fitted. She remained on the Harwich-Hook of Holland run until July 1963 after which she was sold to Chandris Cruises' subsidiary Marivic Navigation Corporation.

From 1964 to 1975 the old **Duke of York** cruised the Mediterranean as the **Fantasia** before being broken up at Piraeus. ||||

TWELVE HECTIC HOURS ON BOARD THE *"MAURETANIA"*

by Sir James Bisset, ex-Commodore of the Cunard Line

Sir James Bisset was the author of three books about his fifty years at sea. The first two volumes 'Sail Ho!' and 'Tramps and Ladies' told of his adventures in sailing ships and coal-burning steamers in which he learnt the principles of seamanship. In the third volume 'Commodore', Captain Bisset relates how he rose to the zenith of his profession as Commodore of the Cunard Line and Master of the world's largest ships, the ***Queen Mary*** *and the* ***Queen Elizabeth****.*
In this extract from 'Commodore' Sir James Bisset recalls the time when he was Senior First Officer of the ***Mauretania*** *in July, 1915.*

On 16th July 1915 the **Mauretania** arrived off Mudros (Moúdhros on the island of Lemnos, 39°53′N, 25°19′E) and was admitted without delay through the boom of mined nets protecting the entrance to the harbour from U-boat attack.

The troops we carried were disembarked to encampments on shore to await passage to the Peninsula. Many of the military officers had a fatalistic look, believing that they would never return - and that premonition was only too true. Gallipoli was a shambles. All that the British and French Higher Commands could do was to fling more and more troops into the beach-heads. The odds against our side were hopeless, but to wthdraw might have been even more disastrous than to hold on to the positions so gallantly won.

There were dozens of naval and mercantile ships of many kinds in the harbour. Among them the **Mauretania** rode at her anchor like a gentle giantess. Fortunately for us, the use of aircraft as bombers had not been introduced into the tactics of war at that time, otherwise we would have been a sitting target.

Naval arrangements for coaling the **Mauretania** were completed fairly quickly and after a stay of only one week we hove up anchor and put to sea, with enough coal to get us to Naples.

It was 4 p.m. on 23rd July 1915 when the **Mauretania** cleared out of Mudros Harbour and set course southwards in the Aegean Sea. As usual on leaving port, Captain Dow was on the bridge and all officers were on stations. We were met outside the heads by two French and two British destroyers which formed an escort and steamed with us as the **Mauretania** quickly worked up to her full speed of 25 knots, with frequent zigzags on a predetermined plan.

It was beautiful to see how quickly the **Mauretania**, for a vessel of her size, answered her helm. This had been first noticed on her trial runs over the measured mile in the Firth of Clyde in November 1907. While she was running at 26 knots the helm had been put hard down. With all four of her propellers at full speed ahead she had turned so sharply, with her rudder only, that the official report stated: *"The diameter of the turning circle was only three and three-quarter lengths - a very good result."*

Everyone who served on the bridge of the **Mauretania** was aware of her marvellous responses to movements of her rudder. As we zigzagged it was noticeable that she could alter course almost as easily as the destroyers of her escort. That was indeed phenomenal as destroyers are built to 'turn on their heel'. It was suspected that U-boats would lurk outside Mudros. The destroyers remained in company with us for fifty miles from the harbour mouth.

Chief Officer Dolphin was Officer of the Watch from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., but Captain Dow remained with him on the bridge while we were in the danger zone. I went to my cabin in the 'flat' abaft the bridge when we were clear of the land. I had nearly eight hours to wait before I would go on watch at midnight.

In the feeling of tension that prevailed, I did not lie down for a nap. I kept my uniform and boots on. All our boats were swung out in their davits. We had very few troops on board - only a few dozen naval and military personnel returning to England for various reasons, but there were 850 ship's personnel to be thought of.

Towards 6 p.m. in the dusk, and after the destroyers had left us, I heard the lookout in the crow's nest sound his bell and sing out urgently, *"Periscope on the starboard bow!"* This cry was instantly repeated by an extra lookout on the starboard wing of the bridge. I sprang on to the bridge in time to witness a very fine feat of seamanship and quick thinking by Captain Dow. He was verifying the lookout's report in a split second before taking action. Having done so, he thundered an order: *"Hard a-port!"*

The helmsman spun the wheel as ordered. In the nautical practice of that time, the order to port the helm referred to the tiller orders of olden days. That is, by putting the *wheel* to starboard, the *tiller* was put to port, but the *rudder* went to starboard, and the *ship's head* paid off to starboard.

This was a brilliant manoeuvre which took the U-boat commander by surprise. He had launched twin torpedoes which travelled at 35 knots below the surface of the water, aimed to strike the **Mauretania** broadside on, according to his estimate of her speed which, at that time, was 25 knots.

Captain Dow's order threw the enemy's calculations out of gear. His order to port the helm was given when the U-boat was 60 degrees on our starboard bow, at half mile range, a few seconds after the torpedoes had been launched. So sharply did the **Mauretania** answer her helm that, as the torpedoes raced towards her - their wake clearly visible from the bridge - they passed under the stern; one missing her by five feet and the other by thirty feet.

The U-boat's periscope vanished from sight. Her commander had decided to get out of the way, either because he had no more torpedoes, or because he feared that the **Mauretania** was attempting to ram him. It's hard to say who had the bigger fright, but ramming the U-boat was no part of Captain Dow's tactics which were solely to evade the torpedoes. If he had turned the **Mauretania** to port, that is, away from the U-boat instead of towards it, one of the torpedoes would probably have struck her.

We had no time to loiter and consider the situation. As soon as the torpedoes had passed under our stern the Captain again altered course to bring the **Mauretania**

stern-on to the presumed position of the U-boat, thus offering the minimum target for any further torpedoes that might be launched, and at the same time bringing our one and only gun at the stern to bear on the enemy's position.

The rapid changes of our course, amounting to a double slewing within two minutes, had been done at 25 knots, but the Captain now called out through the speaking-tube to the engineer in charge below to increase speed. Within a few minutes we were travelling at 26½ or 27 knots into the dusk, thereby putting a safe distance rapidly between us and the hidden U-boat.

On first sighting the torpedoes streaking towards us, Captain Dow had ordered the alarm to be sounded for 'Boat Stations'. All except the deck crew on watch, the gunners at the stern and the engine room crew down below, had assembled at their boat stations wearing lifebelts, and they remained closed up there for half an hour until we were clear of that region and the order was given to 'disperse'.

Darkness set in and tension eased. The chief danger now would be one of collision as the **Mauretania**, like all other vessels, naval and mercantile, did not show lights at night in a war zone.

At 10 p.m. an explosion shook the ship. I leaped out of my bunk and hastened to the bridge. The Captain was already there. The Junior First Officer was O.O.W.

People were tumbling up from down below, wearing lifebelts, and assembling at their boat stations thinking that we had been hit. But a happier explanation was forthcoming. The gunner at the stern had sighted an object which he took to be a U-boat. He had let fly at it with his 6-inch gun which made quite a bang. Fortunately he had missed. The 'object' switched on steaming lights and searchlights, and was identified as a French destroyer which had not previously made contact with us by wireless. We did not loiter to explain, but sped on.

At midnight I took over the watch on the bridge, in the darkest hours of the night. The **Mauretania** was then approaching the Doro Channel, a strait six miles wide between the Greek islands of Euboea and Andros. This could be a lurking-place for U-boats. Captain Dow came on to the bridge for the navigation of the channel and set course at a speed of 18 knots, hugging the cliffy Andros side of the strait. We could see the dark mass of the land two miles away on our port side.

When I came on watch I noticed one of the Junior Engineers on the bridge, with his tool-kit, inspecting the steering gear, or tinkering with it. This was not unusual and I took little notice of him as he continued hanging about unobtrusively, watching the helmsman and presumably making a routine check of that part of the steering gear. He did not say anything to me, or to the Captain.

Though the night was moonless, the sky was clear, and there was enough starlight to enable the land on our port beam to be clearly enough discerned.

Captain Dow was standing alongside the helmsman and giving him steering orders to keep the ship's course parallel with the shore. Speed was increased to 22 knots to get out of the strait as quickly as possible in case a U-boat was lurking there. Half way through the strait, when Captain Dow ordered a slight alteration of course,

the helmsman moved the wheel accordingly, then at once said, *"There's something wrong, sir!"*

The ship's head was paying off rapidly to port. Captain Dow himself took the wheel and spun it in an attempt to bring the **Mauretania** back on course but instantly recognised that the gear had broken down. He rang the engines to 'stop', at the same time shaking the telegraph violently to indicate urgency. The order was promptly obeyed but by this time the ship was headed at an alarming speed, under her mighty momentum, towards the towering cliffs.

For the second time within a few hours Captain Dow acted decisively to save his ship in a serious emergency. It is no light matter to order 'full astern' immediately after the engines have been rung from 'full ahead' to 'stop', in a ship displacing 40,000 tons of water, surging along under momentum at a speed of perhaps 20 knots. That momentum would have carried her on to the rocky shore in a few minutes.

To order 'full astern' with all four propellers might have stripped the blades out of the turbines, or at least would have caused such violent vibration that some damage to the ship would have been inevitable. Captain Dow therefore took a cool and seamanlike decision. Leaving the port engines stopped, he ordered the starboard engines 'full astern'.

There was not time to man the emergency steering gear on the after bridge. The rudder was presumably swinging free. The effect of the Captain's order was to cause the ship's head to pay off to starboard, while still having headway on. After what seemed an age the **Mauretania** began to sheer off when she was a little less than half a mile from the shore. It was a mercy that she had not grounded, but Captain Dow's decision had been taken in the knowledge that there was deep water almost to the edge of the cliffs.

When the **Mauretania** was stern-on to the shore he ordered 'slow ahead' on all four propellers and was about to order the emergency steering gear on the after bridge to be manned, when the young engineer officer who had been lurking on the bridge stepped forward with the explanation. He had been changing over from one gear to another at midnight and he had no sooner pulled the pin out when the quartermaster moved the wheel and he hadn't been able to get the pin in again. With the wheel put amidships the engineer quickly replaced the pin.

After it was done the **Mauretania** resumed her voyage. However the fact remained that the young engineer who had tried to do a job, as it were, secretly, at the change of the watch without notifying the Officer of the Watch of what he was doing, had nearly wrecked the ship.

Captain Dow, after writing his 'night orders', retired to his cabin for a nap, leaving me in charge of the bridge. At 3.30 a.m., in the darkest hour before the dawn, we were belting along at 25 knots in open water after passing through the Zea Channel. Suddenly I sighted a faint green light ahead.

No red light was visible. From this I was entitled to infer that a vessel was crossing our bows, proceeding in a westerly direction athwart our southerly course.

The **Mauretania** was herself blacked out, showing no navigation lights. As the green light ahead had appeared so suddenly it was a logical inference that the officer in charge of the vessel crossing our bows had taken the cover off his starboard light for our information.

The faintness of the green gleam indicated an oil lamp, possibly on a small steamer. The wartime practice was to cover the navigation lights, on both wings of the bridge, with sacks that could be whipped off in an emergency.

I therefore gave the order, *"Hard a-starboard!"* and the **Mauretania's** head began to pay off to port, to clear, I supposed, the stern of the vessel ahead, with plenty to spare. However, a red light suddenly became visible, and then a white light. I then realised that the steamer was headed towards us, fine on our starboard bow, and very near, so that a collision was inevitable.

I at once gave the helm order, *"Hard a-port"*, hoping thereby to swing the **Mauretania's** stern away from the bow of the oncoming steamer and maybe reduce the force of the impact. The manoeuvre was effective to a limited extent in the short time available, but the other vessel, now glimpsed as a tramp steamer, struck the **Mauretania's** starboard side, bows on, abreast our No.4 funnel, with a sickening crash.

Instantly I rang our engines to 'stop', and, a moment later to 'full astern starboard', while giving the helm order, *"Hard a-port"*. The **Mauretania** swung around on her heel and came to rest in the darkness a quarter of a mile from the stricken tramp.

Captain Dow hurried on to the bridge and I briefly reported what had happened. I knew that I would later have to seek some explanation of the eccentric showing of green and red lights in the steamer that had crashed into us.

"Find out if she's in need of help," the Captain ordered. *"We must stand by, but this is no place to linger in. It will be daylight in half an hour!"*

With the Morse lamp I signalled, *"What ship is that? Are you in need of help?"*

The answer came back: *"S.S. **Cardiff Hall**. Bows heavily damaged. We are down by the head. Number One hold already full. May have to abandon ship. Two men badly injured. Send a boat."*

Captain Dow instructed me to lower the sea boat and go over to her as quickly as possible. Within a few minutes I had our emergency boat manned with eight seamen and I took my place in the stern-sheets, as, with a rattle of well-oiled blocks, the boat was lowered.

As we approached the **Cardiff Hall** on the lee side I saw that her bows were stove in for twenty feet from her stem, and she was badly down by the head. Her two boats on the lee side were swung out under davits and partly lowered. Most of her crew were already in the boats with their hastily gathered bags of belongings piled up around them.

On the deck of the **Cardiff Hall** I could see her Captain, First and Second Mates, and carpenter moving around with hurricane lanterns and sounding-rods,

sounding the wells and holds to ascertain if she was making more water. I hailed the Captain: *"Have you decided if you are going to abandon her? We cannot stand by too long. It will be daylight soon and there are U-boats about. My orders are to return to my ship as quickly as possible."*

The **Cardiff Hall's** Captain replied that he was not going to leave his ship but that he would attempt to take her into Syros for repairs. He said that No.2 hold was dry and that the forward bulkhead was holding. He asked the **Mauretania** to take off his injured men. From the **Mauretania** herself the Morse lamp was winking, signalling to me to return without delay.

I asked the Captain of the **Cardiff Hall**: *"Why did you show your green light only at first, and then your red light afterwards?"*

He answered sarcastically: *"The famous 'Floating Hotel' **Mauretania** was showing no lights at all, belting along at 25 knots in the dark!"*

"True enough, Captain," I admitted. *"No steaming lights by Admiralty orders. Will you please tell me why you uncovered your green light first?"*

"Easily explained," said the Captain, *"My Second Mate was alone on the bridge, except for the helmsman. He's no chicken. He's nigh on seventy and he has gout. He uncovered the starboard light first and then rushed across the bridge to uncover the port light. He couldn't have uncovered both lights at the same time!"*

I was greatly relieved at having discovered a reasonable explanation for the cause of the collision.

I ordered my boat's crew to 'give way' and we pulled back to the **Mauretania** where the boat falls were dangling as we had left them. Within a few minutes our boat was hoisted and stowed and our voyage was resumed as daylight began to come in.

The wallowing **Cardiff Hall** was already under way on a course for the Greek port of Syros. Black smoke was pouring from her one funnel; her single screw was almost out of the water and her battered bow submerged.

Courage and seamanship never failed among the shipmasters, officers, seamen and engineers in many a tramp steamer of that humble kind under attack by the enemy or damaged in collision during the war. They limped into port with no thought of abandoning a ship while she could float, make way, and steer. They had no expectation of rewards, or even of public acclaim, for doing their duty. They were the unsung heroes of the Great War of 1914-18, in which sixteen thousand men of the British Merchant Service lost their lives, and 3,400 ocean-going British merchant ships were sunk.

The **Mauretania** had not been seriously damaged in her collision with the **Cardiff Hall**. Examination showed that one of her side bunkers, at the point of collision, was admitting water. These compartments had watertight bulkheads, isolating them from the many other compartments within the hull, and the leak was one which could be kept in check by pumping.

Captain Dow decided to make for Malta for repairs and set course accordingly. On hearing my report in detail, and taking statements also from others

who were on the bridge and on look-out at the time of the collision, he informed me that in his opinion I had given the correct orders, and had done everything that I should have done in the circumstances, and added that he would commend me for having handled the ship in such a way that she suffered only minor damage.

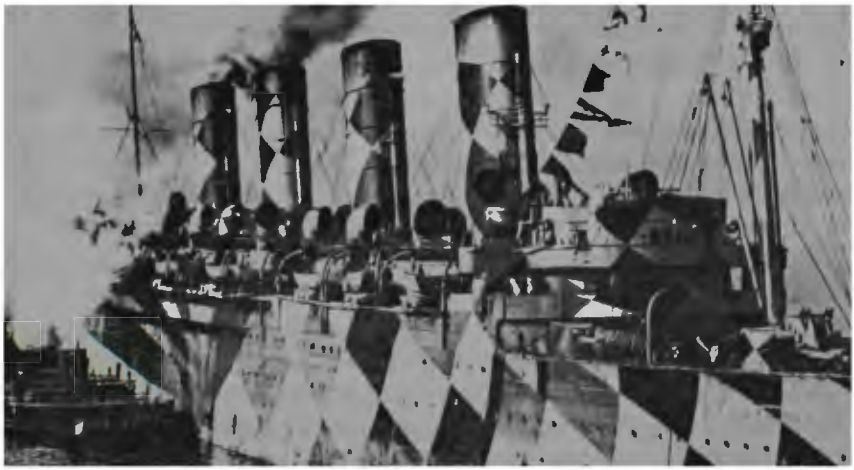
That relieved my anxiety. So ended an extremely eventful twelve hours. When I went off watch at 4 a.m. I felt that we had been in the thick of things since leaving Mudros the previous afternoon. We had been attacked by a U-boat; we had fired on a friendly warship; we had narrowly avoided running aground; and we had collided with another steamer at sea. All that in twelve hours was setting a hot pace that couldn't be kept up! Yet the **Mauretania** had lived up to her reputation as a 'lucky ship'. Any one of those incidents could have ended disastrously!

On arrival at Malta we were directed to anchor in a bay at the eastern end of the island. A diver went down and discovered three cracks in the **Mauretania's** steel hull plates, below the water line. He hammered sheet lead into the cracks, thus sealing the leaks. It was remarkable that we had not suffered greater damage than this, considering that the **Cardiff Hall's** bows had been crumpled by the impact.

We proceeded to Naples for coal and arrived back at Liverpool on 3rd August 1915. The first year of the Great War had ended. The situation on all fronts was grim and would become grimmer.

The **Mauretania** was put into dry dock at Liverpool for replacement of her fractured hull plates. We heard that the **Cardiff Hall** had safely made the port of Syros, proceeding stern first. After repairs there, she went on to Malta to be fitted with a new bow.

Nearly three years later the case of **Mauretania** v **Cardiff Hall** came before the Admiralty Court in London. The verdict was: *"No blame on either side. Ships not showing proper navigation lights owing to wartime conditions."* ||||



*H.M. Transport **Mauretania**, camouflaged whilst carrying troops.*

THE "*ORINOCO'S*" GOLD

by Stuart Nicol

A true story from the archives of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company

The **Orinoco**, a cargo-passenger vessel of 4,572 tons gross, was built for the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company in 1886 by Caird & Company at Greenock. Her flush deck, clipper bows and generally sleek lines added up to a handsome ship. There were two navigating bridges - one forward of the foremast, and the main bridge immediately forward of the funnels. The white figurehead had scrollwork picked out in gold.

Originally the Orinoco had a black hull and black funnels. Her hull was later painted white and the funnels buff, and her final years were spent with a black hull and funnels of the same buff colour.

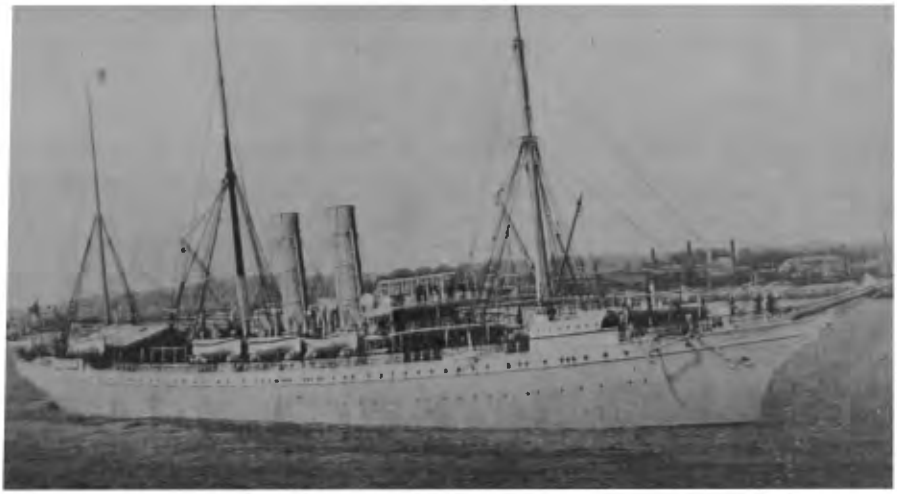
*A model of the **Orinoco** in her orginal form*

The vessel operated between Southampton and the West Indies, often reaching as far west as Colon, where the Panama Canal now has its Caribbean entrance. As part of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company's transatlantic fleet, her conversion to white and buff livery took place late in 1901. The order to revert to black hulls, but to retain buff funnels, was given in November 1902; thus the **Orinoco** was painted for only a year in her 'cruising' colours.

When she was completed in 1886 the **Orinoco** was square-rigged on the foremast and was, in fact, the last square-rigger built for her owners. Although the yards were removed after her twenty-fourth voyage, in 1891, sail was used to a considerable extent. During a voyage in 1890, for instance, the square sails were employed for 359 hours and the fore-and-aft rig for 416 hours. The fore-and-aft sails were not discarded until 1902.

Besides closing the Company's era of square-riggers, the **Orinoco** opened two new eras by being its first steel-hulled ship and its first to be propelled by triple-expansion engines. She was also amongst the earliest ships to use electric lighting: it was installed in 1888.

On 2nd December 1886 the **Orinoco** left Southampton on her maiden voyage, bound for the West Indies. In command was the Company's senior master, Captain J.H. Jellicoe. This extraordinary man spent 73 years in the service of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, beginning as a midshipman in 1841. He rose to senior master and then came ashore to serve as a director until his death in 1914 at the age of 89. His son, Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, Admiral of the Fleet, Earl of Scapa, is of course more widely known.



*The **Orinoco** in her 'cruising livery' from late 1901 until November 1902.*

The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company chose the **Orinoco** to represent them at the Royal Naval Review at Spithead on 26th July 1897 to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. She (the **Orinoco**, not Queen Victoria) was moored between the White Star liner **Teutonic** and Union Castle's **Dunvegan Castle**.

A less happy incident occurred in 1906. At 7 p.m. on 21st November the **Orinoco** was entering Cherbourg harbour in dense fog. Unfortunately the German liner **Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse** was coming out at the same time. The **Orinoco's** clipper bows impaled the German ship on her starboard side, smashing the plates and frames in the 'tween decks and entering the engine room. Four of the *Kaiser Wilhelm's* passengers were killed and several others injured.

Some years prior to this incident the **Orinoco** was mixed up in a quite incredible story, every word of which, on legal evidence, is true. The ship sailed from Southampton at 3.40 p.m. on 13th December 1899 and spent Christmas voyaging in the Caribbean. Her terminal port was Colon where she berthed at 7.20 a.m. on the morning of 1st January 1900.

Two metal bullion boxes were unloaded under guard, transferred to a train and taken across the Isthmus of Panama. (The Canal did not open until August 1914). At Panama the boxes, still under guard, were loaded on board the Pacific Steam Navigation Company's twin-screw steamer **Guatemala** for the voyage to Callao, and so to the London Bank of Mexico and South America in the Peruvian capital of Lima.

The boxes were opened in the bank. They contained lead shot, nails and wood chippings - hardly the best of trading currencies. When the **Orinoco** left England the boxes had contained £10,000 worth of gold sovereigns.

The bank naturally wanted compensation for their missing money; but from whom should they claim? Three companies handled the gold in transit - the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company from Southampton to Colon, the Panama Rail Road Company from Colon to Panama and the Pacific Steam Navigation Company from Panama to Callao.

A commission was set up to examine the witnesses. The barrister retained by the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company was a Mr Frank Phillips. After the first session in Lima he wrote back to London *"Really, these people here are too terrible for words. Nothing short of an earthquake or a revolution seems to move them."* News reached Lima that the night watchman on the Panama wharf at the time of the theft (he had since left) was spending large amounts of English gold in the Colombian interior. Making the trip inland by river tender and pony, the police arrested the man, whose name was Pajares. He claimed that he had 'seen a vision in the night', prompting him to dig at the roots of a tree where the gold was buried!

Pajares' boss at the Panama wharf, Carlos Zachrisson had also left the employ of the P.S.N.C. and was spending English gold, as was his nephew Ricaurte Pacheco. The inferences were plain but proof was a different matter.

The Bank's lawyer in the case was, in the words of Mr Phillips, *"a polite little Peruvian gentleman who is incapable of asking any but leading questions, each one of which is about half a foolscap sheet in length and frequently quite inaccurate."*

The depositions continued in typical style: Zachrisson could not attend because he was suffering from malaria, one person after another walked out or failed to turn up,and witnesses who understood English insisted on a translation to give them

time to think out an answer. The 26-year-old Pacheco at first refused to attend the hearing, but was later 'physically persuaded' to come.

The result of his cross-examination by Phillips left no doubt in the barrister's mind that the boxes had been substituted by Zachrisson on the P.S.N.C. wharf at Panama. Phillips succeeded in proving that Pacheco could not have earned as much as $19,000 in his whole life, yet he had spent far more than that on trips to New York and Paris in the two years since the robbery.

From a negative attitude towards the hearing, the Latin Americans suddenly got a mania for it and there was no stopping them. Zachrisson went into the 'hot seat' and was subjected to a barrage of 649 questions which probed into minute detail on the most insignificant subjects.

Witness after witness was called. Mr Phillips reported: *"By this time the evidence had developed into a personal wrangle, washing the dirty linen of Panama .... The tendency to prolong the proceedings by calling unnecessary witnesses began to get so bad that at last I said that I would leave shortly whether the proceedings were finished or not."* The Bank tried to make Mr Phillips change sides at this point, but he refused ..... *"So then the Plaintiffs said they would stop calling witnesses,"* went on Mr Phillips, *"and I then got an undertaking from the P.S.N.C. that they would stop calling if the Panama Rail Road would do the like. Thus we actually finished the proceedings."*

On 26th March 1902, two years and three months after the robbery, the Pacific Steam Navigation Company wrote to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company suggesting that they joined, together with the Panama Rail Road, in arranging a settlement with the underwriters for the claim to be met privately and not by court action. If the R.M.S.P. did not agree then the P.S.N.C. would apply for the commission to be re-opened. The P.S.N.C. listed points that would implicate both the R.M.S.P. and the Panama Rail Road in the theft.

The last word on the robbery, as one might guess, goes to a woman. A mysterious Josefa Rivas de V. wrote letters to Pajares and Zachrisson after the commission had left for home. The letters were in semi-literate, flowery language, but they indicated quite clearly that Zachrisson had stolen the money, that Pajares had accidentally stumbled on him as the substitution was taking place and had demanded a cut, and that Josefa herself had guarded it. Everybody blackmailed everybody else until the whole matter became lost in a whirl of Latin confusion.

The **Orinoco** continued in the West Indies run for the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company until she was broken up in 1909, after completing 114 voyages for her owners. |||||

Correct Approach

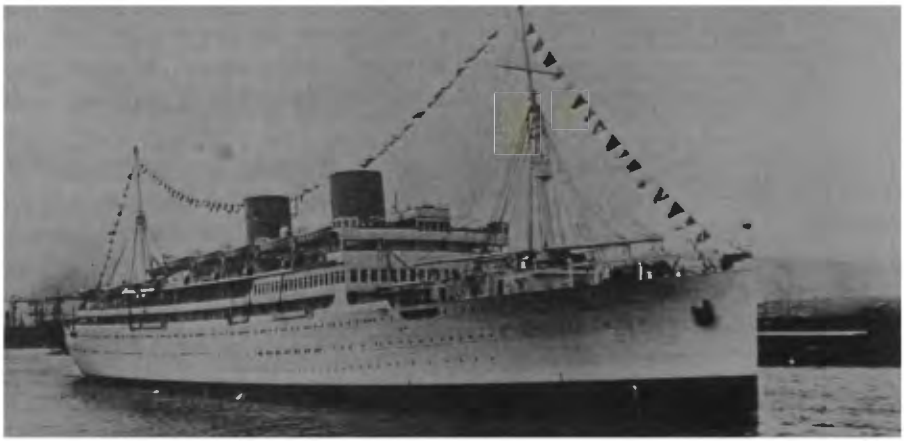
A candidate in a navigation class was asked how he would proceed to berth safely in a certain harbour. Not being sufficiently informed he thought hard for a moment and replied: *"The Civil Service way."* *"What do you mean?"* queried the puzzled examiner. *"Why, through the proper channels, sir,"* replied the lad brightly.

THE *"REINA DEL PACIFICO"* OF 1931

by The Editor

From Lloyd's Register: 1954-55

REINA DEL PACIFICO Official Number: 162339 Signal Letters: G M P S
Quadruple Screw Motor Vessel
Built by Harland & Wolff at Belfast in 1931
Owned by the Pacific Steam Navigation Company, registered at Liverpool
Gross Tonnage: 17,872 Nett Tonnage: 10,402
Length: 551.3 feet Breadth: 76.3 feet Depth: 37.8 feet



The "Reina del Pacifico" was Britain's highest-powered motorship when she was completed

There was widespread regret on Merseyside at the end of 1958 with the news of the final disposal for demolition of the familiar **Reina del Pacifico**, although her later years were marred by a series of unfortunate incidents which brought her into the popular press with uncanny regularity.

Throughout her pre-war career she gave excellent service and the same could be said of her war role as a troopship.

Completed in 1931 at Belfast by Harland & Wolff, she quickly made a great name for herself for comfort and reliability. On her completion she was of considerable interest through her method of propulsion as she had quadruple screws each driven by trunked piston, 12-cylinder oil engines working on the single-acting, 4-stroke principle. She had four auxiliary engines besides, each driving a dynamo and

accommodated in a separate engine room, divided from the main one by a watertight door.

The **Reina del Pacifico** was launched on 23rd September 1930 and she became the largest vessel to date in the fleet of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company. She was the first of the company's ships to be given a white hull, and the first of its passenger ships to be given a name that did not begin with 'O'. The new liner's two funnels added to her appearance, but the forward one was a dummy.

As far as the passenger accommodation was concerned, the **Reina del Pacifico** provided a new standard of luxury in the South American trade. On completion she carried 800 passengers in first, second and third-class accommodation. The public rooms were decorated in Spanish designs of the Moresque and Colonial periods.

Before commencing her maiden voyage to South America, the new **Reina del Pacifico** made a three-day shake down cruise to the North Sea with company guests on board. Her maiden voyage on her intended route left Liverpool on 9th April 1931 and she called at La Rochelle, Vigo, Bermuda, Bahamas, Havana, Jamaica, Panama Canal, Guayaquil, Callao (19 days), continuing to Antofagasta and Valparaiso (25½ days). On 19th January 1932 she commenced her first annual 'Round South America' voyage. Her record passage from Liverpool to Valparaiso of just under 25 days was made in 1936.

The **Reina del Pacifico** was taken up for trooping service just before the outbreak of the Second World War and her first voyage in this capacity was in the re-arrangement of overseas garrisons: she sailed from the Clyde for Singapore and afterwards brought the first Canadian troops to Britain.

On more than one occasion the enemy claimed to have sunk her but these reports - like the premature report of Mark Twain's death - were greatly exaggerated and she continued her trooping service mainly on long distance routes. The **Reina del Pacifico** rushed troops to Norway in April 1940, and as quickly evacuated them a few weeks later. On her arrival at Bygden Fjord she steamed around at full speed in circles for two hours whilst the fjord was depth-charged by her escorts.

After that she was employed mainly in the Middle East and escaped damage in the Red Sea when attacked by Italian aircraft. On occasions she averaged well over 20 knots for 24 hour periods. In 1941 she was taking troops from Halifax, N.S. to Singapore by the westabout route, but the following year she was converted into an assault ship to take part in the French North African and Sicilian landings.

At one stage of her wartime career the **Reina del Pacifico** was at Avonmouth when that port was subjected to a heavy air attack. She was straddled with high explosive and incendiary bombs but she escaped without damage. On another occasion whilst lying at anchor in Walton Bay she was bombed and had a similar experience at Liverpool. A delayed-action missile exploded in the dock alongside, but her luck held and the only damage she suffered was to crockery.

On 21st October 1942 the **Reina del Pacifico** embarked troops for the 'Z' landing at Oran. She was flagship to the Senior Naval Officer Landing. The Algiers

force had to be 24 hours ahead of the Oran force so that at one stage the **Reina del Pacifico** had to steam back on her tracks for eight hours in order to pass through the Straits of Gibraltar in darkness. At 15.30 on 7th November 1942 the **Reina del Pacifico** met up with the equipment ships off Oran - she was on time to the minute, and at 07.00 the following morning her landing craft took her troops ashore. Later the ship berthed in Oran harbour.

In 1943 the liner was off Gibraltar when attacked by German aircraft on two successive days but no hits were scored. After the Sicily landings the **Reina del Pacifico** took King Peter of Jugoslavia and his staff to Port Said en route to his own country and then sailed on to Taranto with troops. Following the Italian campaign she was once more used on long distance hauls carrying troops of all nationalities. She was then placed on repatriation duties to and from the Middle East. The astonishing good luck of the liner during her wartime voyaging might very well be said to have given the lie to the stories that went around in her final years that she was a 'hoodoo' ship.

The **Reina del Pacifico's** sinister record began in 1947 when she was the subject of a serious crankcase explosion on 11th September whilst on trials after beng refitted at her builders' yard at Belfast before re-entering commercial service. This explosion caused the death of 28 members of the crew and the P.S.N.C.'s technical staff. She returned to Harland & Wolff's Belfast yard and was eventually put back on her peacetime service to the West Coast of South America about a year later.

There then followed a series of minor incidents - engine trouble and the like - which culminated in the grounding of the ship on Devil's Flat, Bermuda in July 1957. After some days she was safely refloated and returned to the U.K. On her next voyage after leaving Liverpool she had to put into Milford Haven with generator trouble and eventually it became clear that she could not be repaired in time to complete this voyage. This was cancelled and she returned to Liverpool for major repairs to her generating plant.

In November 1957 the **Reina del Pacifico** dropped her starboard inner propeller whilst manoeuvring in Havana harbour (Cuba) and she was eventually drydocked at Balboa (Panama Canal Zone) to have a spare fitted. This spare had been shipped out to Panama in the motorship **Salinas**, another P.S.N.C. vessel.

At the end of March 1958 it became clear that when the **Reina del Pacifico** reached Liverpool at the completion of her voyage, she would be withdrawn from service. At that stage it was not clear what was intended as far as the ship's future was concerned, although it ws obvious that she would be offered for sale.

Whilst lying at Liverpool awaiting disposal negotiations were taking place for the old ship's sale to Japanese shipbreakers but this deal did not come to anything and the **Reina del Pacifico** was eventually sold to the British Iron and Steel Corporation (Salvage), Ltd., London. When she left the River Mersey for the last time she was bound for Newport, Mon., to be scrapped by the shipbreaking firm of John Cashmore Limited, the same company which had broken up her former consort, the **Orbita**, in 1950. |||||


CROSBY

THE CROSBY LIGHTSHIP *"COMET"*

In April 1950, after 83 years service, the old lightship **Comet** was withdrawn by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board from her station in the Crosby Channel in the River Mersey estuary. The old lightship was replaced by a light float.

The withdrawal of the **Comet** left only one manned lightship stationed in Liverpool Bay, the Bar lightship **Alarm**.

The Formby lightship was sunk during the Second World War and replaced by a light float, and the North-West lightship was removed and also replaced by a light float in the autumn of 1949. As the lightships were withdrawn arrangements were made, as far as possible, to deploy their crews on other duties. The **Comet** had a crew of seven.

The Crosby lightvessel position was established in 1840, the character of the light, which was at the top of the foremast, being single white.

The lightship **Comet** was built in 1867 by W.H.Potter and Sons of Liverpool, being constructed of iron. Her dimensions were: length 87 feet and beam 18 feet.

In June 1869 two subsidiary white lights were established, one of the forepart of the vessel and one amidships, and in such a position that a vessel approaching the lightship beam-on would see three white lights in a triangle, apex uppermost. The **Comet** was placed on the Crosby station at about his time.

In May 1874 a steam foghorn was installed, giving one blast every twenty seconds, to take the place of the bell which had previously been used during foggy weather. In 1887 the light character of one flash every ten seconds was instituted, the flash lasting for one second, the eclipse for nine seconds.

A compressed air reed horn was established in 1896, giving one blast of two seconds' duration every 20 seconds. In 1910 the main light was raised from 27 feet to 30 feet, thereby increasing the range. In addition to the main light, anchor lights were also exhibited.

The **Comet's** hull was painted red with CROSBY on the sides in white letters. Her foremast was surmounted by a red ball-shaped daymark. The vessel was moored with two lengths of chain, each of 90 fathoms of $1.^{5}/_{8}$ inch cable, with a 40cwt anchor. These chains were laid in a north-westerly and south-easterly direction, being joined at the ship end on to a swivel. The vessel, thus moored, swung to a change of tide in a comparatively small arc, a necessary feature in a narrow fairway.

On 10th March 1939 the **Comet** broke adrift during a storm and was in danger of being driven ashore until her emergency anchor held.

The **Comet** was equipped with radio-telephone in her later years. The light was a catadioptric (involving a combination of reflecting and refracting components) revolving lens with a focal plane of 30 feet, burning paraffin oil in a concentric-wick capillory lamp producing 4,000 candlepower. There was an oil driven dynamo for domestic lighting.

The **Comet** was manned by one officer, one engineer and five crew, whose spell afloat lasted for three weeks, followed by three weeks ashore. |||||

CARGO SHIP STATUS

by Captain A.W. Sayle

When I joined the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company in July 1907 as fifth officer, the ink was only just dry on my second mate's certificate. I was just under twenty years of age. A year later I was promoted to fourth officer and it was in that capacity that I found myself serving in the steamer **Ceylon** in July 1909.

At this time the **Ceylon** was one of the oldest and smallest ships owned by the P. & O. - just 4,000 gross tons - but she had fine lines and lofty masts. She had accommodation for twenty passengers and her complement consisted of master, four officers, six engineers, a surgeon, chief steward and stewardess, boatswain, carpenter, five European quartermasters, thirty lascars and the usual number of native stewards and engine-room ratings.

The boatswain needs a word to himself; he was always known in all P. & O. ships as 'the gunner', a relic of the days of the 1840s and 1850s when the ships were actually armed. Just to make matters more complicated, he signed on as 'sailmaker', but the only sails carried by the **Ceylon** were a set of staysails and trysails which we set in the south-west monsoon and, apart from those and the awnings, there was precious little sail making for him to do. In actual fact he did the work of the boatswain, and in other companies that is what he would have been called.

The **Ceylon** made a voyage out to Japan on the usual intermediate passenger run, returning to London in November 1909. We were then met with the news that the 'powers that be' in Leadenhall Street had decided that the **Ceylon** was to be reduced to cargo ship status. This meant that the surgeon and the gunner were taken out of the ship and the lascar crew was reduced to twenty. Since there were to be no more passengers, the stewards department was cut down considerably. The engine room was left in peace.

I was then informed that I should have to take on the duties of fourth officer, boatswain and doctor. I began to see that there were possibilities with the job - to begin with, instead of having to double up with the third officer, I moved into the surgeon's cabin which was a roomy affair with the surgery leading off. I was not so keen on the idea of running the crew until I came to an arrangement with the chief officer with whom I kept the four to eight watch, that I should remain on watch until 5 a.m., then turn the hands to, and after I had worked out the star sights, I should then keep an eye on the hands during the forenoon.

Later in my career in the P. & O. I counted myself fortunate in having had to run the lascar crew in that I got a good insight into their way of life. It was an order of the company that all officers made themselves acquainted with the native language. Having to run the crew, I learned far more Hindustani than the average young officer of the day. One could get very attached to a lascar crew. The P. & O. crews all came from three coastal villages or towns near Bombay: Damond, Gogo and Ratnagiri. It was a father-to-son business with them and generations of them had served the

company. The process of getting a crew was simple - the Serang did it all. He was the father of his crew in more ways than one for he probably had several sons and grandsons in the crew and many other relatives, all of whom came from his home town.

These lascars had not the physical strength of a European seaman: it took two of them to do a job done by one European, but having been born and bred to the sea they were fine seamen. It was fascinating to watch them splicing: they seemed to use their bare toes as much as their fingers. They never gave any trouble and during all my time in the P. & O. I never remember one being logged for misconduct. They were very loyal to what they called the 'Kumpani' and in that connection I was once told an amusing story by the master of one of the 'Straths'. It was just after the Second World War when there was a good deal of dispute as to the boundaries between India and Pakistan. This master said to his Serang: *"Which are you, Serang, India or Pakistan?"*, to which the old man replied: *"Me, Sahib, I be P. & O.!"*

These then were the men who I had to 'run'. We sailed from the Royal Albert Docks on Christmas Eve 1909 bound for Yokohama with a general cargo. I began to take an interest in keeping the ship smart. The lascar Cassab (storekeeper), the Serang and myself used to sit on upturned paint drums in the paint locker devising ways of making the ship look *'Bahut Acha'* (smart!).

My surgical duties did not take up much of my time, but I began to grow very interested in them. All the **Ceylon's** medical stores which she had carried with a surgeon had been left behind including a full poison locker, scalpels, and there was even a set of dental forceps which I fingered longingly! There was also a book called the 'Prescription Book' in which previous surgeons had written their prescriptions.

Having completed discharging our cargo at the terminal port - Yokohama - we started loading for home. We first called at Idzuhara on the island of Tsu-Shima near where, only five years before, the Japanese fleet under Admiral Togo had defeated the Russians. Our next port of call was Wei-Hai-Wei. Again off the beaten track, it was a summer resort for the British China Fleet. This port was often ice-bound in winter so the Fleet departed leaving only a care and maintenance party and a detachment of Marines. We arrived in February when the port was just open. We proceeded from Wei-Hai-Wei to Shanghai where we loaded a shipment of fish oil. I well remember this because we were very short of oil for mixing paint. The old Cassab and I discussed the situation at great length, and then we broached a case of fish oil telling ourselves that it was all to make *'the Jahaz'* look *'Bahut Acha'*. Unfortunately it did not work out that way. Paint mixed with fish oil just would not dry. It did not matter how much turps or driers we used, it just would not dry! Luckily we were in Colombo with one of the Company's ships and they let us have some oil from their stores.

During the voyage I had become very friendly with the engineers and I conceived the idea of taking the Board of Trade Examination which, if I was successful, meant having my certificate endorsed 'Passed in Steam'. The idea was that a deck officer would benefit by knowing a little of how the wheels go round down

below. Consequently I borrowed a text book during the voyage and with visits to the engine room mugged up on the subject. The examination was part written and part oral. The day we arrived back in London I went up to the examination rooms and paid my guinea fee to sit the following Monday. I scraped through the written papers and the examiner then told me to meet him in the docks at the gangway of a Canadian Pacific steamer, one of the *'Monts'*. He said, *"We will go below and see what you know."* I was at the gangway in good time and walked along to the ship's stern. What worried me was that a candidate was supposed to be able to stop and start the ship's engines. I need not have worried: there were so many lighters and barges under her counter that you could not have moved the engines. The examiner arrived, we each donned a boiler suit, and he gave me a doing over, but I received a pass.

Soon after this I left the old **Ceylon**. I stayed with the P. & O. until May 1914 when I left to do my twelve months' R.N.R. training in the Navy which in fact was to run to five years by the time the war had finished. My last ship in 1914 was the crack Australian mail steamer **Moldavia** of which I was second officer. She was a fine ship and a happy one in which we took a great pride.

Looking back I think I was happier in the old **Ceylon**, seated on a paint drum yarning with the Serang and the Cassab and discussing how we could make the old ship look *'Bahut Acha'*. |||||

AND FINALLY..... A FOND FAREWELL

After seven years as Editor and thirty-three 'Bulletins' amounting to 1,386 pages, it's time for a break. I'm standing down as Editor after this issue. It's been great fun but also a lot of hard work.

I'm off on my travels for a year while I'm still young enough (?) I should like to stand on top of Table Mountain just one more time, visit friends in Australia and Canada, and have a holiday in New Zealand.

I should like to thank everybody who has contributed in any way to 'The Bulletin' over the past seven years. Special thanks go to proof-readers Graeme Cubbin and Alan McClelland who have meticulously gone through each edition and weeded out my errors of spelling, punctuation, grammar, syntax etc .... Those of you with computer screens will know what I mean when I say that the more you stare at the screen, the more you see what you want to see, and not what is actually on the screen!

I wish my successor well, and feel sure that, like the Serang of the **Ceylon**, he will make every effort to keep 'The Bulletin' *Bahut Acha*.

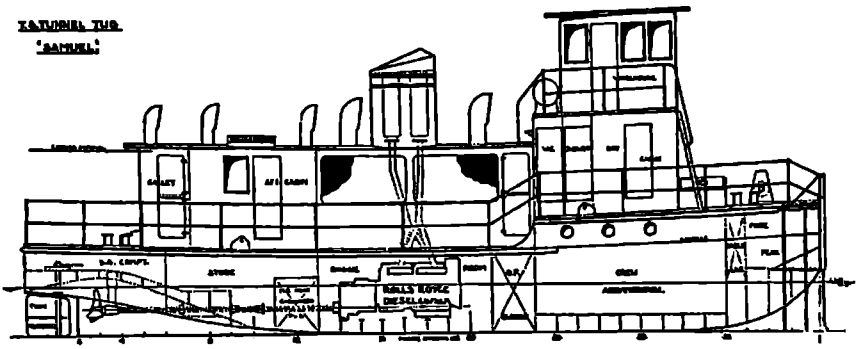
John Shepherd,
May, 2003.

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

THE BULLETIN

Volume ~~46~~ 47, Number ~~3~~ 2 September 2003



THE COUNCIL OF THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

Memberships and General Correspondence
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society, Maritime Archives and Library
Merseyside Maritime Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool L3 4AA, UK.

Bulletin Editor
Antony Barratt, 24 Cross Green Upton by Chester, Chester
CH2 1QR, UK (Email tony.barratt@btopenworld.com)

Items for inclusion in future editions of the Bulletin can be E-mailed to the Editor or sent to the above address

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Front Cover
The pusher tug **Samuel** built by Pimblott at Northwich in 1959 for the Booth Line. Length 55ft beam 15ft, speed of 10 knots, when pushing two 100 ton barges, on the 14 day round voyage between Iquitos and Pucillpa, in Peru She was transported to the mouth of the Amazon on board the **Hubert**.

All photographs in this edition are from the Editor's collection
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Letter *from* the Editor

Thank you John! I promise to try and keep *The Bulletin* "Bahut Acha", and best wishes to you on your travels.

John has certainly set a high standard to follow and I hope that I will become a worthy successor as Editor of *The Bulletin*. I am indeed fortunate in inheriting an experienced team of proofreaders, who may well be kept busy, as I do not come from a maritime background. Unlike John I am fortunate in having been given a supporting team to deal with the actual dispatch of *The Bulletin*.

Since being proposed as Editor I have been asked several times, "Which way I want to take *The Bulletin*". Personally I think this is a question for the membership to answer, and I would welcome views, verbal, or by email and letter. Initially I feel my guiding principles should be the Society's Objects as set out in our Constitution and especially, to encourage an interest in the history of shipping (particularly local shipping) and to survey Liverpool vessels, their builders, owners and masters.

Perhaps we could also cover some of the port related industries such as stevedoring, ship-repairing etc. At the Society's inaugural meeting, in 1938, areas worthy of consideration even included maritime monuments and stained glass!

I fully accept that like the port itself we must look outwards and therefore some items from a wider sphere would also seem appropriate. I am also aware that many of the current members of the Society have watched the revolution in merchant shipping, from the inside, and I feel that it is important that those experiences are recorded, not to mention the now lost forms of trading and maritime practices.

One feature that I would like to see is a brief summary of today's events relating to the port and its companies over the previous quarter say a page or two per issue. It is all too easy to forget that today's news is tomorrow's history. Living as I do on the fringe of Merseyside I would welcome the assistance of any locals with an ear closer to the ground than mine, to help with this.

So may I end this letter with a plea, for comments on what you would like to see included and equally as important items for inclusion in future issues. Articles of any size are wanted, although, if over say 3500 words these will probably have to split between issues. Shorter articles and snippets are equally welcome.

Antony Barratt,
Sept 2003

THE WINTER'S SALE

By L.N.R.S member Graeme Cubbin

A sad sale's best for winter.
I have one of models and paintin 's.
(With apologies to William Shakespeare.)

There is something about the word "Sale" that arouses the acquisitive streak in all of us, whether it be a Closing Down Sale in the local High Street, or a Car Boot Sale in a farmer's field. But this was a Closing Down Sale with a difference. The official Catalogue, when it came out in December, was mouth-watering in its appeal. Published by Bonhams, the London auctioneers, it announced the Sale of the Harrison Line Collection due to take place at their New Bond Street Showrooms on Tuesday, 21st January 2003. There followed page after page of illustrations in glossy colour of ship models, paintings, brass bells and nautical instruments, all designed to stiffen the resolve of the most timid bidder.

The Harrison Line of Liverpool had finally ceased trading in October 2000. The process of disintegration had been gradual but remorseless, with offices and agencies closing down all over the country, and overseas. Precious artefacts which had graced those premises for many years - ship models, and paintings by distinguished artists - had been jealously guarded, collected, and transported to Mersey Chambers, Harrison's Liverpool headquarters, for safekeeping. But that building was soon to be put up for sale, and in November 2002 the place was evacuated. Meanwhile, the removal men had moved in and stripped it bare. A team from Bonhams had collected all items of value and transported them to London, destined for sale by auction, while another team from the Merseyside Maritime Museum had assembled all records, photographs, and archive material, stowed the lot in about 130 boxes, and delivered them to the Archive and Library store at the Albert Dock.

It did not take long for Captain Mike Jones and I to decide that, come what may, we would be at that London Sale, if only to ensure that the familiar tokens and totems of our years of employment with Thos. & Jas. Harrison went to good homes. We boarded a mid-morning train from Liverpool on the Monday, arriving at Euston in good time to nip over to Bonhams for a preview.

It was probably the first and only time that anyone had ever seen all the paintings and models displayed in one place, and the sight was impressive. Rows of paintings lined the walls; ranks of models in glass

cases covered all available floor space. It was a Harrison Line moment of sunset glory, better seen than described.

We took the opportunity to register officially as bidders, then travelled across town to Charing Cross Station to entrain for Wadhurst, where old friends had kindly offered us a night's lodging.

Next morning, we were up betimes, and, accompanied by our host, returned to Bonhams to find the place seething with humanity. Attendance had far exceeded our auctioneers' expectations, and the start of the sale was delayed while they adapted another room with a video link for the overflow. Everyone was in high good humour, and old friends greeted each other with acclaim. I was utterly bewildered by the stream of venerable seafarers who were eager to re-introduce themselves, having sailed with me in some ship or other some 30 or 50 years ago! And this, the ultimate sale of Harrison Line treasures had brought us all together!

The bidding, once started, was, as they say, brisk. Lot after lot came under the hammer, and prices escalated rapidly, taking those modest items which I fancied soon out of reach. The fleet of 34 models went first, fetching some 2 to 3 times the reserve price. Lot 9, a Builder's model to scale 1:96 of MV **Interpreter** (1948), reserved at £3,000, went to its new owner on a bid of £9,200! After the models came a stream of brass bells, clocks, and nautical instruments. One elderly bidder, whose father had been master of the SS **Novelist** during the War, would have liked Lot 6, a model of that ship (which fetched £6,200). But it was too big for his north London flat, so he was determined at least to claim the ship's wheelhouse bell, with its elaborate sennit-worked lanyard. His determination boosted the price to £900 - three times its reserve - but he was delighted with his success! In fact, he was typical of the majority of bidders; most of whom had a personal or family connection with the firm, and dearly wanted a souvenir while memories of those bygone days were still fresh.

Next under the hammer was the picture Collection. This included ship-portraits by the 19th Century masters, Joseph Heard, the Walters, and W.K.McMinn. However, some of these did not attain their five-figure reserve price, and were withdrawn to fight another day. However, paintings by modern artists - Colin Verity, Robert Lloyd, John Stobart, Arthur Burgess and Gordon Ellis - were in great demand, and in most cases achieved three or four times their reserve price. Lot 203, a nostalgic composition by John Stobart of MV **Governor** (1952) anchored in Carlisle Bay, Barbados, realised £7,500 - more than ten times its reserve price!

And so the day wore on. Lunch was tacitly ignored while the 230 or so lots (of which only eight were withdrawn) were steadily disposed of, reaching a total of over £460,000 (of which some £80,000 would be shared between the auction house and the Treasury). Weird and wonderful were some of the bids: £120 for a clutch of washer-like dockers' tokens strung on a strand of old baling wire; a sea-ravaged panel from a case of Scotch whisky salvaged from the wreck of the ill-fated SS **Politician** - mounted in a frame, it is true - was sold for £1,300; while a faded receipt issued by the commander of the **Graf Spee** to the master of the **Huntsman** for his ship before it was looted and sunk, fetched £950. But these items meant something to the purchasers. Their links with history were profound or personal, and doubtless they would in time acquire the status of family heirlooms, perhaps destined to tease the curiosity of viewers of some distant *Antiques Roadshow*.

Of course, it soon became apparent that observers (like me) had to exercise care, and sit rigidly in our seats, as the slightest gesture, or least fleeting eye contact could raise the bidding by several hundred pounds! It was a hazardous place to be in that respect. Successful bidders, too, had to be sure they had the necessary funds available, for, having congratulated themselves on the success of their bids, they would then find as much as 25 - 35% added to their bill to cover VAT and the auctioneer's commission!

The Sale excited comment from local and national press correspondents.

For example, Clare Stewart, in THE TIMES:

> "*Anyone nostalgic for the days when Britain ruled the sea-lanes will be interested in the unique archive of the Harrison Line, one of Britain's oldest shipping lines. They [the models] are a microcosm of British shipping history, ranging from coasters to container-liners* ".

Anne Crane, in the ANTIQUES TRADE GAZETTE:

> "*A slice of Liverpool's celebrated maritime history was under the hammer... people who had worked for, or were associated with the Company, turned out in force to buy a memento... many coming from Merseyside and the North*".

Chris Proudlove, in the LIVERPOOL DAILY POST:

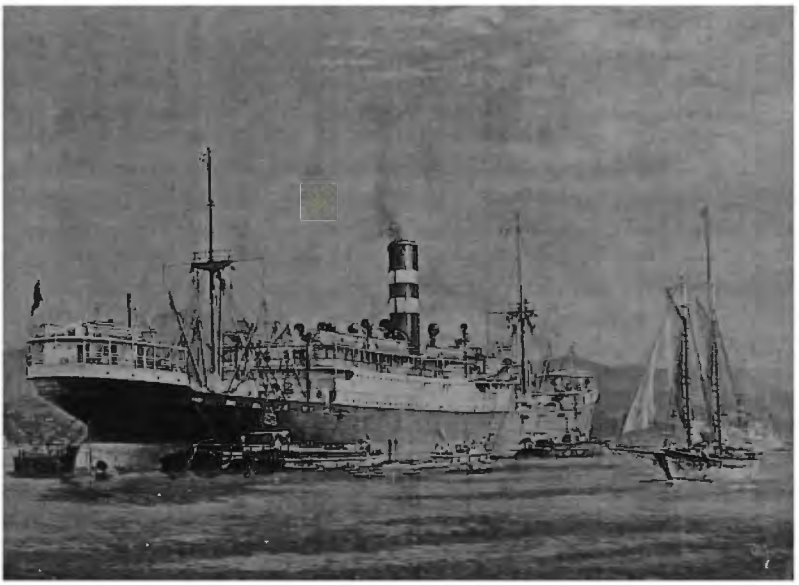
> "*... any [painting]... in the Harrison Line Collection... would do [me] nicely... but with champagne taste and beer pocket money, most are out of my reach. But again ... I'm sorely tempted...* "

Emma Johnson, in the LIVERPOOL ECHO:

> "*It is no surprise that the auction raised such an interest - the history of the line is a fascinating one.*"

Thus the Company's treasures, amassed over a period of 170 years, came to be dispersed throughout the land, and possibly overseas. Fortunately for the peace of mind of future maritime historians, the Company's records and archives, as noted above, were collected en masse by a team from the Merseyside Maritime Museum's Archives and Library Department, to be kept in perpetuity by that organisation for the enlightenment and instruction of future generations of students of maritime history. For it is all there: -

> Vessels' voyages and Movement Books; performance of machinery and fuel consumption; details of Deck and Engineer Officers' careers; personal accident and sickness reports; stevedores' records of cargoes loaded and unloaded; detailed cargo plans; leather-bound accounts ledgers and minute books; summaries of case law; casualty and disaster files; ships' plans and profiles, many hand-drawn in leather-bound tomes; trade statistics; insurance claims; diaries and shipmasters' reports; crew lists and wage structures - even a dreaded "Black Book" of misdemeanours; and photographs – literally hundreds of photographs - loose and in albums.



A typical example of a Harrison painting, this is the **Inanda** 1925/5985gt, built by Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson. Sunk in London docks in 1940 she was raised and renamed **Empire Explorer** only to be lost in 1942,

Dawn Littler, the Museum's Archivist, quoted in the LIVERPOOL ECHO, says;

> "... *this is a great opportunity for us, and it is very kind of [the Company] to donate this archive intact. Harrison's was a very well loved company in Liverpool, and I think there will be a lot of interest in this archive. Shipping historians will be keen to see these artefacts, as will people, who worked for the Line, and their relatives. It completes our collection [of Liverpool Shipping Company records]. It is a very good collection... and it is now that the work really begins* ".

The task of classifying and cataloguing the Collection with the Department's customary attention to detail, would, it was estimated, take about two years.

However, it is hugely satisfying to know that these unique documents are now in safe and caring hands, and that the history of a famous old family shipping company will not be lost to posterity.

LONG-LIVED WOOD

The following is an un attributed extract from an article which was found as a cutting pasted inside a copy of an 1886 Lloyd's Register which had been in the ownership of Captain E. A. Woods, a founder-member of the L.N.R.S The extract dates from 1925.

Modern ships built of iron or steel are not so long-lived as timber-built vessels, and, in the Baltic there is to be found quite a number of small wooden vessels in use, of which the oldest, the **Constance**, was built in 1723, and is thus 202 years old. Sweden has a ship called the **Emanuel**, built in 1749. which began as a pirate, but now is engaged in carrying timber. She has been owned by the same family for nearly a century. In 1917 there was sold at Cardiff the fine old vessel **Good Intent**. She is a ketch of about 22 tons burden, and was built at Plymouth in 1790. In spite of her great age she fetched £200, which works out at the very respectable figure of £8 per ton [sic]. Another very old ship that was at work a few years ago, and may still be afloat, is the **Seal**, which was built at Southampton in 1810. In 1823 she was caught in a tremendous storm off Poole and driven ashore right up into a turnip field. She was launched again, and the last that was heard of her was that she was sailing from Bideford, Devon, for Durban in South Africa, a voyage of six thousand miles. But all the vessels mentioned are babies compared with the Italian ship **Anita**, which was broken up at Genoa [early in the 20th. century]. She was built in the days of Queen Elizabeth and for well over three centuries, sailed the world's seas. She was not only the oldest but the slowest ship in existence. No wonder, for her hull was of oak twelve inches thick.

CAPTAIN H. W. WILKINSON, MASTER MARINER

Captain Harold Wilkinson's sea going career included working on the China Coast in the 1930s and for the Straits SS Company from 1939. This extract records his wartime experiences and includes some material not contained in official histories. It was compiled from the verbal recollections of Captain Wilkinson as told to M A Savage and P E Threadingham , who have consented to its publication

The Japanese Invasion

At the time of the Japanese invasion of Malaya Harold was attached to the **Kinta** anchored in Singapore Roads. On 8 December 1941 the day that Singapore was bombed for the first time he was seconded as Chief Officer or First Lieutenant in RN parlance) to HMS **Pangkor** a Straits Steamship Company twin-screw motor ship of 1,250 tons taken over as an Auxiliary Patrol Vessel. (Built in 1920, she was taken over on 25 September 1939 continuing with cargo-carrying, with some patrol work. These requisitioned vessels were known as "East Indiamen": passengers were required to sign indemnity forms). She continued in naval service until May 1946. She had a 4-in. gun forward with a Malay gun crew and was fitted with ASDIC (carrying three RN operators) and depth charges. During trials the ship was almost too slow to get out of the way of her own depth charges and firings frequently shattered some of her fittings. An RNVR Lieutenant and a Sub-Lieutenant took charge of gunnery and signals and there were Malay telegraphists and signalmen.

The ship was at Seletar Naval Base and Harold was lent a company car and chauffeur to get there. He was met at the gate of the naval base by a naval officer and they drove past HMS **Repulse** and HMS **Prince of Wales** before reaching the **Pangkor.** Harold had never seen, or indeed imagined, ships of such size and has recorded his feeling of pride and satisfaction at their enormous bulks towering over the surrounding buildings and that such vessels were indeed here to our aid.

While on board HMS **Pangkor** Harold served as a naval officer (RNR). The ship sailed for Penang as soon as he was on board, without even time to go to his cabin before going forward for getting under way.

At Penang, Captain Sutherland and the two RNVR officers were ashore when the first air raid took place on Glugor, the airfield near the southern end of the island. The ship was cleared for action but fortunately it was not necessary to use the gun as it was later found that the gun's crew had loaded the gun with the wooden drill round that they had used so often before. (As far as Harold remembers, there were only four live rounds on board two AP and two HE.)

They embarked prefabricated wooden buildings, a senior officer from each of the three services and a doctor and sailed for Nancowry in the Nicobar Islands, which was to be surveyed as a possible secret advanced base. Anchored there was one of Jardine Matheson's large river vessels which was used as a base ship. **Pangkor**'s cargo and passengers were landed by lifeboats and rafts and almost all her fresh water was transferred to the base vessel.

On the return voyage to Singapore the ship was entering the northern end of the Malacca Straits when she was diverted to Penang. She berthed at Swettenham Pier at dusk just as all other vessels were sailing. The available vessels of the local naval defence sailed for Singapore during the evening of 17th December carrying the garrison and British civilian residents. It was then learnt that the island was to be abandoned and that **Pangkor** would be the last ship to leave.

For the next few hours feverish activity prevailed. Anyone who wanted to come could - men, women and children of all races. Navy, RAF and the army with their weapons and stores (including the NOIC Penang and some crew members from the **Repulse** and **Prince of Wales** who had been operating the two Penang ferries - **Bagan** and **Tanjong**). *We* replenished our supply of fresh water and Harold rigged slip-ropes ready for departure. When *we* sailed shortly after midnight the pier was deserted. There were some hundreds of people on board. Penang appeared doomed; the night was lit by many fires from burning bombed buildings. It was reckoned that the Japanese were then near, or at, Butterworth, so maybe it was the very dark night with light drizzle, which helped prevent detection.

The ship had a Penang Pilot on board and as she passed through the South Channel where all lights on buoys and beacons had been extinguished, a lamp signal SOS was received from one of the Penang ferryboats (**Tanjong**). She had left earlier under the charge of some of our Company's deck and engineer officers and some Naval personnel, with about 300 passengers. She had broken down and was listing rather badly. **Pangkor** was manoeuvred alongside and everyone taken on board. *We* left the ferry a blazing wreck after firing two of our precious shells at her. The first round was semi- armour piercing and went straight through, but the next was HE. No doubt she sank.

Later in the morning *we* came upon another ferryboat and *we* went alongside and took off about 300 passengers. This ferry, the **Bagan** continued to Port Swettenham and then on to Singapore but was lost in the Pelambang River in Sumatra.

The water taken on board at Penang was never used as it was thought that it might have been contaminated by dead bodies in the

reservoir. The ship had one double-bottom tank with water for topping-up the diesel engine cooling water and a hand pump was used to draw water from this tank straight into any drinking vessel each individual could find - cup, cigarette tin or whatever.

Pangkor arrived at Singapore late the following night and berthed at the Singapore Harbour Board wharf. There was one naval Lieutenant who lay in Harold's bunk for the whole of the day and a half passage to Singapore who uttered scarcely a word the whole time and was perhaps mentally disturbed.

The passengers were landed at Singapore and Harold left the **Pangkor**, having been relieved by W E Steele as First Lieutenant. The ship later did good work collecting refugees and escapees on the west coast of Sumatra.

Harold was employed for a few days in HMS **Lipis**, which had arrived shot up from Sarawak, and in HMS **Kudat**. He joined the **Krian** (ceasing to be a naval officer!) and made a voyage to Port Swettenham, where they experienced the first air-raid on that port. **Krian** received some damage and five of the crew were injured. The ship embarked civilian Japanese internees and returned to Singapore where Harold joined the **Angby**, which sailed to Port Dickson, loaded bales of rubber and some RAF equipment, and then returned to Singapore.

[Note: - HMS **Kudat** was bombed in Klang *(sic)* Strait, near Port Swettenham, on 30 December, set on fire and sunk. **Krian** sailed from Clifford Pier on about 5 February, called at Pulau Moro to dump supplies for an escape route and thence via Tandjong Priok, Batavia to Ceylon. HMS **Lipis** sailed from Singapore on the 11/12 February with 300 passengers. She was caught by enemy bombers off Sultan Sands, set on fire and abandoned. Singapore surrendered on 15 February.]

India

Harold joined the **Pahang** (Captain G Paterson, Mr. W Tait, Chief Engineer) on 5 January 1942. **Pahang**, 1,494 tons and about 215 feet long, was the latest Straits Steamship Company ship, built in Hong Kong in 1939 and normally carried only dry cargo - about 800 tons - and passengers. She sailed on 9 January with a full complement of 24 First Class, 12 Second Class, and between 200 to 300 deck passengers and a cargo of baled cotton from a captured Japanese ship. A lifeboat drill initiated by sounding the siren was less than successful as the deck passengers panicked.

The ship was routed through the Sunda Strait between West Java and Southern Sumatra, near the volcano of Krakatoa. Before reaching the Strait, Harold was on watch at night when he sighted five warships

in line-ahead, heading north (possibly Dutch destroyers). Thereafter she travelled half way across the Indian Ocean before heading for Madras where we were quite unexpected and, from what we heard later, "almost on the point of being blown out of the water by the shore batteries". She arrived on 21 January.

With the fall of Singapore the **Pahang** came under the management of the British India Steam Navigation Company. She was sent up the coast to the Hooghly River and Calcutta and was employed on several voyages carrying coal from Calcutta to Madras, which was considered very infra dig for the pride of the company's fleet.

When the **Pahang** left Calcutta for the last time under the control of Captain Sidebottom, the Hooghly pilot, she was stopped at the pilot station because a Japanese fleet had come across the Indian Ocean and swept up the east coast of India. (The first sinking was made by air attack on 5 April and sailings from Calcutta were cancelled on 6 April 1942. On that day small air raids were made on Vizagapatnam and Cocanada, north of Madras, and Japanese aircraft and surface ships sank 18 merchant ships of more than 93,000 tons in the Bay of Bengal.)

The **Pahang** returned up river and berthed at Garden Reach. Some of the officers went to an army-training base at Dum Dum by coach where they were given some gunnery instruction and invited to go clay pigeon shooting.

The **Pahang** sailed armed with a Lewis gun and one soldier to fire it. She was finally routed down the centre of the Bay of Bengal and passed 300 miles from Ceylon before reaching Cochin where HMS **Kedah was** waiting for replacements for her burst boiler tubes. **Kedah** had used river water in her boilers. One set of replacement tubes had been lost on the way, but her boilers were repaired eventually. She was the first of the Straits Steamship Company's fleet to return to Singapore, on 5 September 1945 carrying the Rear-Admiral, Malaya (designate), senior members of the British Military Administration and the Chairman of the Singapore Harbour Board.

Pahang continued on to Bombay where Harold noticed a number of small Dutch vessels swinging idly at anchor. At Bombay **Pahang** 's holds were fitted to carry cased petrol. The Singapore Chinese and Malay crew refused to go any further than Bombay and were replaced by a most excellent Indian crew. The catering staff were mainly Goanese from the British India Company: hence the Chief Steward was known as "The Butler" and Captain Paterson was heard to boast that he was the only member of the Paterson family with his own butler.

The Persian Gulf and the Red Sea

The **Pahang** left Bombay on 4 June 1942. Passing HMS **Pangkor** at the entrance to the Persian Gulf, she went up the Shatt al Arab to embark petrol. Harold's brother Leslie was a hydrographic surveyor working for the Iraq government based at Faw. He brought his launch alongside **Pahang** at Abadan. The ship took a full cargo of cased (4-gallon tins) 100 octane to Port Sudan and from there to the headland of Ras Gulhan (Ras Qui'an Cove is at 24° 17N, 35° 22E), where an airstrip was used as a staging post for American planes. They had to travel close inshore using a chart in French borrowed from the local sheik. Captain Paterson later gave Harold's copy of the chart to the naval authorities at Port Said and they were sufficiently impressed to offer Harold a job in the Hydrographic Department. **Pahang** remained there for a few days anchored in the centre of a circular reef with one gap in it. For a few weeks the ship made various trips in the Red Sea taking 100 octane and 80 octane to different points, once to the Gulf of Aqaba and also to an inlet on the Eastern side of the Arabian Sea which was rather like a desert version of a fjord.

Later **Pahang** was sent through the Suez Canal to Port Said on 12 August 1942 (A British plane patrolled the canal each day to destroy any magnetic mines dropped by the Germans - the plane had a large magnetic loop under it.) The RAF had barrage balloons, with an explosive device attached to each cable, along the length of the canal. One of these had lost its gas and this dangerous paraphernalia was draped across the canal where it hit the steel jack staff of the **Pahang.** Harold called for some tools but the only thing they could find immediately was a chipping hammer. In desperation he took a number of swipes at the wire as it scraped along the jackstaff and finally succeeded in cutting it before the explosive charge reached the ship

The Mediterranean and Petrol for the Eighth Army

Harold did not like Port Said, much preferring Alexandria when the ship reached there. He recalls sitting outside a hotel in Port Said with an orchestra playing and an ornamental pool nearby. Some men from the RAF were sitting dangling their feet in the pool, still wearing their long stockings. One of them removed his wet stockings and, whirling them round his head, succeeded in landing the wet stockings round the neck of a player in the orchestra. A Third Officer WRNS was as high as a kite and insisted that everyone called her Bubbles.

Eventually **Pahang** reached Alexandria where the harbour was almost deserted of shipping. The fleet had left, leaving as the only sizeable ships in the harbour the battleship HMS **Queen Elizabeth** (in

the floating dry dock) and a Glen Line vessel (under repair). To us it appeared that all British forces were getting out in a hurry. At this time Rommel's army was only some sixty miles from the city. **Pahang** went in to the inner harbour to the Arsenal Basin where she waited at one hour's notice to move and there were numerous air-raids. Meanwhile the officers received instruction from the RAF on the use of small arms and on the making of Molotov cocktails. When we, as Merchant Navy officers, inquired into the purpose of this, we were told that if the enemy entered Alexandria we were to climb up onto buildings and throw the 'cocktails' on the tanks passing below. We did not think much of this bright idea, and naturally wondered what the army was doing. Also we had our ship to take care of. Fortunately it never came to pass that we had to attempt such dire deeds of valour.

The Chief Officer left while the ship was at Alexandria and Harold was promoted in his place. As no junior Merchant Navy officers were available, two RNVR sub-lieutenants joined in lieu (Laurie Barr and John Thacker). **Pahang** was fitted with Oerlikon and machine guns, crewed by naval DEMS ratings, as her task was to be to carry petrol for the Eighth Army and the RAF as they advanced along the North African coast. **Sofala,** a British India ship of similar size and **Pahang** were the only ships carrying petrol in the early stages.

After the battle of Alamein (the breakout was on 4 November) the first supply run was to Bardia: again the cliffs on either side were reminiscent of a journey through the Norwegian fjords, but dry and rocky. Landing craft came alongside when the ship had anchored and the petrol tins (known as flimsies) were off-loaded into them and taken to the beach. **Sofala** continued to Benghazi, where she arrived four days after it fell, i.e. about 20 November.

Usually we had a good naval escort of corvettes or motor launches, and mostly we had air cover. We always followed the escort leader, following the coastline in never more than eighteen feet of water on account of submarines. First to Bardia; then Tobruk, then Benghazi and Tripoli. They sometimes left Alexandria with a barrage balloon attached to the stern with the inevitable explosive device on the cable. These balloons were supplied and installed by the RAF but no instructions were provided. Harold cut the wire on his before entering harbour to get rid of it.

The escorting motor launches carried depth charges and often berthed alongside in the harbour and used the ship's washing facilities. Built for the Far East, **Pahang** had very large water tanks.

Carrying petrol to Benghazi, **Pahang** was following the escorting corvette. Harold was on watch, admiring the golden domes of the

Roman Catholic cathedral shining in the evening sunlight. He noticed the corvette sail on as he made the 110° turn to port and so he called her with the Aldis lamp and she eventually followed into Benghazi. Once the British forces were established at Tobruk that port became our loading point, the petrol having been brought overland. More small ships joined until usually about six formed our little convoy, most carrying high-octane or AGO (Automotive Gas Oil) for tanks, or ammunition. The AGO was carried in 44-gallon drums and landed in DUKWs.

Harold has described the fear and horror of enemy air-raids and submarine attacks; the almost unbearable tension and strained nerves in the early days in the Mediterranean, when I believe even the Naval escorts had one trip off in three, whilst we had to carry on, knowing it may have needed only one hot splinter to set the high octane off.

On one occasion a landing craft commanded by an RNVR comedian (an actor on the London stage in civilian life) attempted to come alongside with one of his three engines unserviceable. He started his run from way out to sea but still missed the **Pahang** by 200 feet.

One of the RNVR sub-lieutenants on the **Pahang** was seen in a bar (Mary's House) in Alexandria, sticking a revolver into the ribs of a full blown RN captain because of indiscreet talk. He returned on board later and hid for days.

In Tobruk, Harold and other crew members were taken by jeep to a cinema show in a large barn-like building where they found a crowd of matelots and squaddies sitting on the ground. Unfortunately a large squashed spider about the size of a human head covered the heroine's face for the most romantic part of the film. When she put a plate of food down before kissing the hero a ravenous squaddy shouted out "Eat the bloody duck first".

Being attached to the Eighth Army, the ship received General Montgomery's orders, including the instructions that soldiers were not to be called "Pongoes", that everyone was to stand for the Egyptian national anthem, and that thieving must stop as losses on the current scale would lose the war. They were also discouraged from singing some of the popular ditties of the day, such as "Queen Farida's not so gay, now she's in the family way". However, the crew were not averse to a bit of pilfering and managed to carry a statue of the Virgin Mary on board. (Harold told them they would be shot!).

It was essential not to lose electric power in **Pahang** at sea as the steering gear was electrically driven. On one occasion when in convoy, in darkness, we could hear the enemy aircraft trying to find us when a generator fault sent a terrific shower of sparks flying out of the exhaust,

lighting the funnel like a Christmas display. The Third Engineer hastily climbed up the funnel and put his helmet over the exhaust until another generator could be started and the offending one stopped. However, enemy aircraft must have spotted the sparks and dropped bombs, one of which hit the **Hermelin**, a Norwegian ship immediately astern, causing damage to her hull and bridge structure

Harold has recorded his recollection of climbing into the gun-pit with the efficacious but rather feeble, "don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes", received with bursting, hilarious laughter forced out of the tense and nervous gun crew. We were all scared, often almost to the point of sickness, with the Why? Why? pounding in one's brain. The thunderous crash of near-miss bombs, the violent shuddering, shaking and jumping of the ship; the roar and thumps of the barrage and our own guns. For a time we lived in a world apart, then came back. We were lucky. The third officer lost his nerve during a heavy bombing raid running round the boat deck screaming until brought down by a rugby tackle and held down by two of us until calmer.

At Tobruk the **Pahang** berthed at a wharf (itself a sunken ship which had been levelled by the army to provide a flat platform) to load petrol which had been brought by railway from Alexandria. This railway had been blown up, and repaired, many times. She then moved alongside a much larger beached ship where she was partially hidden and had instructions not to use her guns. Moving across the harbour Harold looked down from the bows seeing the many unexploded bombs lying on the seabed, wondering if, when we let go the anchor, it would hit one and set it off. **Pahang** was not fitted with gas extractors and there was considerable leakage from the flimsy four-gallon tins of high-octane which could only be pumped out of the bilges by the electric pumps. The whole ship was saturated with petrol, we lived with the ever-pervading smell, and our food tasted of it. Towards the end, on arrival at a discharging point, all hatch covers were opened for some time to free the holds of gas; otherwise the men in the working parties became quite intoxicated and frequently unconscious. For some time we knew the end was coming, it had to.

Finally, in the early morning of 31 January 1943, **Pahang** had completed loading at Tobruk, the hatches were battened down, and they were still lying at the loading berth when the high-octane in the after hold exploded into flame and within a few minutes **Pahang** was ablaze with flames some hundreds of feet high and bursting ammunition and rockets flying in all directions. Fortunately, because almost everyone was in bed, except the duty watch and the DEMS anti-sabotage guard, there were only very slight injuries among the crew. Standing on shore

we watched the masts, bridge and accommodation disintegrate and sink into the blazing hull, myself clad only in pyjama trousers, which had a most embarrassing split right down the back. Mr. Tait was also in his pyjamas but, much worse, he was without his spectacles. We were asked to flood the engine-room which was aft, so Mr. Tait and myself climbed aboard over the stern, went below and using his knowledge and my eyes, opened the necessary flooding valves. A tug was hitched on and **Pahang** was towed across the harbour and beached. Despite great efforts to subdue the fire the vessel was ablaze for 23 days before the fires burnt out. Harold lost everything he had on board: all his kit and many possessions, including all his certificates and discharge papers. The ship was later towed to Port Said and it is believed that she was taken on to Massawa and that there her superstructure was rebuilt; later running in the eastern Mediterranean for Levantine owners. It was said that **Pahang** was the 111th wreck at Tobruk.

On reporting to Navy House the crew were issued with 10 cigarettes each and were made to sign for them. They were sent to a supply depot and given complete outfits, each including a very superior quality New Zealand battledress. The sergeant said that the war would be over soon so there was no point in obtaining signatures for the uniforms. Captain Paterson and Mr. Tait remained at Tobruk for some time, and the former was awarded the MBE.

Within a few days it was by the somewhat rickety railway that Harold and the crew returned to Alexandria, this not being without thrills as the line was a favourite target for dive-bombing and strafing. The passengers included German and Italian prisoners and when the train stopped at a feeding station, one's neighbour in the food queue might be from any of the armies engaged in North Africa - Commonwealth, German or Italian. On arrival at Alexandria the officers were taken to an army camp and provided with a bell tent and one blanket each for the bitterly cold night but the next day the agent booked Harold in to a hotel. The RNVR officers were given an immediate payment of £150, later increased to £300, to compensate for their loss of possessions. However as a Merchant Navy officer, Harold was given less than £70 and this on condition that he joined another ship. His money was to replace about £250 worth of lost personal effects and equipment

The crew of the **Pahang** were sent back to India by the agents.

The agent for the Straits Steamship Company in Alexandria (Moss) was also agent for Jardine Matheson. Harold was offered the command of a Jardine Matheson ship but turned it down as he was not sure that he

would not be replaced; in any case he wanted to remain with the Straits Steamship Company. *(To be continued)*

'Kedah', the fastest Singapore ship of the 1930's.

Kedah 1927/2499gt built by Vickers at Barrow with a service speed of 18.5 knots the **Kedah** could carry 80 - 1st class and 960 deck passengers. Sold in 1946 to Palestine interests she was broken up in 1956

THE CAMPANIA AND VIBRATION.

The following is a paraphrase of an anecdote related by Sir W.B. Forwood in his book 'Recollections of a Busy Life

The **Campania** was launched in September 1892 by the Fairfield Shipbuilding Co. on the Clyde and commenced her trials in April 1893. While undergoing her initial engine trials she vibrated so violently that some stanchions broke and deck plates split. Sir William Thompson (later Lord Kelvin) the renowned physicist was asked by Cunard's Chairman to investigate the cause of the problem at further trials to be held on the Clyde.

After several days of trials the great physicist said that the vibrations would cease if the vessel was weighted down. Three thousand tons of coal were taken on board and she then set out on another trial carrying a large party of guests. At slow speed all was well but as she was put to full speed (while all the guests were below dining) the whole ship began to shake so violently from stem to stern that everyone quickly came on deck in alarm. The vessel then returned to port at very slow speed. Back in port the fault was diagnosed by an old Scotch engineer of Cunard. He thought that the pitch of the screws needed altering so that the vibrations of their revolutions were not in synchrony with the vibratory period of the ship. He was right

EARLY IRON STEAMBOATS BUILT BY LAIRDS, BIRKENHEAD.

By L.N.R.S Member Charles Dawson

An exciting piece of news about one of these early iron steamboats, PS **Mary Summers**, which was built by Lairds at Birkenhead as far back as 1838, has recently arrived from the USA. Her wreck has recently been discovered and positively identified - resting in the shallow waters of the Navidad River in Jackson County, Texas, a long way from her place of build. The comprehensive report on her finding recounts full details of her interesting life in various US waters. *[1]* Rebuilt, she became PS **United States** in 1851. She appears below in a survey of the earliest iron vessels built by Lairds.

The Scot William Laird who founded the famous Birkenhead shipbuilding firm that later became Cammell Laird & Co, was a pioneer in a number of aspects of shipbuilding, being one of the early advocates of iron as a material for ships hulls.

The first vessels in the material built by Laird & Son (William had by this time been joined by his son John) were small lighters 60' x 13' 4" x 6', 50 tons built in prefabricated "knock-down" construction for export to the Inland Steam Navigation Co of Ireland for use on the River Shannon. The first, given the Yard Designation A, was shipped in October 1829 and two more, with designations B and C, followed in 1832.

That same year, another of William's sons, MacGregor, basically with missionary aims, formed the African Inland Commercial Co. (AICC) of Liverpool and in 1832 built the iron PS. **Alburka**, 68' 6" x 13' 3" x 7', 35 tons burthen, with a 35 HP engine. *[2]* She was the first iron vessel to make a long ocean voyage, *[3]* which was to the River Niger, where she operated.

Laird ordered the similar, but larger PS. **Quorra**, 103' 8" x 16' 1" x 7'2", 83 tons burthen, with a 40 HP engine, from Seddon & Co of Birkenhead. She was also registered to the AICC, on 5 July 1832. *[4]* Both vessels were broken up at Fernando Po, in 1838 and 1841 respectively, *[5]* the venture by then apparently having become a commercial failure.

In 1833/4 Wm. Laird & Son built three more iron paddle steamers of prefabricated "knock-down" construction, most of them larger than their previous lighters. They were listed as Yard Nos. 1-3:

Yard No.1, **Lady Lansdowne**, parts shipped to Ireland in November 1833 and assembled as a vessel 133' x 17' x 9' 6", 148 tons, 90 HP engine, for service on the River Shannon. This was a service

inaugurated by the City of Dublin Steam Packet Co. with the aim of alleviating the rampant unemployment in Ireland at the time. [6]

Laird's expertise now spread across the Atlantic, the result being: Yard No. 2, **John Randolph**, for the shipowner there, of the Iron Steam Boat Co of Georgia, [7] Gazaway Bugg Lamar. She was shipped from Liverpool on 5 February 1834 by the barque **Alcyone**, (Captain Muir) and arrived Savannah 24 March. [8] Assembled at John Cant's shipyard in Savannah, Georgia, USA, [9] 110' x 22' x 7' 6", 249 tons with Fawcett, Preston, Liverpool, 60 HP engine.

Yard No. 3, **Garry Owen** was built to the order of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Co, and shipped September 1834, for service on the River Shannon, 130' x21' 6" x 9' 3", 263 tons, 90 HP engine.

Further vessels of "knock-down" construction, delivered later, were:

Chatham, Yard No. 6, 120' x 26' x 7' 6", 375 tons, 60 HP engine, built 1835, bought in 1836 by Lamar's rival company the Steamboat Co of Georgia. [10] Confusing information has appeared on her, usually of her being an East India Company vessel, probably owing to her seemingly English name, although there are many places called Chatham in the Eastern U.S.

Duncannon, Yard No. 8, for service on the Waterford River 115' x 19' x 9'9", 189 tons with a 65 HP engine, January 1837.

Lamar, apparently delighted with the **John Randolph**, appears to have ordered three further vessels, Laird Yard Nos. 12, 16 and 17, all of which were shipped in 1838:

Savannah, which was probably Laird's working name - she was christened **Lamar** when she arrived in the USA, 115' x 24' x 8', 308 tons with a 60 HP engine, and two vessels 115' x 25' x 7' 6", 332 tons, with 70 HP engines, unnamed on the Yard List (Nos. 16 and 17 marked only "for Savannah"), but presumably the ones named **Mary Summers** and **De Rosset** in the USA, not necessarily in that order. As built by Lairds, they measured 115' x 25' x7' 6", 332 tons 70 HP. The **Mary Summers** dimensions as measured from her wreck are shown as 114' 6" x 25' 4" x 7' 8". [11] The upper plates of her hull are of ¼" iron plates, 6-7' long x 2' wide, each iron plate overlapping its adjacent lower plate by two inches in a typical clinker-built fashion, and joined by a single row of rivets. The engine is missing.

Laird's reputation now spread eastwards to the East India Company, for we next find them shipping three iron paddle steamers, also of knock-down construction, for use on the Euphrates route to India:

Euphrates, Yard No. 4,105' x 19' x 7' 6", 179 tons with a 50 HP engine, in December 1834,

Tigris, Yard No. 5, 90' x16' x 6' 6", 109 tons with a 20 HP engine, in January 1835,

Indus, Yard No. 10, 115' x 24' x 8', 309 tons with a 60 HP engine, in 1837.

In May 1837, the iron PS **L'Egyptien**, Yard No. 9, 116' x 18' x 8', 188 tons, with a 45 HP engine. She made the long passage out from England to Alexandria and thence up the Nile. *[12]*

Whilst in October 1837 the iron PS **Rainbow**, Yard No. 11, 185' x 25' x 11' 9", 581 tons, with a 180 HP engine, then the largest iron ship, for the General Steam Navigation Co., London. Lairds invited Professor Airey Astronomer Royal to carry out tests on her regarding the problem of compass deviation in iron vessels.

In June 1838 iron yacht **Glow-worm**, Yard No. 13, 150' x 22' x 11' 6", 362 tons, 110 HP. She was built for Assheton Smith who had already in 1835 placed an order for such a vessel, but had been persuaded to have second thoughts about iron. *[13]*

On 7 July 1838 iron SS **Robert F. Stockton**, Yard No. 15, 63' 5" x 10' x 7', 33 tons, 30 NHP, for the Swedish engineer John Ericsson, to make a further test of his engine and screw propeller. She was called after Ericsson's main supporter, a prominent US naval man, who was also involved in politics. He undertook to establish a U.S. government of California after Mexico, its previous owner, having refused to sell it to the U.S., was forced by military means to annex it. *[14]* The **Robert F. Stockton** was tried first on the Mersey and then on the Thames. In January 1839, THE TIMES remarking that

> *"The evidence was quite conclusive as to the success of this important improvement in steam navigation".*

Further disappointment at the lack of Admiralty interest led Ericsson to leave England. On 13 April 1839 she left Gravesend under sail, with Ericsson's direct drive engine, the first practical example of the type, together with her propeller stowed in the hold, and reached New York after a stormy 46-day voyage. With her engine and propeller in place she was renamed **New Jersey** *[15]* and served on the Delaware River for some 25 years. Stockton himself was already back home early in 1839. Ericsson, disappointed by the lack of success of his partnership (with Braithwaite) in England, left the country for good on 25 November 1839 in the PS **British Queen** from London for New York, where he made his name and fortune.

Notes

[1]. THE AMERICAN NEPTUNE Spring 2002, (AN) page 163.
[2]. Public Record Office, (PRO) Ships Register BT107/211, Liverpool 1832/93,registered to the AICC on 5 July 1832.
[3]. D.Hollett, "Men of Iron", Birkenhead, 1992, page 3.
[4]. PRO, BT 107/211, Liverpool 1832/92.
[5]. Letter to H.R.Laird from West African Company dated 7 July 1842 found in LNRS archives by Mr. Harry M. Hignett on 9 Mar 1989.
[6]. Hollett, page 3.
[7]. A.N. page 166
[8]. Hollett, page 4.
[9]. A.N. page 167.
[10]. Ditto.
[11]. A.N. page 168.
[12]. Hollett, page 4.
[13]. Ditto.
[14]. "Mains'1 Haul", San Diego's Maritime Museum journal, Spring 1997, page 34, (per Mr. Harry M. Hignett).
[15] Kennedy,67.

THE DECLINE OF BRITISH SHIP-OPERATING SINCE 1965: THE CASE OF ELDER DEMPSTER AND THE OCEAN GROUP

A summary of the presentation given on 20th March 2003 by Prof P.N. Davies

The decline of the British mercantile marine in the post-war world is well known and has been keenly debated. It is generally agreed that this has been due to a combination of major factors which included the fall in the UK's share of world trade and the failure of its manufacturing sector to remain effective in global markets.

The lack of government support, problems with industrial relations and the additional costs of British crews and safety regulations also helped to reduce the competitive edge of British ship-owners.

Thus it proved to be difficult to cope with either those vessels sailing under Flags of Convenience or the highly efficient national carriers of Japan and Greece.

Another factor frequently thought to have been of considerable significance in the failure to compete with these operators was in respect of the calibre of British shipping entrepreneurs - this is an area in which this present paper hopes to make a useful contribution.

In the post war decades Elder Dempster continued to dominate the West African trade as it had done since the 19th Century.

Until 1965 it operated as an independent company but then became a wholly owned subsidiary of the Ocean Group and hereafter its fortunes were to be closely integrated with an organization which included both the Blue Funnel and Glen Lines. At that time the Group

had more than 100 deep-sea and other vessels in commission but by 1989, when the remains of Elder Dempster were sold to a French concern, Ocean no longer possessed any sea-going tonnage.

Initially Ocean's management made every effort for it to remain a maritime-based enterprise but these efforts not only proved unsuccessful but at one stage threatened its independence. Fortunately the Board recognised the need for a broader based entity and its entry into distribution and air forwarding proved to be profitable in the longer-term.

Thus today the Group continues in a strong financial position but has only a very small interest in maritime activities. With the benefit of hindsight it is clear that any other course of action would have been disastrous.

A typical Elder Dempster cargo vessel the **Dixcove** 1959/5905gt was built by Wm Gray & Co at Hartlepool. Sold in 1979 being renamed **Gulf Eagle** she was broken up in 1983

The last class, of six sisterships, to see service with Elder Dempster included the **Sokoto**, 1978/9145gt. Built in Poland she was sold in 1986 and wrecked in 1998

BOOK REVIEW

The Trade Makers: Elder Dempster in West Africa 1852-1972, 1973-1989 2nd Edition

Research in Maritime History No 19: St John's NF: International Maritime Economic History Association [www.mun.ca/mhp/imeha.htm] 2000

This reprint of Peter Davies's classic but long out of print history of Elder Dempster, with the addition of a new chapter covering the last years of the company between 1973 and 1989, will be widely welcomed by maritime and business historians. Elder Dempster was one of two great shipping lines which carried cargo between West Africa, the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe. The original study was a major scholarly achievement. It was based on an extensive use of the company's archives and provided a sophisticated and rigorous account not only of this firm but also of the entire West African shipping business. The book included an extraordinarily useful appendix, which has remained a statistical goldmine for any researcher interested in this topic.

Although the preface to this new edition contains some corrections to the original text, the major addition is a new chapter dealing with events since 1973.

Davies ended the original volume with optimistic hopes for the future. The West African trade still seemed to be growing, while in 1965 Elder Dempster had become a wholly owned subsidiary of the Ocean Group. Ocean, a majority shareholder since 1936 also owned another pillar of British shipping, the Blue Funnel Line, which traded between Europe and East Asia. In practice the future turned out differently. Davies explores the changing shape of the West African shipping business during the oil boom of the 1970s, including the expansion of trade routes to North America, Japan and Saudi Arabia; the growth of competition from local firms; and the introduction of containerisation in the early 1980s. He also devotes considerable time to the overall strategy of the Ocean Group, including some ill-advised diversification into the bulk oil and ore shipping and the carriage of liquefied natural gas. Davies tracks how the share of maritime business in Ocean's overall profits diminished to a mere ten percent by 1987. In 2000 Ocean merged with another company to form Excel, a global supply-chain business with no residual link to shipping.

In Davies's analysis, it was not the overall diversification strategy of Ocean which finally led to Elder Dempster's demise. He identifies some strategic failings, including being rather slow to containerise the West African trade and also allowing competitors to secure market share. It was the catastrophic state of West African economies, however, that emerges as the real problem. In particular, the collapse of the Nigerian oil boom after 1980 and the country's drift into near-bankruptcy lead to a sharp decline in both the level and quality of cargo carried by Elder Dempster, and a serious fall in freight rates. This was particularly unfortunate as Elder Dempster's shipping conference commitments required the provision of scheduled services irrespective of the freight offered. Various survival strategies were attempted including in 1984 the acquisition of the business of its sole British competitor, the Palm Line, formerly owned by the consumer-goods multinational Unilever, which was attempting to divest its large West African business. Yet the decline in revenues was acute, and in 1989 Ocean sold the deep-sea operations of Elder Dempster to the French firm Delma Vieljeux, which had formerly operated mainly in Francophone Africa.

In a wider perspective, Davies's book as a whole provides a compelling micro-level study in the rise, decline and demise of the British shipping industry. As he reminds his readers the British share of world tonnage was still 29% in 1939, but fell to 10% in 1975 and 3% in 1985. The key question is whether the decline was the "inevitable" result of the British economy after World War II - certainly other sectors which had serviced British trade such as merchant houses and overseas banks, underwent similar decline - or whether alternative strategies and organisational systems could have led to survival and renewal. In his exceptionally balanced narrative, Davies touches on the alternative strategies that Ocean might have followed to stay in shipping, only to conclude that its decision to diversify elsewhere was ultimately justified by the subsequent "excellent return to shareholders". This is an argument that will no doubt receive further examination as scholars turn their attention to other aspects of the story of the decline of British shipping.

The paperback edition of *The Trade Makers*, with its account of the last days of Elder Dempster is a book that every maritime and business historian will want on their personal bookshelves. GJ

THE PLEASURES AND PERILS OF LAIRDSIDE MARITIME CENTRE

By David Eccles and John Stokoe, L.N.R.S Chairman & Secretary

Had they known they were venturing out into an evening of such rapidly changing weather conditions in both the Mersey Estuary and the English Channel, it would have been perfectly excusable for those members who were visiting Lairdside Maritime Centre for the first time to have checked out the BBC Shipping Forecast for some reassurance. All told, 18 Members were fortunate to join in an evening of nautical mishap and mayhem back in early March this year.

Captain Peter Woods, Simulator Manager at the Centre and our host for the evening, got proceedings off to a fascinating and amusing start with a richly anecdotal introduction of what goes on at Lairdside. Apprenticeships in the various bridge based professions lasted merely minutes before the assembled motley crew was divided into three groups each being charged with the safe navigation and night passage of a cross channel ferry between Dover and Calais. During this 'real-time' two hour voyage the three teams were 'treated' to a succession of varied challenges aimed at bringing out both the best and worst in our virtual reality roles with sufficient ingredients to trigger either wilful disobedience or mutiny to the already beleaguered skippers in charge.

Take for instance some of the experiences of one crew as indicated in this log extract from the MV BERORO: -

> "Immediately after plotting his course the Captain departed Dover with a bridge crew of 4 personnel comprising two Mates and two lookouts. Having cleared the Dover breakwater a complete failure of the auto helm meant redeployment of one lookout to Helmsman duties. Extreme vigilance on the part of both Mates was essential in dealing with numerous crossing traffic, with radar playing a vital part during deteriorating visibility.
>
> Partway through the passage an incoming message relayed news that, whilst two ferries were proceeding to Calais, only one link span would be operational and available to the first vessel arriving. Subsequent progress was impeded when the 'man overboard' shout was heard calling for drastic response to this emergency. With additional help secured from an air-sea rescue helicopter and another passing vessel the voyage was resumed.
>
> Orders were given to the Helmsman to steer visually but, having totally misjudged the situation, the Fairway Buoy in the Calais approaches was unfortunately passed to the wrong side. This resulted in an urgent 180-degree turn so as to enter the buoyed

channel in the correct manner. Although the final course into harbour was being impeded by a blockade of French fishing boats this final and rather unorthodox manoeuvre had thwarted their attempts to halt the ferry. However, an inability to adjust to close range radar settings caused the Captain to decide against port entry without a Docking Pilot and as the link-span was occupied by another ferry our vessel lay off the Pier awaiting further instructions."

At the conclusion of proceedings our host was thanked most sincerely for his very kind invitation to Society members. At this point it was revealed that this was almost the end of yet another 14-hour working day for Peter. Maybe one or two of those fortunate to be present quietly envied him in his enthralling work at Lairdside!

SHIPBUILDING ON THE RIVER WEAVER

A summary of the findings given on 17th April by L.N.R.S member Antony Barratt on shipbuilding on the River Weaver.

Introduction

The River Weaver rises in the Peckforton Hills, to the southeast of Chester and flows through, Nantwich, Winsford, Northwich and Frodsham, where it joins the River Mersey. Shipbuilding has probably taken place on the tidal stretch around Frodsham, since time immemorial. But at Northwich and Winsford shipbuilding commenced around 1728. This followed the making of the Weaver navigable as far as Winsford, under an Act of 1721. Shipbuilding continued until 1974

Early shipbuilding was very different to the capital-intensive industry, which developed, in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A picture by John Constable of boat building near Flatford Mill in Suffolk was almost certainly similar to the scenes which would have been found on the Weaver. Portrayed is a barge under construction in a rough hollow shut off from the river by gates. A sawpit and a pitch boiler are the only signs of technology being applied to the task by the three men in the picture.

The very simplicity of the operation often means no records or evidence remains of the activities of such builders. It is claimed that around 1800 there may have been as many as 24 shipbuilding locations between Winsford & Northwich, a distance of about six miles. As different builders could have used the same locations at different times the number of builders could be considerably greater, than so far found.

The matter is further complicated by barge owners listing themselves as builders when in modern parlance they employed various shipwrights to act as sub-contractors.

Since first collecting data on Weaver built ships, in 1960, I have identified 55 different builders, on at least 24 sites. I feel confident in saying that many more remain to be found. Of the ships themselves I have currently identified about 2,480 vessels constructed (NB because of the many sources consulted there may be a small element of duplication).

In the 1730s 45-ton barges could reach Northwich with 38-ton barges reaching Winsford. With the constant improvements made to the Weaver, the size of ships built culminated with the 668 gt, **Athelbrae** built in 1956. Output was prodigious; in 1854 50% of all flats in use were Weaver built. By 1914 of the 350 flats registered, 190 appear to have been built at Northwich and 109 at Winsford.

The Builders

Winsford

(NB. The dates alongside the builder's name are the earliest/latest records found, which is not necessarily the business start and finish date)

Earliest vessel found **James & Maria** built 1756 – Broken up 1877

Builder	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Number of Vessels found	Notes
Hulse	1807		1	
Dudley J	1816	1854	6	Possibly father & son
Dobson	1819	1827	2	
Cross	1848	1891	11	Traded under 4 names
Alcock J & G	1860		0	In Directory
Verdin	1860s	1888	0	Salt Proprietor & flatowner . Yard to Salt Union later
Deakin	1853	1888	21	Traded under 3 names Later Salt Union yard,
Falk Herman	1863	1888	7	Yard to Salt Union
Henshall Wm	1874		0	In Directory
Stubbs	1888		0	In Directory
Salt Union	1888	1960s	1	ICI say yard closed in 1952 but I can recall it in use in early 1960s as repair yard
Evans	1876	1888	1	

Other Winsford built craft of which the builder's name not known - 117
Total Winsford craft found - 157

Last ship built - **Monarch** by Salt Union Co in 1896 having taken seven years to build. Lost off Ireland during World War I when acting as collier.

Northwich

Earliest vessel found **Friends Goodwill** built 1740 - Deleted from Register in 1827

Builder	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Number of Vessels found	Notes
Weaver Nav/ Brit Waterways	1720s	Continuing	1	Others built, but not found
Edwards	1758	1772	2	May have been sub-contractor to Weaver Nav
Vernon	1792		1	
Holland Wm & Sons	1794	1822	1	Near Hunts Lock and later possibly on the Gibson site
"Witton"	1800	1815	2	Two vessels built at Witton, may have been by Holland
Okell	1820	1890	5	Traded under 4 names
Gibson	1824	1880s	6	Traded under 4 names. May have owned barges circa 1810
Cawley J	1834	1886	2	Possibly 3 generations
Brown R	1834	1860	3	Also on Tithe Map
Thompson J	1840	1885	15	Taken over by Woodcock
Pimblott	1847	1906	)	In Central Northwich
	1906	1971	) 770	At Hartford Traded under 2 names
MooreT	1850		0	On Tithe Map
Hulse T	1858	1890	3	In Directory
Sharp	1860		0	In Directory
Venables	1863		1	
Clegghorn & Wilkinson	1874	1896	2	Built engines - Yard taken over by Weaver Nav
Bracegirdle	1878	1890	3	
J Parks	1870s		1	Built on Witton Brook
Achering Edward	1880		0	In Directory
Bates	1880		0	Built engines. Possibly the yard used by Sharp
Woodcock	1882	1896	9	Yard taken over by Yarwood
Yarwood	1896	1966	1046	
L'pool Lighterage	1912	1972	0	Former Pimblott yard used for repairs

Other Northwich built craft of which builder's name is not known - 339
Total Northwich craft found - 2212

Last ship built - **Dolphin** a dredger by British Waterways, in 1974 for use on the Leeds Liverpool Canal.

Frodsham

Earliest vessel found **Alice & Anne** 1728 – Fate not known

Builder	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Number of Vessels found	Notes
Hayes Wm	1795	1844	4	Slate trader & possible ship owner
White Isaac	1799	1860	1	
Hayes & Urmson	1821		1	Possibly Wm Hayes Urmson - cheese merchant & ship owner
Hazelhurst William	1838	1856	1	Coal merchant & possibly ship owner
Jones Edward	1857	1866	3	

Wm Mulvey, shipbuilder of Chester, may also have built some vessels at Frodsham prior to 1820

Other Frodsham built craft of which builder's name is not known - 86
Total Frodsham craft found - 96

The last Frodsham built vessel was the flat, **Fanny** built in 1862 and broken up in 1950s after use by Rea

Vessels built on the Weaver but build locations not known - 27.

PRODUCTION RATES

Research so far completed reveals the following rates of production.

Years	Vessels	
1728 1750	6	*[NB Because of the sparse early*
1751 1800	83	*records and the existence of*
1801 1850	299	*some early vessels without*
1851 1900	265	*building dates this table can*
1901 1950	1613	*only be indicative of what has*
1951 1974	229	*so far been found]*

THE TYPES OF SHIPS BUILT

In the early days ships built would have been built for local uses and mainly have been barges and flats. A greater variety of sailing craft may have originated at Frodsham, as there are reports of three craft built there being owned at Bangor, one being wrecked in the Ribble, whilst the **True Love** of Frodsham was lost in the Irish Sea in 1710, and **Friends** built at Frodsham was for a time owned by John Bibby.

The early barge and flat type vessels would generally conform to the standard dimensions, which would have allowed their use on other navigations linked to the Mersey. Later larger versions were built and the Weaver Packet **Monarch**, the last vessel built at Winsford measured 121 by 25 feet

Iron vessels began to be constructed in the 1860s, the earliest example being the **Experiment** built by Falk at Winsford in 1863, reputedly from old saltpans. She could tow up to three dumb flats, making a combined deadweight of 1000 tons. Motor vessels were being built as early as 1911.

With the concentration of building on Northwich and the development of Pimblott and Yarwood, wider markets were sought, including some of the larger shipping companies. Repeat orders were received from: -

Company	Vessels	Types
Alexandra Towing Co	10	Tugs
Bacon Line (Coast Lines)	5	Small coasters
Booker Bros	7	Punts & small coaster Possibly others via agents
Booth Line	12	Barges & tugs
Brocklebank	2	Barges
Elder Dempster (inc. Mersey Engine Wks)	295	Barges, launches, tugs & canoes
Esso	6	Tugs & Barges
John Holt	34	Barges, launches & tugs
Johnston Warren Line	2	Tugs
Lever Bros (Merseyside operations)	46	Barges, packets dredgers and a floating boathouse
Manchester Ship Canal Co	96	Tugs, ferries, barges & dredgers
Pacific Steam Navigation Co	19	Barges
Rea/Cory	10	Tugs & barges
Shell (and subsidiaries)	35	Tugs, launches & coasters
United Africa Company (and subsidiaries)	141	Barges, tugs & launches

Overseas Customers and Government Bodies

Body	Vessels	Types
Aden Port Trust	6	Tugs, barges, launch
Geelong Harbour Trust	2	Tugs – Australia's largest
India	7	Barges, tugs & dredger
Mid Mediterranean Towing	1	Tug – Yarwood's last vessel
Sudan Government	5	Pass/cargo barges
Admiralty (Warships)	5	Seaward Defence Boats & trawlers
Admiralty (Auxiliaries)	156	Barges, VIC s, tugs & tenders
Air Ministry	38	Tenders, barges & bombscows
British Transport Comm.	4	Dredgers, launch & tug
HM Customs	2	Steam launches
India Office	8	Barges
Min of Aircraft Production	29	Barges & bombscows
Min of War Transport	11	Coasters
M D & H B	8	Beacons, launches & barges
War Office	25	Barges & tugs
Weaver Navigation	7	Barges, tugs & dredger
White Fish Authority	1	Research trawler

Seven small coasters were also built for J H Cooper of Widnes and three for the Northwich Carrying Company. At least 55 vessels were built for Brunner Mond, ICI, the Salt Union and other associated concerns.

In the 1920s and 30s large numbers of canal narrow boats were built, particularly by Yarwood. Barges for wider canals, eg. the Leeds Liverpool Canal, were also built. Constricted sites, loss of overseas possessions and a general decline in the number of small craft being built ultimately led to the decline of the Northwich industry, leading to final closure (excluding the British Waterways maintenance yard) in 1971.

[Note: - I have not been successful in finding out details of vessels built by British Waterways at the Hayhurst Yard, but I understand that silt barges have been built and the capacity to build these may still exist on the site.]

Principal Sources,
Mercantile Navy Lists, Lloyds Registers, Marwood' s Index
Builders' records at the Cheshire Record Office and Ellesmere Port Boat Museum and references in many books and Magazines
Figures updated to March 2003

THE VOYAGE OF MRS CHARLOTTE CORBETT

Transcript of letter sent by Mrs Charlotte Corbett concerning her voyage aboard the Cunard paddle steamer ***Asia****. Also making the journey with her were Mr Corbett, valet "Green" and maid "Placide". The journey commenced at Tilstone, near Malpas, in Cheshire in 1852.*

New York Hotel,
New York.
Friday, 19th November 1852

My own darling Mamma,

Here we are, safely landed at New York after a passage of 12 days and 11 hours. We arrived in the bay 1 o'clock last night or rather this morning and breakfasted on board and came on shore at 10. The passage was a wonderfully good one for the time of year. We had fair weather nearly all the time except for the two first days and this is very rare for November. I must begin at the beginning of my story.

On Saturday the 8th November we left Tilstone at nine in the morning. Dear Anne bore the parting better than we expected but still it was very, very sad. My father-in-law, Henry and Frank went with us to Liverpool, and at Chester Cornwall Legh also went with us. We got to Liverpool at about half past eleven and at the docks found Uncle Blackburne waiting to see us off. They all came on board the **Asia** with us. The **Asia** looked so much nicer than the day we saw her before. She looked so clean and nice. My father-in-law was quite charmed with her and really she is a magnificent boat. At two o'clock the bell rang to warn the landsmen to leave us, and at last after two, we started on our long voyage.

That day, it was very calm and nearly all the passengers, ourselves inclusive attended the half past 3 o'clock dinner. The Captain, Captain Lott by name is such a nice person. Vincent Corbett crossed the Atlantic with him a few years ago and liked him so much, and we found him so quiet and gentleman-like and kind, besides being a very intelligent man. Well, the first day all went very well. I was rather tired and went to bed at 8 or 9. But in the night the wind rose and blew straight ahead, and Sunday morning found everyone sick. The ship pitched up and down dreadfully, so much so that the sailors themselves were seasick. I was very sick and so was Edwin and so was the wretched Placide, and so was Green and so was everyone else. No one attempted to leave their berths all Sunday. The reason of the pitching being so great was that we were not yet out of the Irish Channel and it was a short sea which is

much more trying than a good long Atlantic roll. That Sunday night we turned Cape Clear. Monday the wind was still ahead and the pitching was as great as ever. Everyone sick and wretched. In the afternoon I crawled up and with the assistance of the stewardess got on a dressing gown and laid down for an hour in the Ladies Cabin. A lovely Cabin, so prettily decorated, but was obliged to get into my berth again. Edwin was worse than me and the servants of course worse than either of us. Green informed us afterwards that he was firmly convinced we were going to the bottom.

On the Tuesday, the wind changed and blew fair. Edwin tumbled on his clothes and got on deck and I with the assistance of the Stewardess tumbled on my gown, greatcoat and wide-awake *[1]* and Edwin sent me some mulled Port to revive me and I got on deck! From that moment I got better. Mr Muir the English Consul at New Orleans to whom Edwin was introduced at Paris and who is a very nice man brought *(sic)* me a charming easy chair on deck and there I sat, wrapped up in shawls with my wide-awake on my head, all day and managed to eat a little for the first time. That night I was a little tired and went to bed at 7!!! Now I have got over the disagreeable part of the journey and all the rest is pleasant. Both Edwin and I were nearly well. The next morning I got up very early as I began to hate the stuffy cabin and longed to get on shore, and though I felt rather sick at first, I rested on the sofa between any operation and the stewardess gave me iced water. I managed to get on deck and there I had my chair again and stayed till 9 o'clock at night. The whole blessed day did I sit in that charming chair wrapped up in cloaks and shawls. Edwin varied it by walking up and down the deck but I preferred staying still. Edwin took a little medicine to set him right and from that day neither of us felt the least seasick through the whole voyage. Mr. Muir lent me his chair every day and, from 8 or 9 in the morning till 8 or 9 in the evening, I sat on the deck and so did Edwin. I began to feel so well and my appetite came back and I ate twice as much as I do on shore. We never went down to breakfast or dinner in the saloon as it was stuffy but we had our breakfast on deck, also luncheon and dinner. Edwin sometimes breakfasted downstairs but I always had it on deck and we had our dinner together on deck and I confess I liked it very much. In the evening I walked about the ship and looked at the phosphoric lights on the sea, which were lovely on a dark night.

Towards evening all the passengers used to get together on deck and we used to have smoking and mulled wine and dessert, and those who could sing used to sing. Oh it was so pleasant! All in the open air!

Now that I have told you of our pleasant life on board I must tell you about our fellow passengers, at least the most prominent. Mr Muir the English Consul at New Orleans took us under his special care, He has been eight years Consul and distinguished himself very much in this capacity. He was so good-natured to us. He has crossed the Atlantic 15 times, in the Asia herself 3 times, so he is quite "au fait" with it all. He lent me his chair the whole time and was always rushing about to get me something or other thinking of every sort of thing to add to my comfort and amusement. Edwin was quite fond of him.

Then there were two uncommonly gentlemanlike Americans. Yes you may stare but they were very gentlemanlike boys but thorough Americans. One of them said, "I guess" every minute and the other talked about advertisements with an accent on the third syllable. They had the twang but I defy any young man of any rank in any country to be more thoroughly pleasing. They were from 19 to 20, and were cousins. Their names were Mr. Aspinwall and Mr. Rowland. Their fathers are the Merchant Princes of New York. Mr Aspinwall was very like Henry Fane only better looking and older and six feet, two. The other smaller with one of those little page faces violet eyes and black lashes and very retrousse. They both sang very prettily and in the evening used to sing Negro melodies and we all joined in the choruses such happy evenings on deck! Well these were two types of the American merchant aristocracy. There was another type of American also, in the shape of Mr. Zacharie an old Southerner and merchant of New Orleans. He is a dear good prejudiced dirty vulgar old southern slaveholder - as dirty and vulgar as possible, as prejudiced a Yankee as ever breathed but as good-natured, generous, kind hearted, good tempered an old man as possible. He was a slave owner and of course upholds slavery. He and I used to quarrel over it every day but he was, I think, very fond of me and I was very fond of him. And he used to sit by me for hours and hours and bore me a little, poor dear old man. Sometimes both Yankee and Englishmen used to poke fun at him and he bore it so jollily and good temperedly. Here were two excellent types of Americans.

Then there was a little red haired Frenchman always in good humour. He was a shopkeeper in San Francisco he told me, Charles Bertrand by name. His "magasins" had been burnt to the ground five times during the time he was at San Francisco. So now he took to merely transporting goods from Paris and not setting up shop. He contributed very much to our amusement and sang "Malbrook s'en va t'en guerre" and recited Fables de la Fontaine and vers de Vaudeville for our edification and made love to every woman. I and Placide inclusive.

Then there was a Canadian farmer of Yorkshire extraction who was very jolly, and two dirty Spaniards, one young, the other 40 who could speak nothing but Spanish and there was a Yankee Captain Briton, a sailor, very American. Very clever, amusing and jolly nice was a Scotchman, Mr McGregor and wife and child, and a French woman with two children, rather a pretty little woman. But her hair in front snow white her back hair, brown (and she was about 20). It had been in her family for 300 years and every now and then skipped a generation. Then there was a little Canadian woman of 26, very jolly and handsome, unmarried and going to join her family in Canada. I do not describe the ladies more particularly because they hardly ever appeared on deck and so I saw very little of them. The little Canadian Miss Fisher was the only one. Then there were four men, two Americans and two Scotchmen who used to sing very well and played whist together. Then there were a great many more whom it would be endless to describe. I have described the most striking. I never left the deck whatever the weather, rain or shine, fog or cold, never once. Often the captain and I were the only people on deck.

Now for the officers. I have described Captain Lott. Then comes my particular friend, the first officer Mr. Salt. He came from Shropshire and knew about Sir A Corbett and Lord Hill and that was the tie between us. He was such a thorough sailor, so simple, so unsophisticated and would talk about the village where his father was a clergyman and tell me about the garden there, and about old Lord Hill and his wife. He took a great fancy to Edwin and I and would be constantly thinking what he could bring to please us. You know we used to have dinner on deck and, as all the other passengers were dining in the saloon, we had the deck to ourselves. Mr. Salt used to come and talk to us while we were eating our dinner and look over the bill of fare and tell us what the cook did best and then he used to bring us up Filberts and a particular kind of apple. Then there was the doctor, a little man with the blackest curls I ever saw who was so sailorish and nice. Mr. Salt and the doctor were like two boys together. Certainly I never was so spoilt or made so much of as I was on the **Asia.** I was the only young lady, then I was never sick and always on deck and everybody was so very kind to me, Captain, Officers and passengers, Americans and English that I had tears in my eyes when I left the good old ship. I used to be the first on deck generally and used to get on deck generally at about half past 8 or 9 and then my breakfast used to come up on a little tray. Hot mutton chops, hot rolls, fried potatoes and tea, were my general breakfast. I was obliged to eat fast as the air chilled it if I dawdled over it. Then after that, one by one all the passengers came to

speak to me as neither I nor they had anything else to do. I neither felt inclined to read or work. I was in too high spirits and liked to talk and laugh better. Then at half past eleven came luncheon: mutton or chicken broth and some roast apples and then talking and laughing until dinner, which was at half past three. Excellent dinners they were. There was a most uncommonly good cook; a very good confectioner. We used to have desert *(sic)* and then the rest of the people came and we all gathered on the deck near the engine and had coffee and mulled wine and devised some amusement. We told stories and gave riddles and conundrums and had singing. It was so nice in the open air when we used to walk up and down the deck and look on the broad Atlantic shining in the moonlight and the phosphoric lights dancing round the vessel as she went through the water at the rate of 12 knots an hour. One night we had a beautiful Aurora Borealis. It lit up the heavens and the ocean quite beautifully. There were the most glorious sunsets I ever beheld and such pretty songs and cries the sailors made when they pulled up the sails. One night we went down into the engine room! It is indeed a magnificent sight. They are the finest engines ever made. They have crossed the Atlantic 44 times without an accident. They are 800-horse power; it is really the Triumph of Science.

Many of the passengers sang very prettily and it sounded so well in the open air. Principally Negro melodies, many of which are quite lovely. Such simple, beautiful melodies, with so much feeling and fun at once. We all joined in the choruses. The last night Edwin and I spent an hour with Mr. Salt in his cabin, which is charming, and the doctor came and sang for us. This morning I really felt the tears in my eyes as I left the good old ship which had carried us so bravely on board. However many of our acquaintance will I hope, last long. Captain Lott and Mr. Salt are coming to see us as also Mr. Aspinwall and Mr. Howland and if ever we go south we are to go and see Mr. Zacharie at New Orleans. Mr. Muir is at this hotel with us. We dine at the 5 'o clock Table d'Hote and are going to Christie's, a sort of concert room, where they sing Negro melodies. In my next letter I shall be able to tell you more of New York as I have yet seen very little of it. You land on the opposite bank of the Hudson in Jersey City and cross the river to New York. New York is a beautiful town, very English looking. The public buildings that I have passed are very handsome, mostly built of marble and granite. Many of the private houses are built of marble and granite, also the principal shops; we stay here till Monday I think. I find my prejudices rapidly dying away and I hope that I shall be as liberal towards American people and customs as if absurd prejudices had never poisoned my mind. The last day on board we dined in the saloon and had toasts and

Mr. Muir gave a very good one. He made very good speech praising America and England and drank to both sides of the Atlantic and may nothing but the Atlantic ever divide them: - was it not good? After all it does seem very absurd we should quarrel with an American because he is an American and because he says "I guess". It is no more vulgar than "I fancy". Americans find just as many peculiarities in our English, as we in theirs, and I am sure a young English swell talks much more slang and real vulgarisms than a Broadway swell. Slang is much more vulgar than to say, "I calculate" which is really a national peculiarity of idiom which we have no sort of right to find fault with. I believe the Arts are very much behindhand, but literature is wonderful and advanced and we are too apt to forget that. She is a young country whose steps towards improvement we ought to encourage. Yankee is a term they like to be applied to them. New York Bay is quite lovely, so large and open and the great broad Hudson opening in to it. Business seems the watchword here, and there is a great deal of life in the streets. There seem to be a few nice "turnouts". They are all in bad taste. The little French man on board the **Asia** told me that San Francisco was the place to spend money. That there was more luxury and elegance there than in Paris or London. That silks, velvets and shawls sold for double the price there and that "Les femmes etaint tres coquettes et tres elegantes". I believe that the last ten years has made a wonderful difference in it. Gambling is carried on to a great extent unfortunately.

Now my dear mother I must say goodbye. You will wonder at my raptures over the voyage for you know they say

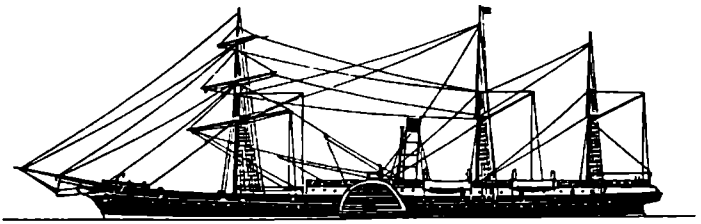
"Two things vary an Atlantic trip
Sometimes you ship a sea,
and sometimes you see a ship."

Nevertheless it was very pleasant but a very idle life. The pilot boats are the loveliest little graceful things you ever saw. You know at a little distance from the shore a pilot comes on board to steer the ship into harbour.

Now again my darling mother goodbye. From this day forward I will keep this journal and send it periodically as often as possible. Best love to dear Isabel and George, Evan, Mrs Vaughan and Robert. Edwin sends you his best love. Ever your most affectionate child

Charlotte Corbett

I am so well after this voyage, goodbye and God bless you again.



The **Asia** 1850/2226gt built by Robert Steele & Son, Greenock. As built carried 130 1st and 30 2nd class but reduced to 40 1st and 30 2nd class in 1852 Sold 1867 and burnt out 10 years later at Bombay

***Note** [1] A wide-awake is a low crowned, wide brimmed hat*

WARTIME SHIPPING IN THE PORT OF LIVERPOOL

By L.N.R.S member Harry Hignett

For the first year of WW2 my schooling was disrupted by partial evacuation of half of the school and the conscription of over half of the masters. Half of the time normally used for inside lessons was occupied on the playing fields with football and other team games. We were doing nothing in the way of education although enrolled as 'messengers' for the Air Raid Precaution services, mostly at night when the air raids took place. And in the early days of the blitz we guided people bombed out of their homes (in Bootle), to shelters such as church and school halls in Waterloo well into the early hours of the morning. Even our own school was occupied for about four weeks by homeless people.

One day I met a friend, working as a telegraph messenger who had been delivering a telegram to a ship in Gladstone Dock. That did it for me and I applied and became T 131, one of six lads based at Bootle GPO, next to Bootle Town Hall, on the princely wage of 11 shillings per week and 8d per hour overtime. In addition to delivering telegrams one of the duties of a telegraph messenger was to accept telegrams and collect the cash for them and hand them in at the post office on our return.

Telephones were not universal equipment in homes and urgent or important messages were sent by telegram. If, after delivering a telegram, we were asked to take a telegram for delivery we did so, charging the standard rate of 1 penny per word. Our district comprised most of Bootle and included all the docks from Sandon Dock to

Gladstone Dock. What a district! and at the time of the highest activity ever at those berths: the peak of the Port of Liverpool's importance.

We boys soon learned our way around the docks and where best to leave our red-coloured bicycles whenever we delivered aboard a ship, the dockers, on tonnage bonus, did not take too much care when they were moving cargo.

At least twice a month we would note that the docks were almost empty, and then overnight, find a convoy of ships had docked. Most of the ships berthed in Gladstone Dock were large passenger ships not normally seen in Liverpool. The vessels based on Southampton and London were, naturally, crewed by seamen from those ports. On arrival at Liverpool they were anxious to let their families and friends know of their safe arrival. The first telegram boy boarding the ship would be almost overwhelmed with requests to take telegrams. The wording was usually about 14 and the change from the charge was left as a tip. It was not unknown for the boy to collect £4 in tips - four weeks wages. We soon learned the type and ownership of (for us) the most lucrative ships.

The first vessel I boarded as a lad of 14 was the **Taranaki** a Shaw Savill & Albion cargo vessel (my friends will smile). The company flag on the mainmast showing brightly over the grey painted ship impressed me and later I was to sail for more than seven years under that flag.

We boys all admired the lovely modern Union Castle liners, **Athlone, Capetown, Carnarvon, Durban, Stirling, Warwick,** and **Winchester**. There were several others - and we even liked the cheeky little **Roslin Castle** one of the cargo ships, which were faster than some of the passenger vessels.

THE UNION-CASTLE LINE M.V. "DURBAN CASTLE." 17,382 TONS.

The **Durban Castle** 1936/17382gt built by Harland & Wolff at Belfast. She was broken up in 1962

Similarly we learned to recognise the Orient Line's, **Orcades, Orion, Ormonde, Orontes, Oronsay** and **Otranto,** all with the line's unique funnel cowls. We saw, to some extent, the same type of hull arrangements in the P&0 Company's ships, **Strathaird, Strathallan, Stratheden, Strathmore** and **Strathnaver**. The **Orion** and the **Stratheden** seemed to be almost the same ship. We also saw the **Maloja, Mooltan, Viceroy of India, Chitral,** and **Ile de France**.

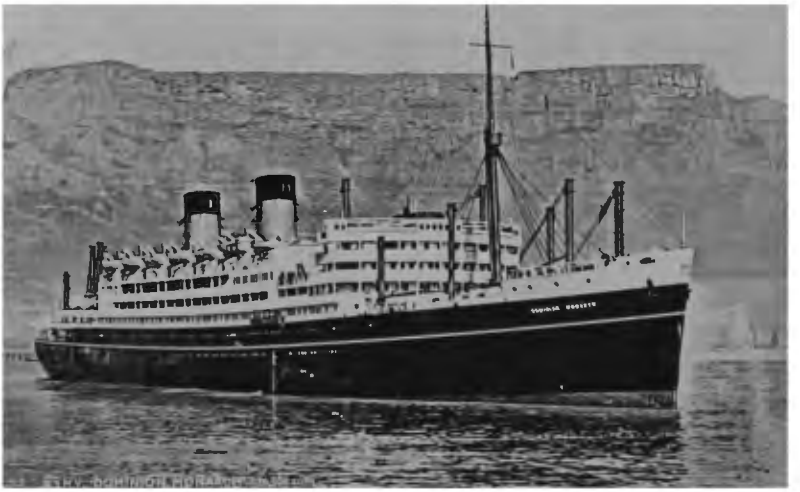
ORIENT LINE S.S. "ORONTES." 10,000 TONS

The Orient liner **Orontes,** 1929/20097gt built at Barrow, was one of five similar ships, of which only two survived the war. Orontes was broken up in 1962

Rangitiki 1929/16698gt, was part of the **Jervis Bay** convoy in 1940. Built by John Brown she remained in service until 1962

The larger New Zealand Shipping Company vessels were very popular with us; **Rangitata, Rangitiki, Remuera, Rimutaka**. There were also the Royal Mail passenger ships, **Alcantara, Almanzora, Andes, Asturias** as well as the four **Highland** vessels: **Brigade, Chieftain, Monarch** and **Princess**.

I well recall the Shaw Savill ships, such as the **Dominion Monarch, Akaroa, Arawa, Mataroa, Tamaroa, Themistocles** and **Ceramic**.



Dominion Monarch 1938/27155gt built by Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson she was broken up in 1962 after serving for a short period as an hotel at Seattle

We also saw the **Aorangi** and the lovely **Awatea** of the Union S.S.Co of NZ, both under normal circumstances operating in New Zealand and Pacific waters. Also normally on the Pacific run was the **Empress of Japan** - we were amused to note that the name on the stern was only partially altered when the word Japan was erased.

EMPRESS OF JAPAN
LONDON

For quite a time the name on the stern appeared thus:

EMPRESS OF
LONDON

Not a few people misread the erasure to think the new name was *Empress of London* not realising that London was the port of registry. However the new name **Empress of Scotland** was not placed on the stern until the end of hostilities. The **Empress of Australia** and **Empress of Asia** were also strangers in the port. Likewise the **Queen of Bermuda** and the **Monarch of Bermuda** frequently berthed in Gladstone Dock during the War.

Foreign passenger ships also called here, the Netherlands **Christiaan Huygens, Marnix Van Sint, Aldegonde, John Van Oldenbarnevelt** and the lovely **Oranje**. The latter had an unusual 'waisted' shape when viewed from forward to aft (or vice versa). The French **Pasteur** with the huge funnel also appeared in Gladstone Dock, as did the Polish **Pilsudski**. I think we also saw the French **Jean Laborde**.

I haven't mentioned the passenger ships of Cunard, CPR, PSNC, Elder Dempster, Furness Withy, and Bibby that would, in peacetime have been fairly regular visitors to the Mersey.

One day in 1942, the three funnelled **Princess Victoria** of the CPR Vancouver fleet arrived and, when passing Perch Rock, the pilot blew the whistle to signal he was about to round up for the Gladstone entrance. Unfortunately he was unaware of the unusual sound of the whistle - a sound evocative of the whistles of CPR railway engines on the Prairies but with several times more decibels. It was amusing to see the faces of the dock labour trying to cope with a new sound. And a phrase something like "What on earth was that?" was heard.

The **Ceramic** caught our attention and we watched her loading on the Blue Funnel berth at SE No 2, Gladstone. She was an elderly passenger ship, with four tall masts. In fact the **Ceramic** had been the largest vessel on the Australian run for over twenty years, and at one time was the largest vessel to use the locks at Tilbury. One day she disappeared and we presumed she had sailed, but five days later she was back on the berth. We were very amused, thinking that something had gone wrong and she had been overloaded. The real story was that a tug had struck the lock gates at Sandon and the whole dock system was emptied.

The **Ceramic** and a few other vessels were moved out to the Bar while repairs were completed. The evening before she sailed I delivered a telegram to the Chief Officer. He read it in front of me and said "No Reply". As I left the ship, I saw about 50 Nurses as passengers and also noted that at least a dozen officers wearing the green intelligence tabs on their coat lapels were on deck. The next day the ship was gone - and we

were all very sad to learn, a few weeks later, that she had been lost with all hands but one - about 600 people all told.

Years later as Second Officer of the **Akaroa** a number of officers and shore superintendents sat having lunch at the large central table in the dining room. The Outward Cargo Superintendent, Capt 'Tommy' Marsden, a man popular with all the staff, was talking about his term as Chief Officer of the **Ceramic.** He enlarged "When I read that telegram promoting me to the **Empire Grace**, I could have kissed the telegram boy!" I was pleased to reply, "You never even gave the beggar a tip!" Tommy's face was a picture.

One day I had a telegram to deliver to a Glen liner, this time in NE No 2 Gladstone. It was obvious she had arrived direct from the Far East. An Intelligence Corps sergeant was questioning a very pregnant woman and she appeared distressed. He melted when she replied to a question "But I don't know where my husband was when I left and would very much like to know where he is now".

It is not surprising that I considered going to sea. I boarded all the above vessels and spent perhaps twenty minutes aboard each - looking round the ships and comparing them. At all times, whenever and wherever, the officers and crews treated me with extreme courtesy, even though they were often very busy and harassed. That treatment decided for me that I wanted a sea-going life. One day, on one of Thompson's 'Ben' vessels (I think the **Benledi**) a 2nd Officer offered me a cup of coffee in the officer's dayroom. I sat down and in front of a couple of other officers was asked "Do you intend to stay with the Post Office all your life?" I replied in the negative. He then asked, "What would you like to do?" I said "Sit in a day-room like this, with my feet up like you, having coffee." He laughed. "This telegram sends me on leave for ten days, I was torpedoed ten days ago and arrived on this ship yesterday." With a wicked grin he continued, "Do you still want to go to sea?" I nodded. He handed me a book and indicated that I should read it when at home. It was the "Full Syllabus of the Merchant Navy Training Board's Scheme for Deck Officers". My involvement in the day-to-day business of the Port of Liverpool only lasted for a short, but highly significant time.

It seems a pity that this period, as well as earlier days of greatness, do not occupy a larger part in the nautical history displays of the Maritime Museum

MODERN PIRACY

By L.N.R.S member Jim Pottinger

It may come as something of a surprise to readers that piracy on the high seas is alive and well and still with us, in just as deadly a form as was practised by freebooters of a past age. The trade has now reached a far higher level of sophistication, and no less brutal, than was carried out by Captain Kidd and his band of renegades.

Modern piracy was usually limited to that carried out by Chinese, who set out from bases in junks with heavily armed crews. Bias Bay, forty miles east of Hong Kong, was a favoured haunt, preying on other native cargo carrying coastal craft, and later being tempted by the greater loot carried on European sailing ships.

In many cases the leaders were well-established merchants, with often a quasi-legal status in the communities of China and Macao.

The introduction of steel steam powered vessels made the interception and capture much more difficult, especially as ships trading regularly in these waters had a complement of firearms with the officers trained in their use, and were often provided with steam hoses at strategic points and spiked rails along the deck edges to deter the invaders. Sections of the passengers' spaces on the decks were cordoned off by railings and mesh fences, and access to the officers' quarters and bridge and engine-room was similarly barred, often with armed Sikh guards posted. Regular naval patrols further proscribed the activities of the pirates. A new approach was needed, thus instead of attacking from the outside, a party indistinguishable from the large numbers of passengers, would embark and at a given signal would cast off their disguise and attack the ship's officers and capture the ship, which could then be looted at their leisure.

More up to date, the reported attacks against commercial ships have tripled in the last decade, last year alone by nearly 50%. The majority of the incidents in 1999 were in Asia, with 113 of the 285 reported attacks in Indonesian waters. With 45% of all shipping movements moving in the pirate infested seas of Asia the risk is increasing. The pirates of today are a mixed group, which can include opportunistic fishermen, common criminals, Asian Mafia, and in almost all cases the acts involve intruders armed with modern military style automatic weapons in addition to knives, machetes or clubs, who threaten, injure, kidnap or kill members of the crew and passengers. Whilst piracy has been a problem in the south-east Asian archipelago for centuries, the steep rise in activity can be attributed in part to the financial crisis that began in Thailand in late 1997 which led to mass

unemployment of thousands of people. Another factor is that most of the staff in Southeast Asia's maritime security forces are grossly underpaid. Allied to the culture of semi-official corruption prevailing it is not unusual for some "off budget" activity to take place, with kickbacks and bribes being common. It seems that there is the temptation for official maritime forces to turn a blind eye to these criminal activities.

The problems caused by underpaid forces and smuggling affect the China Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) - Navy as well. Recent reports describe attacks on a number of ships on the high seas boarded by men from military gunboats bearing the markings of the PLA Navy, even to the extent that the pirates still wore PLA uniforms. China itself has been heavily criticised for deporting pirates instead of prosecuting them. As an example, the small products tanker **Petro Ranger** was hijacked off Malaysia and later found in mainland China, the criminals being merely deported to Indonesia without trial.

Today the act of shipping piracy ranges from the classic boarding and hijacking of a vessel on the high seas to the more usual stealing from the ship whilst at anchor. The targets include the contents of the ship's stores and safe and the valuables of the crew. The piracy of the ship itself and whole or part cargo represents only a small fraction of the reported crimes in number, but amounts to $200 million per annum in value. As the majority of the attacks occur when the ship is berthed or anchored in port in an adjacent country's territorial waters it would suggest that there is some complicity by the host's maritime security forces involved. An even more sophisticated and deadly game is being played out where, for a sum, a pirate will go out and highjack the ship of choice. If the crew was required they would remain on board, if not they would be tossed over the side or murdered. The stolen ship would then be given a false and temporary registration and sail to Singapore or Hong Kong, where she would be re-registered, this time under a false name. From there the ship would load a bona fide cargo and simply disappear, usually after radioing with engine trouble, the cargoes inevitably ending up in China. The "phantom" ship trick involves sophisticated gangs with a network of contacts and agencies to conceal and dispose of the cargo.

The classic case was the disappearance of the **Jahan** in January 1997, a 15,022 ton ship built in 1972, registered in Belize and operated by a Singapore company and bound for London with 14,000 tons of sugar, reportedly sunk in the South Atlantic in unexplained circumstances. The ship later turning up in Ghana where it was impounded and the crew arrested. A few days earlier, off South Africa, the ship had radioed that she was sinking, which posed some questions as, at the time where the

THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY
THE CHAIRMAN' S ANNUAL REPORT

1st May 2002 – 30th April 2003

I will start by thanking the Officers, Council and Members of the Society for their support during the last twelve months.

When I became Chairman a year ago the Society was still recovering from the sad loss of our Secretary. I was very pleased when John Stokoe agreed to take over this office. He has been of great assistance to me and is proving a worthy successor to the late respected John Tebay.

During the summer recess there was rumour in the media concerning the future of the Maritime Museum, after it closed The World of Models exhibition. On behalf of the Society I wrote to Dr Flemming, the Director of the National Museums & Galleries on Mersey side, to express our concern over the future of the Mersey side Maritime Museum and it's collection of ship models. Dr Flemming wrote to assure us that the future of the Mersey side Maritime Museum was secure, and its collection of models will remain on Merseyside. It is planned that a greater selection of its ship models will be exhibited on a rotating basis. Those not displayed can be seen in storage by appointment with the curator.

The Society maintains a very friendly relationship with the Maritime Museum and we are grateful for the use of its address, for the use of this room, and for the Monday facility at the Maritime Archives and Library, which allows members the opportunity for group research. This Monday facility is open to all members.

Last October the Society Stand was at the Wirral History & Post-card Fair held at Port Sunlight. I thank the members who attended the stall, and I am pleased to report we made a small profit and enrolled a few new members.

Because Society meetings are now announced on Monty Lister's Sunday morning program on Radio Merseyside, we have introduced a ticket system for visitors, as fire regulations place a limit of sixty-five people allowed in this room. These free tickets are available from the museum Information Desk. To make it easier to identify each other at our meetings, we have produced lapel badges for members to use if they wish.

The high point of the year was the presentation of the LNRS Award arranged by Captain Mike Jones. This annual Award financed by anonymous donation, is to encourage an interest by the younger generation in nautical history. It is a cheque for £200 together with a certificate designed by our vice-president Harry Hignett.

There were seven applicants, five from John Moores University and two from Hope University College. All entries were of a very high standard, but the panel of three judges - Alan McClelland, Mike Jones and myself, decided the winner to be Mr Sidney Wilson from Hope University College who received his award at our meeting on February 20th. I am very pleased that Captain Mike Jones has agreed to be the Award Secretary, and is at the present time progressing next year's award.

I wish to express the Society's gratitude to John Shepherd for seven years service as editor and publisher of the BULLETIN, The BULLETIN is held in very high esteem, and thanks to John, circulation has doubled to 250 copies per issue, but this has greatly increased the work he had to do. John has decided to take a long well earned holiday and the June issue will be his last. I look forward to reading articles from John printed in future Bulletins.

I am pleased to announce that Tony Barrett has agreed to be the new editor of the BULLETIN. Tony will edit and arrange with the printer only, our vice-chairman Gordon Bodey has volunteered to be responsible for packing and posting.

The Society membership covers a wide field of maritime interest. To enable Tony to maintain the high standard of the BULLETIN, I call on members to send articles of maritime interest to Tony for their inclusion. These should not be limited to local history, as Liverpool's influence on commerce, trade and industry was nation wide and international. On behalf of the Society I thank Ron Dennis for the very interesting speakers we have had this session. It has always been the aim of the Society to have 'in house' speakers at our meetings. Ron has a very difficult job arranging speakers and I invite members to contact Ron if they are willing to present a talk about their own research.

At last year's AGM Sandy Williamson announced he would like to hand over the treasury to a younger member. Late last year John Coats consented to become the next Treasurer. Since then he has worked with Sandy and took over the Treasury on April 30th. On behalf of the Society I thank Sandy for the diligent manner he controlled the treasury during his seven years in office.

Since the last AGM four of our members have crossed the Great Bar. They are. JACK LOVEGROVE, TED TOZER, Mr C EVANS and Capt J.R. HOWEL. They are greatly missed and are remember with respect.

To conclude this report, it is time to look forward. Younger officers are now in charge of the watch, and I am confident the Society is on course towards a secure future.

David Eccles - Chairman, Liverpool Nautical Research Society 15th May 2003

THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE MERSEYSIDE MARITIME MUSEUM ON 15TH. MAY 2003

Present: The Chairman and 21 Members as recorded in the Attendance Register

The Society's Chairman David Eccles formerly opened the Meeting and welcomed the Members present

1.The Hon. Secretary read the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 16th.May 2002

2.There were no matters arising.

3.The Chairman presented his report for the year and confirmed that the full text of his message would be issued with the September 'Bulletin'. He outlined the various matters of significance which had received attention during his first year in office which are now summarised: -

The media rumour relating to closure of the Maritime Museum's World of Models which generated assurance from Director Dr.Flemming that the future of the collection was secure and it would continue on rotational display or specific models made available by appointment:

There were pleasing remarks as to the Society's continued friendly relations with the Maritime Museum and its staff:

Our practice of advertising monthly meetings through Radio Merseyside had been effective to the extent that to conform to Museum Health & Safety Regulations we had resorted to the introduction of guest tickets to aid control of overall attendance at our presentations:

The LNRS Award had been regarded as the high point of the season generating high quality submissions from the local universities with Sidney Wilson being declared our first winner and the success of the exercise clearly demonstrating that we should continue to mount such opportunities to encourage interest in nautical history by the younger generation:

The 'Bulletin' had enjoyed yet another successful year culminating in John Shepherd's recent decision to take a well deserved globe-trotting break after seven years as Editor and we had been extremely fortunate in appointing Tony Barratt at John's successor which now introduces a new arrangement whereby Gordon Bodey has agreed to look after issue dispatch: our Chairman

concluded this news by warmly inviting Members to submit articles of general maritime interest for future publication:

Turning attention to the excellent line-up of speakers that had been organised over the past year the Chairman expressed his thanks to Ron Dennis and once again adding a clear message of encouragement for our own Members to come forward and offer to talk about their own research;

Members will have recalled Sandy Williamson's announcement to step down as Treasurer coincidentally also after a period of seven years in office and we had been fortunate to hear that John Coates has been happy to take over the Society's accounts.

Following on from the earlier Council Meeting the Chairman paid tribute to the longstanding and valued contribution which had been made by Captain Graeme Cubbin who is now stepping down from Council and that there had been unanimous agreement to Graeme's appointment as a Vice-President.

In a rather apt concluding comment Chairman David Eccles said that younger officers are now in charge of the watch and that he is confident that the Society remains on course towards a secure future.

4. A copy of the Accounts had been given to everyone present and new Treasurer John Coates read out the report which had been prepared by Sandy Williamson. The year had seen a net growth of 9 Members to the Society. Our income had once again been augmented by several generous donations and again we very much appreciated the NMGM decision to exempt us from any charges for use of the Education Suite. The accounts now circulated demonstrated an almost neutral budget for the past year where income had matched expenditure even though with the new Award Scheme and an extra issue of 'Bulletin' we had spent around £500 more than normal. Thanks were extended to David Eccles and Norman West for checking and approving the accounts. Mr Peter Kenyon proposed that we accept the accounts and this was seconded by Mrs Margaret Parker

5.New Editor Tony Barratt spoke briefly of his intentions for 'Bulletin' and indicated that he would be relying on Members and their submissions to determine the future direction of our publication.

6. Ron Dennis provided a brief outline of the line-up of presentation topics and speakers who would be joining us during the coming season. Membership Cards conveying full details will be issued in August.

7. It was then proposed by Mr Gordon Harrison and seconded by Mr Geoff Holmes that the Society's Officers and Council Members are re-elected en bloc for a further year and this was unanimously approved by the meeting.

8. Secretary John Stokoe reported a number of decisions, which had been taken at earlier Council. It had been felt that in the best interests of the Society, Subscription Rates with effect from the 2004-05 season would become £12 for individual Members and £15 for couples. It was also agreed that refreshment charges would increase to 50p from this coming September recognising that any profits continue towards the purchase and engraving of Society tankards which are presented to speakers. Finally, it should be noted that we intend dispensing with our own website but thanks to John Luxton details relating to the Society would continue to be available on www.merseyshipping.co.uk

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.

Liverpool Nautical Research Society
Income and Expenditure for 2002 -2003

GIROBANK Current A/c	
Balance in Current account on 1 May 2002	172,44
INCOME	
Personal and Family subscriptions	1879.43
Corporate subscriptions	110.00
Book sates	32.40
Transfers from deposit a/c	1600.00
Donations	371.43
Christmas Lunch money	630.00
Total Income	4623.26
EXPENDITURE	
Hon. Secretary's expenses	80.61
Hon. Editor's expenses	193.33
Cost of Assistant Curator	658.00
Cost of printing Journals	1755.01
Catering, gratuities, etc.	31.85
Transferred to Deposit Account	1000.00
Renewal cost of Web-Site	28.50
Cost of Christmas Lunch, including gratuities	576.50
M.I.A. subscription	15.00
Essay Prize Money	200.00
Refunds (Subscriptions £10 & Christmas Lunch £45)	55.00
Total Expenditure	4593.80
Income exceeds expenditure by £4623.26 minus £4593.80 =	29.46
Balance in Giro Current A/c on 30th April 2003 is £172.44 + £29.46 =	201.90
GIROBANK-Deposit A/C	
Balance in Deposit account on 1 May 2002	6013.88
DEPOSITS	
Transferred from current a/c as available	1000.00
Interest paid on 15 July 2002	101.38
Total Deposits	1101.38
WITHDRAWALS	
Transferred to current A/c as required	1600.00
Withdrawals exceed deposits by £1600,00 - £11O1.38 =	498.62
Balance in Giro Deposit A/c on 30/4/2003 is £6013.88 - £498.62 =	£5515.26
Total in current and deposit accounts on 1/5/2003 is £201.90+£5515.26 =	£5717.16

Note Recently the Girobank has changed its name to Alliance Bank. The account conditions are unchanged.

Examined David Eccles Signed A A Williams Retiring Hon Treasurer 30 April 2003

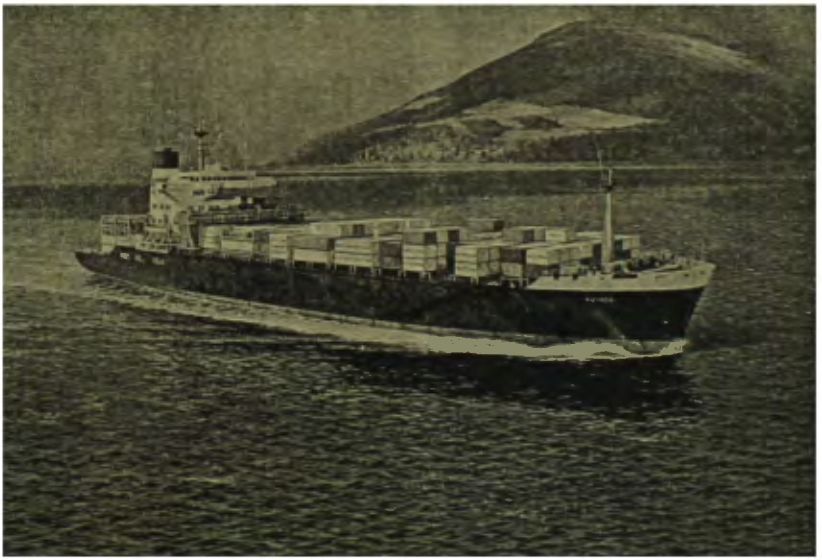
J S Coates Hon Treasurer Elect

vessel was assumed to be, the weather was reported to be fine and clear. The radio messages confirmed that all 28 crew had abandoned the ship as she was reported to be taking in water. After searching for 11 days the rescue teams could find no trace of the ship or survivors and called off the search. The real reason being that the ship was nowhere near her reported position, instead she had been renamed **Zacosea Two**, taking the near name she was previously known as, and had diverted from her original planned route and was in Ghanaian waters, heading towards Tema harbour. The Ghanaian captain and Burmese, Indian and Bangladeshi crew were then arrested following investigations. This ship had been built in Greece and had previously borne the following names, thus reflecting her chequered history: **Serra Verde**; **Elizabeth**; **Elizabeth K**; **Mega Luck**; **Mogli**; **Amanecida**; and **Zacosea II**.

Given the scale of the crime and competitive market operating many carriers opt to not report the incidents, preferring instead to meet the costs themselves rather than risk any increased insurance costs, or delays in port whilst any official investigation takes place.

AND FINALLY

A further reminder of a Harrison Line painting



The MV **Author** 1980/20031gt in the Clyde in 1983, from a painting by John Groves, which sold for £1100

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER	18th	Lifeboat, **Manchester & Salford,** restoration project *[M Raynes Project Manager Service Dev Shell]*
OCTOBER	16th	Construction & early history of the SS **Great Britain** *[G Bodey LNRS]*
NOVEMBER	13th	The Work of the Maritime & Coastguard Agency *[B George Watch Officer M&CA]*
DECEMBER	18th	Annual Christmas Social & Quiz

All Meetings are held in the Education Suite at the Merseyside Maritime Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool commencing at 12 .30pm,

(Coffee and biscuits available from 12 noon)

THE MONDAY FACILITY

Members' access to the Archives and Library of the Merseyside Maritime Mondays has been arranged for the following dates:
(Hours 10.30 - 12.30 & 1.30 - 3.30)

SEPTEMBER	1st	8th	15th	22nd	29th
OCTOBER	6th	13th	20th	27th	
NOVEMBER	3rd	10th	17th	24th	

EXTRACT FROM LLOYD'S LIST 2ND FEBRUARY 1898

found by L.N.R.S Vice President Harry Hignett

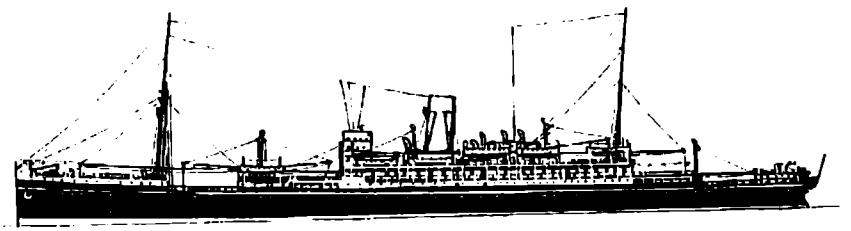
Acacia (s) - Wapping Feb. 1st, 3.40 p.m.
About. 1.10p.m. today, a fire broke out in the engineer's berth of the **Acacia** (s), of London; Mr. Hamson owner, while lying at Battle Bridge Pier, completely gutting the berth and engineer's store. The fire was subsequently put out at 1.49 p.m. by the ship's donkey. Cause of fire unknown.

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

THE BULLETIN

Volume 47, Number 3 December 2003



THE COUNCIL OF THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

Memberships and General Correspondence
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society, Maritime Archives and Library
Merseyside Maritime Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool L3 4AA, UK.

Bulletin Editor
Antony Barratt, 24 Cross Green Upton by Chester, Chester CH2 1QR, UK
(Email tony.barratt@btopenworld.com)

Items for inclusion in future editions of the Bulletin can be E-mailed to the Editor or sent to the above address

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Front Cover
The **Jervis Bay**, built 1922 at Barrow for the Australia - London trade, became famous for her defence of her convoy against the **Admiral Scheer** in November 1940, as recounted in Lifeline on Page 22
~~~

Letter *from* the Editor

Thank you for the comments I have received on my first edition of the Bulletin and thank you to those members who have submitted items for future editions. But please don't rest on your laurels, items of any length are always welcome.

I do however have to offer an apology for the "clanger" that got through in the September edition. Sharp-eyed readers will have noticed that it bore the title "Volume 46 Number 3". It should have been Volume 47 Number 2. I used the September 2002 edition as a model for my first draft and failed to change the Volume number. As for the issue number I can only plead guilty and promise to try harder next time

I ended my letter in the last edition with a request for ideas for future articles. Amongst those received has been a suggestion that some of the articles published in earlier publications of the Society might be republished for the benefit of new members and those not close to the Society's Archive at the Maritime Museum. I feel this is an excellent idea, but should be done sparingly so as not to stifle new work.

Also new this month is a letter from a Society member, recently published in the Liverpool Daily Post. If any other member has had a letter published on a maritime topic, and thinks it might be of general interest to other members please send me a copy, and I will try to include it, space permitting. Likewise I have received a couple of queries from a member and I have included one of them in this edition (the other will follow in due course). If members are able to contribute answers I will be happy to publish the results for all to share.

With the recent 60th Anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic in mind I have also printed a poem from a member and as it concerns the **Jervis Bay** Convoy I thought that it was an appropriate time of year to include it.

I hope you like this edition and look forward to your comments and items for inclusion in future editions.

Antony Barratt

December 2003

North Atlantic Operating System
The Turn Round of North Atlantic ferries

By LNRS member Harry Hignett

For over 60 years Liverpool was the eastern terminal of the North Atlantic ferry. Host to a horde of steam passenger liners, owned by almost a dozen companies, all with their own ideas of operating the vessels. However all routinely followed the management system evolved by Charles McIver over a couple of decades from 1840 onwards.

In 1836 the British Government found their communications with Canada, Bermuda and the West Indies needed improvement. The current Post Office service was maintained by a flotilla of packet-schooners based on Falmouth. Although efficient, there was no way of forecasting a time of arrival to within a week. To carry mails by steamer across the Atlantic in 1833 was a concept much the same as a trip to the moon appeared in 1958, vaguely possible. A couple of successful Atlantic crossings in the mid-1830's by steam powered ships induced Post Office managers to accept that steam was the way forward and the government to announce that contracts to carry the mails by regular steamer were to be sought.

The McIver Brothers with a decade of experience managing and operating the Liverpool terminal of the short sea ferries between the Clyde and the Mersey were invited to join the consortium of Glasgow businessmen financing a new British & North American Steam Navigation Company. A coastal ferry service sailing two or three times weekly between Greenock and Liverpool was hard work but becoming routine. David kept the books and handled the commercial side of the business at their offices in Water Street. Charles, the younger brother, spent much of his time on the dockside attending to the quick turn-round of the ships. The ships were expensive to build and maintain so a fast turn-round at each end was imperative. The new service across the Atlantic with vessels at least twice as large would need careful monitoring, and with their current experience D. &. C. McIver & Co were appointed agents handling the traffic and collecting a percentage of the freight charges and passenger fares. Charles continued to superintend the ship and dockside operations. For the first five years he was to spend most of his working day on the waterfront, in the marine department, (the maintenance of the hulls, engines and rigging needed careful attention, as did careful selection of officers and crews). To justify the cost of fitting engines in what really were modified sailing vessels it was necessary to achieve a consistent and rapid turn-round at each end of a ferry service.

McIver was able to use the new Coburg Dock where the entrance was wide enough to take the large paddle steamers of the new service. Here each ship was to be loaded with mails, freight, stores and fuel: passenger

accommodation had to be cleaned and supplied with fresh bedding. Even in these conditions, the security of coal supplies had to be a concern. The docks were then open quays: theft was a regular occurrence. For almost a decade the ships were bunkered from small vessels direct from South Wales. When ready, the ships were moved out of dock to lie at anchor in the Sloyne allowing no chance of a delay through dock problems. After six years Charles McIver had a large mooring buoy laid in the Sloyne where the passengers and baggage could be embarked. The passengers boarded a tender (usually a local paddle steamer) in Coburg Dock to be carried out to the ship. The crew had no opportunity to slip away for a "quick drink", - they were on board. Any stragglers (or crew replacements) could be ferried out to the ship, but after a few successful regular trans-Atlantic crossings the advantage of working on the new service ensured that sober competent crew members clung to a safe, well-paid job.

Regular steamship services across the ocean over 2,500 miles were a novel feature and a new type of crew was needed. Sailors maintained and repaired rigging and sails and steered a ship according to the set of the sails and direction of the wind. However steering a paddle steamer in a seaway is not easy. The uneven pitching and rolling of the vessel with one paddle biting in the water, the other whirling in the air caused difficulty in holding a steady course. Even with the weather directly ahead or astern steering was difficult requiring special expertise. Charles McIver ordered the masters to select from the sailors, the best six helmsmen who could be relied upon for good steering: such specialist helmsmen he termed "quartermasters" and paid them an additional 10 shillings per month. To encourage a good lookout in the bitterly cold weather of the North Atlantic, the sailors were issued with good quality overcoats.

The experience of the engine-room staff was limited to Irish Sea conditions. New ships in a long, rolling ocean swell and a high sea could be dangerous for the engine-room personnel. Firemen had to be wary of being thrown around the stokeholds in conditions that were to exist for a couple of weeks every passage, west- or east-bound not merely on a 20-hour passage between the Clyde and the Mersey. Instructions were given to the engineers to avoid the danger of pipes etc freezing especially in the icy harbours of Halifax and Boston. It was also necessary to make provision for good quality coal fuel to be available in Canada. The McIvers always purchased best Welsh steam coal mostly from the area around Swansea. Their first vessels in 1840 used about 38 tons per day, about 550 tons per trip. Up to 1880 they brought the fuel to Liverpool in small sailing vessels of about 250 tons, and for a couple of decades sent the coal across the Atlantic in similar ships. Later in the century their vessels were using 800 tons per day. If poor quality coal was used the speed could drop by as much as 25%. Supplies and stores were purchased through local agents, in particular the Morison Brothers; Kenneth Morison

was Charles's brother-in-law. When, in 1845, David McIver died, Kenneth became Outside Superintendent, thus freeing Charles to spend more time in the Water Street offices. It was now Kenneth's work to coordinate the storing, fuelling and crewing of the ships and arrange labour for handling cargo, to employ engineers on maintenance, riggers and shore gangs for all departments attending to the ships whilst in dock.

From 1840 to about 1850 the new line had little or no substantial competition, but in 1848 the owner of the Collins Line persuaded the American Congress that competition was necessary and obtained the contract to carry the U.S. mails. For a few years Collins carried by far the greater number of passengers across the Atlantic east and west. Charles, however, refused to compete in terms of speed being more interested in safe passages.

New regulations were passed through Parliament in 1848 introducing qualifications for ships' officers and to drive out many who had drink problems. (Captain Judkins, the senior master in the Cunard fleet, was one of the first to pass the examination). At the beginning of each voyage the master was to produce a copy of Articles of Agreement to be signed by each member of the crew with the details of the individual member. This was signed in the presence of a Board of Trade shipping master, or a member of a local marine board (at Liverpool, the Pilotage Committee). At the end of the voyage the crew signed off and received their pay, again under the shipping master. Each member of the crew received a formal discharge certificate to be produced when applying for another job. Whilst the Cunard Line was sailing from Coburg Dock there was no problem. A member of the crew would call aboard the ship and show his certificate and other credentials to the head of department and, if taken on, received a note to be presented at the Custom House when the crew were being signed on. Coburg Dock was a mere mile from the Custom House.

In 1860, when the ships began to sail from Huskisson Dock, Charles made arrangements with the current Board of Trade Superintendent to sign articles on board the ship and had the shipping master or his deputy spend the day aboard the ship. This system removed the need for crew members to travel on foot three miles from the centre of Liverpool to the ship and then back to the Custom House. This practise continued over several years until a new Superintendent declared it was illegal and allowed signing on only in the Custom House. There was a suggestion that Charles did not "pay enough" for the benefit. This enraged Charles who, a couple of years later, used it in evidence to a "Parliamentary Inquiry into Unsafe Ships". However, by that time the bumptious officer had been promoted to a similar post in Ireland, and from 1868 on, the practise of signing articles aboard all large ocean liners was standard.

From the start the Cunard Line was a major enterprise having 500 employees, albeit some casual, working for the new concern. There were four

ships each having 90 men on board needing 20% extra for sickness, leaving for other work, retiring etc. 60 other personnel handled cargo, porterage, routine maintenance checks and repairs. Apart from the railways, which were currently becoming large employers, there were not many firms larger than the British & North American Steam Navigation Company (rapidly becoming more familiarly known as Mr.Cunard's Line). By 1856 perhaps as many as 1,700 men were dependent on work on or around these Atlantic ferries. From 1870 to 1880, UK steam tonnage grew from 1 million to 3 million tons. Liverpool's shipping business grew at the same rate so that by 1890 there was much demand for the local workforce both ashore and at sea. Skilled labour was at a premium and there were not a few strikes.

The mid-19th century was a time for other companies to enter the trade. The Inman Line, founded in 1852, did not enter competition with the Cunard Line until taking over the old Collins Line sailings in 1856. The Guion Line and Oceanic Steam Navigation Co (White Star) entered the transatlantic trades. They all copied, recruited from and modified the system built up by Charles McIver. The White Star Line went on further and by 1875 there was a White Star Laundry in Bootle and a White Star Engine Works. The latter became part of the Harland & Wolff engineering shop on the Dock Road, Bootle by World War 1. The White Star Laundry lasted until the early 1930's when the White Star and Cunard companies merged.

At the end of the 19th century, the following arrangement was almost set in stone. In 1853 the Cunard Line began to load their steamers in Huskisson Dock some three miles north of Princes Landing Stage, and after a steamer's loading was completed she was generally taken out of dock on the morning high water of the day of her departure, and according to the state of the tide, then proceeded to an anchorage, and thence to the Princes Landing Stage, or direct to the Stage. Sometimes, on account of neap tides, it was necessary for the vessel to leave the dock earlier and moor at the Cunard buoy in the Sloyne, before proceeding to the Stage. Cunard were the only company to possess a mooring buoy in the Sloyne.

The vessel reached the Stage shortly before the hour fixed for her departure, usually about 4 p.m. then, assisted alongside by a tug or tugs and made fast. The saloon passengers and their baggage were embarked, and the mails and special goods received on board. The time occupied at the Stage was sometimes as long as four hours, sometimes not more than half an hour to an hour, and on the average about two hours. The steerage passengers generally embarked from a tender while the vessel was in the river at anchor or at the buoy, but sometimes in dock if the vessel went direct to the Stage.

During the 1890's about seven steamers per week belonging to different lines used Princes Landing Stage for the purpose of embarking their passengers, and about the same number used the Stage for the purpose of disembarking passengers on their inward voyages. It was always a difficult

operation to bring those large steamers alongside the Stage owing to other vessels going in and out of dock and the other traffic in the river, and especially on strong flood or ebb tides. The steamers always left a dock at or near high water, but could berth alongside the Stage at all stages of the tide.

This routine brought problems. The liner companies engaged choice pilots who spent most of their pilot working times on their vessels. The ships saved time in inclement weather by boarding their own pilots at convenient places around the Irish Sea, Isle of Man, Cork or Moville. Difficulties could and did arise.

A good example, illustrating the movements of the vessels is the departure of the **Servia** in 1897. She left the Canada Dock on August 10th on the morning tide, in charge of pilot Gore, and anchored just upstream of the Princes Stage. Shortly before 4.30 p.m. she weighed anchor and moved alongside the Stage under Mr. Gore's charge. There she embarked her saloon passengers, passengers' baggage, and the mails for New York, sailing about three hours later. Mr. Gore disembarked at the outward compulsory pilotage limit at the North West Buoy. For these services the pilotage charge was disputed. The shipowners claimed that the anchoring and berthing at the Stage were all part of the same service and should not be charged as separate items.

At this point reference may be made to inward bound cattle steamers. For a number of years a very large trade was carried on in the importation of live cattle and sheep from Ireland, and increasingly from North America into the port of Liverpool. In 1897 400,000 head of cattle were exported to Europe from the USA and 100,000 head of cattle exported from Canada. In 1897 Boston handled the largest number of cattle with 154,406 head. New York was second with 135,155 head. British ports received the greatest part of these shipments with Liverpool handling nearly two thirds. White Star carried the most cattle and sheep i.e. 42,000 cattle, 31,000 sheep (also 4,500 horses). Wilson/Leyland carried 39,300 head (see below) and Atlantic Transport/National Line bringing 34,000. The Johnston Line showed remarkably good results carrying 32,689 cattle (28 died) between Baltimore and Liverpool. The figures for Cunard were, 17,566 head of cattle (23 died on passage), and 21,685 sheep (21 died), but they were about to strengthen their cattle trade with two new vessels, the **Saxonia** and the **Ivernia** to run between Liverpool and Boston, specifically designed for carrying livestock. To give some idea of the increasing importance for Liverpool of the trade, the shipments on Leyland steamers in 1904 show that the Line carried 131,002 head of cattle, 87,616 sheep, 282 horses with 44 sailings from Boston to Liverpool, 19 to London, 26 to Manchester.

Most of the liners leaving Liverpool with emigrants for North America had spare capacity on the eastward passage. This space became increasingly

used for carrying cattle; special arrangements at Liverpool were in place, supported by legislation.

On arrival the cattle and sheep were landed at the Wallasey and Woodside landing stages, on the Birkenhead side of the Mersey, under the provisions of the Diseases of Animals Act 1894, and the orders made in pursuance thereof, including the fixing of charges for the purpose. There were rules made by the Pilotage Board regulating the time, order, and manner for berthing vessels at the Stages. These Stages and a part of the Alfred Dock, Birkenhead, near the Wallasey Stage, were the only places in the port where the landing of livestock imported from abroad was permitted.

The practice of the Cunard Line, very similar to that of other lines with regard to cattle steamers, was as follows:

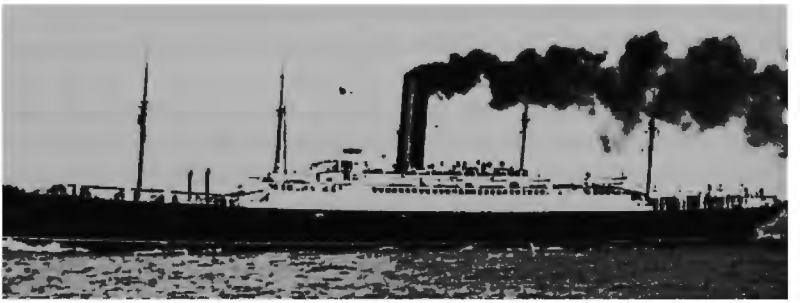
> A pilot was taken off the port, and as the steamer entered the river orders were sent off to her as to berthing at the Stages or the Alfred Dock. If the tide suited, and there were no steamers in the way at the Stages, the vessel proceeded direct to the chosen Stage. If the tide did not suit, or there was no available berth at the Stage, the vessel anchored. If the vessel had both sheep and cattle she generally went both to Wallasey and Woodside Stages, landing sheep at the one and cattle at the other, though sometimes both were discharged at the former Stage. If she had only cattle she went to Woodside or Wallasey Stage, or in some cases to the Alfred Dock, Birkenhead, where there was accommodation for both sheep and cattle. The arrangements depended on the room in the lairages. After landing the livestock, the vessel was taken direct into a dock on a suitable tide, or to anchor, and docked as soon as possible, the rest of her cargo being discharged in dock.

About 14 steamers per week belonging to different lines arrived with sheep and cattle. It was difficult to manoeuvre the vessels alongside the stages, owing both to river traffic and tide and the assistance of a tug or tugs was required. The vessels were made fast to the stages, and it took normally an hour or an hour and a half to land the cattle, and one to three hours to land the sheep, though it was stated that longer times were occasionally taken and that cattle ships had been three tides at the stages and finished in the Alfred Dock. To take case of the **Carinthia** *(See picture on page 43)* she was inward bound with cattle, sheep and other cargo from America, and about 8 30 p.m. on the 21st August 1897, pilot Durrant boarded her off Point Lynas, took charge and brought her into the river about 2am on the 22nd. She then proceeded in the usual way, first to the Wallasey Stage, where she discharged her sheep, and then to the Woodside Stage, where the cattle were landed. At 5 p.m. she was taken to Canada Dock entrance, but owing to her draught was not permitted to enter, and was therefore anchored and lightened. She did not dock until the evening tide of the 23rd. Mr. Durrant was in charge throughout and officially on his feet for over 36 hours!

The Cunard Line considered the pilotage as one service to be charged as such and in court sued for return of the money it had paid. They lost, the disputed charge had to be paid.

After 1910 the system remained but things were changing. The larger new vessels of Cunard and White Star were using Southampton. Increasing numbers of frozen meat cargoes from Australia and New Zealand began to supersede the importation of livestock.

The basic handling of ship movements remained the same as in 1840.



*Cunard Liner **Saxonia** launched by John Brown in 1899 remained in Cunard service until November 1924*

A Famous Grave

In Thurstaston Churchyard can be found the grave of Thomas Henry Ismay, founder of the Oceanic Steam Navigation Company, better known as the White Star Line.

Born on 7th January 1837, at Maryport in Cumbria, his father had been to sea before setting up a grocery and a shipbuilding business. In 1853, at the age of fifteen, Thomas was apprenticed to shipbrokers Imrie, Tomlinson & Company. Four years later he set up as a shipbroker on his own account, later establishing an office in Water Street, Liverpool, and trading as T H Ismay & Company.

On 7th April, 1859 he married Margaret Bruce, the daughter of a Liverpool shipowner. They had nine children,

Thomas became a director of National Line in 1864. On his own account he acquired sailing ships sending one to Australia in 1866. Following the collapse of H T Wilson & Cunningham, in 1869, Thomas acquired the houseflag, name and goodwill of their White Star Line. Being very ambitious he ordered four ships for a Liverpool – New York service. The rest of the story is well known.

Thomas Ismay died in April 1907

What other famous, or infamous, maritime graves and memorials are to be found in Merseyside and in its Churchyards? - Contributions welcome

MERCHANT SEAMEN'S RECORDS

(Part 1)

By Michael Watts

Having researched his family history, which revealed an ancestor who acquired a schooner, in the East Coast Trade, Michael Watts wrote a booklet to assist other family history researchers and this is a summary of an article which appeared in the "Cheshire Ancestor"(with the permission of the Cheshire Family History Society and the Author) in 2001, which might be useful to maritime researchers. This booklet was first published in 1986, reprinted in 1991, with an updated edition produced in 2001. [NB Any prices and addresses quoted below are those current in 2001]

Current summary of records by the Registry of Shipping and Seamen

An eleven page Information Leaflet on Historical Records may be obtained from the Registry of Shipping and Seamen (RSS), PO Box 165, Cardiff, CF14 5FU. Tel: 029 20 768227. E- mail RSS@mcga.gov.uk. In sections 1 and 2 below, a précis is given of the sections of the leaflet that relate to the registration of

1 Merchant Navy seaman's sea service records

1.1 - 1992 - 2000 Sea Service Records

Details of a merchant seaman's service are available for the above years, at a charge of £11.00 per logbook from the RSS.

1.2 - 1973 to 1991 Sea Service Records

The RSS cannot supply information concerning the sea service details of individual Merchant Seamen from 1973 to 1991. After 1973 the Registrar General was not required by legislation to keep these records.

1.3 - 1941 to 1972 Fifth Register of Merchant Seaman's Service.

Records of individual Merchant Seamen's sea service details are held by the RSS in alphabetical surname order. These details include the following information: Name of seaman. Date of birth, Discharge book number. Rank. Details of the ships on which he served, these include: Name of ship and official number, date of engagement (joining ship). Date of discharge (leaving ship). These records are in classification:-

BT382, at the Public Records Office.

Details shown in BT382 are similar to those contained in an individual seaman's discharge book and are thus confidential to the seaman himself or, if deceased, his next of kin. If you wish to obtain details of a family member you must provide documentary evidence that you are related to the seaman concerned.

Note:- Some information on some but not all the Fifth Register entries can be found in the on-line catalogue PROCAT in series BT372. This system holds records relating to individual seamen which were filed together in pouches, which appear to have been used as a kind of "safety deposit box". Their contents, however, cover the period 1913 to 1972. When seamen were discharged some or all of their documents were placed in pouches and these include discharges of seamen who were originally registered in the Central Index Register of 1913 to 1941. Most pouches contain the individual's British Seaman's Identity card, bearing a photograph and fingerprints. The online catalogue. PROCAT, includes seaman's names, date and place of birth.

If you are trying to obtain details of a seaman' s service a fee of £11.00 is charged for an initial search of the records. If no records are held this fee is not refundable. Having paid the fee you would then be advised whether or not there are the records and will be given details of the seaman. There is a fee for this document that is based on £6.60 for the seaman's first voyage and £1.10 for each subsequent voyage. A Certificate of Sea Service for a seaman who had sailed on four ships should therefore cost £9.90

Cheques or postal orders should be made payable to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). If writing from abroad please ensure that any cheque is made out in sterling and may be drawn at an UK bank.

1941 is the earliest date which the RSS hold records of seamen. Records prior to this date have been transferred to the Public Record Office, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU.

1.4 - 1913 to 1940 Fourth Register of Merchant Seaman's service.

These records are available at the Public Record Office and are held in classifications: -

BT 364 Register of Seamen, Combined Numerical Index (CR1, CR2 and CR10). Microfiche of these three index series are held in the following classes:
BT 348 Register of Seamen, Central Index, Numerical Series (CR2),
BT 349 Register of Seamen, Central Index, Alphabetical Series (CR1) &
BT 350 Register of Seamen, Special Index, Alphabetical Series (CR10).

The original records for the above named classifications are now held at the following address: Southampton Archives, Southampton City Council, South Block Civic Centre, Southampton, S014 PLY.

1.5 - 1857 - 1918 for gaps between these records

This period is a "black hole" for Registers of Seamen! Certificates of competency and service exist for masters, mates and engineers, but the ordinary seaman's career can generally only be traced, in crew lists, if his ships' names are known.

1.6 - 1854 - 1856 Third Register of Merchant Seamen's service.

This register of Merchant Seamen's service was opened in 1854. This was arranged in alphabetical order and contained the following details of seamen: age, place of birth, details of voyage, including name of ships and ports of departure. In 1856 it was considered that the obligation to maintain a register of seamen was satisfied by the crew list and the register was closed.

These records are held at the Public Record Office in the following classification: -

BT 116 Register of Seamen: Series III.

1.7 - 1845 - 1854 Second Register of Merchant Seaman's Service.

The Merchant Shipping Act 1844 stipulated that every British seaman should have a register ticket. The details given when applying for a ticket were: Name, Date and place of birth. Date and capacity of first going to sea. Capacity since: any Royal Navy ship served in, and capacity; present employment at sea, home address.

These records are held at the Public Record Office under the following classifications: -

BT 113 Registers of Seaman's Tickets.(1845-1853).In Certificate number order.

BT 114 Alphabetical Index to registers of Seaman's Tickets.

BT 115 Alphabetical Register of Masters tickets.

1.8 - 1835 to 1844 First Register of Merchant Seaman's service.

The registration of seamen was introduced by the Merchant Shipping Act 1835. These records are held at the Public Records Office under the following classifications: -

BT 120 Register of Seamen Series I. (1835-1836). These records are arranged alphabetically.

BT 112 Register of Seamen: Series II. (1835-1844).

BT 119 Alphabetical Index to Seamen. This index provides the registration number of the seaman.

2 Log Books and Crew Agreements

Logbooks are the records of a period of time in the life of a vessel, these usually are in existence for a one year to eighteen month period. The logbook is divided up into two sections, the tabular section and the narrative section. The tabular section contains the information concerning "Notice of Freeboard" this is a record of all the ports the vessel docked at, and other information. This form is used for tax purposes. Births and deaths are also recorded in the tabular section along with other more routine information. The narrative section of the logbook contains written entries concerning various events that occur on each voyage: disciplinary matters, illness amongst the crew and accidents.

2.1- Fees for photocopies of logbooks.

There is a charge of £ 11 to extract a logbook from these records and also additional photocopying charges. Please note blank pages with no information on are not photocopied.

2.2 - Crew Agreements

This document is a legal agreement between the crew of a vessel and the owners. It lists all the crew by name, includes their signatures and the last ship on which they sailed. When requesting a copy of a logbook the attached crew agreement would also be photocopied.

2.3 - Log Books and Crew Agreements 1991 -1999

These records are held at the Registry of Shipping and Seamen in their entirety. A certificate of sea service for individual seaman who sailed on ships from this period may be obtained from these records

2.4 - Log Books and Crew Agreements 1977 -1990

A 10% sample of all log books for the above period 1977 to 1990 are held at the Public Record Office, in classification: -
BT 99 Agreements and Crew Lists, Series 11.

The 10% between 1981-1989 are held at RSS awaiting transfer to the Public Record Office.

2.5 - Log Books and Crew Agreements 1951 to 1976

A 10% sample of all logbooks from the above period are held at the Public Record Office, in classification: -
BT 99 Agreements and Crew Lists, Series 11. -

80% of the records are now held at the Maritime History Archive, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, A1C 5S7 The remaining 10% of these logbooks and crew agreements are kept at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, SE10 9NF. This last address keeps the years ending in "5",ie. 1955, 1965,1975.

2.6 - Log Books and Crew Agreements 1947 to 1948

The Public Record Office holds all surviving logbooks and crew agreements for 1947 and 1948. These include both Merchant and Fishing vessels.

2.7 - Ships Logbooks and Crew Agreements 1939 to 1946. & 1950

Log books and crew agreements for the above period are held at the RSS, by special permission of the Public Record Office to help with the issue of medals. These are held in order of the ship's Official Number. It is therefore advisable to find out the Official Number of the ship in which you are

interested before contacting this office. They would also require the name of the ship. NB Log books and crew agreements for the year 1949 are currently unavailable, they are in the process of being prepared for the Public Record Office.

2.8 - Allied Crew List 1939 -1945

The following documents concerning allied vessels are held in alphabetical order of ship's name: Returns of British members of the crew of a foreign ship that has been requisitioned or chartered by, or on behalf of H M Government. Account of changes in the crew of a foreign-going ship.

Agreement and list of the crew of a foreign-going ship. Some Official Logbooks of these vessels are also held. The records also include those records of the British crew of allied vessels who were lost at sea. An additional record was also kept of the British seamen who served on Dutch and Norwegian ships. These are held in alphabetical ship order.

2.9 - Ships log books and Crew Lists 1861 to 1938

10% of log books and crew agreements for the above period are held at the Public Record Office in classification: -

BT 99. Agreements and Crew Lists, Series II.

80% of the records are at the Maritime History Archive, Canada.

The remaining log books are held at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. They hold the years where the last digit ends in "5", from 1861 onwards- ie 1865, 1875,1885 etc.

Log books and crew agreements not included in the above for the years 1861 to 1913 have been retained by some local records offices. If you wish to obtain a list of where these records are held please write in to the Registry of Shipping and this will be supplied.

2.10 - Ships Log Books and Crew Lists 1835-1860

From 1835 onwards the masters of foreign going British ships over 80 tons were required to carry on board a written agreement with every seaman employed. These agreements contained the following: wage rate. The capacity he served in, and the nature of the voyage.

These records are held at the Public Record Office under the following classification: -

BT 98. Agreement and Crew Lists: Series I.

Records prior to 1854 are arranged by the port of registry numbers, later records are arranged in Official Number order.

From 1852 onwards the official logbook of the vessel was kept with the agreement and crew list.

2.11 - Ships Log Books and Crew Lists 1747 -1851

From 1747 onwards masters or owners of merchant ships were obliged to keep muster rolls of each voyage. These contained: names of the seamen employed on the ship, their home address, when they joined ship and the last ship on which they sailed. This system continued to be compiled until 1851. These records are held at the Public Record Office in: -

BT 98. Agreements and Crew Lists: Series I.

(There are in fact very few surviving records for the period 1747 to 1834, and only for Shields, Plymouth, Dartmouth, Liverpool and "other ports".)

2.12 - Special Ships 1861 onwards

A selection was made of log books and crew agreements from famous ships, for example the SS **Titanic** and SS **Great Britain**. These records are held at the Public Record Office in category: -

BT 100. Agreements and Crew Lists Series 111.

A 10% sample of similar records for fishing vessels of less than 80 tons, can be found at the Public Record Office in category: -

BT 144. Agreements and Crew Lists Series IV for the period 1884 -1919.

Later records of fishing vessels are included in BT 99 (as above)

2.13 - World War 1 Log Books and Crew Agreements

Log books and crew agreements for 1914-1918 are held at the Public Record Office in classification: -

BT 165. Agreements and Crew Lists.

2.14 - Log Books containing entries of Births and Deaths at Sea

Log books containing information concerning births and deaths at sea were segregated. These log books for the years 1902 -1938 are held at the Public Record Office in classification: -

BT 165. Ship's Official Log Books.

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CAPTAIN H W WILKINSON, MASTER MARINER

Part 2 Continuing the story of the service of Captain Wilkinson, of the Straits SS Co as recounted to M A Savage and P E Threadingham

Ammunition Carrier

On 15 March 1943 Harold joined the **Kepong**, (Captain Ebenezer Evans, "a Welsh B....", Mr. L Popplestone, Chief Engineer) as Chief Officer. The ship had arrived in the Mediterranean recently. She was an older Straits Steamship Company ship built in Hong Kong in 1916, steam driven, coal burning, but with only one, four furnace, boiler. She had an armament of Oerlikons, machine guns and a rocket-throwing "pillar-box" with Maritime Regiment DEMS gunners. The Chinese crew, rescued from a sunken ship, drank too much and were very "anti", being eventually replaced by Indians.

The ship had no heating system but the Captain purchased a few paraffin heaters one for himself, one for the officers and two or three for the crew. The crew members slept in the engine-room on the catwalks.

There was a suggestion that the ship should be converted for carrying cased petrol but when I pointed out the galley on the upper deck just two feet from the hatchway and the open (coal-fired) donkey boiler on deck nearby, there was a very quick change of mind

The ship carried ammunition, with bombs and shells in the lower holds and various magazines in the 'tween decks for detonators and other delicate items. 2,000 and 500 pound bombs were brought to the quayside in Alexandria by train and were offloaded by pushing them off the edge of the trucks to drop onto the concrete. Frequently live sheep were carried on deck for the Indian forces.

The Captain was in the habit of attending convoy conferences and collecting the routing instructions, which he promptly locked in his safe and would not show to anybody. These routing instructions contained the details of the mobile light-houses (mounted on trucks) which flashed a Morse-code letter. Knowledge of their positions and code-letters were essential for navigation. The Divisional Sea Transport Officer was told but, when questioned, the Captain said, "that he could not trust his Chief Officer", whereas the real problem was that he did not understand the instructions himself.

The parsimonious Captain Evans kept his toothpaste in his safe, as he was sure the stewards would steal it. He bought NAAF1 cigarettes which he then sold to the crew at 50% profit. On discovering this, Harold bought cigarettes and sold them to the crew at cost price.

Voyages were made to the various North African ports, one of the most noteworthy being Benghazi where the ship was moored stern-on to an inner

mole. The main breakwaters had been breached in many places and so offered little or no protection from heavy seas. Once a strong gale carried away all the stern lines except one heavy wire. For three days the **Kepong** wallowed around, rolling heavily, within about 100 feet of the wreck of another vessel sunk previously in a similar gale.

Captain Evans was relieved by Captain A Brown and Harold was relieved by Mr. P. A. Bulbrooke.

Provisions for the Army in Italy and Elsewhere

Harold's next ship, which he joined in Alexandria in August 1943, had been the SS **Nang Sang Nawa** but was now the **Empire Adur** (Captain A B Durrant) and managed by the Straits Steamship Company. She was an ex-Siamese, ex-American, oil-fired lumber carrier with engines and bridge aft and one long hold with two hatchways. She had wooden masts with 57 foot wooden derricks and an enormous winch aft with cylinders all of two feet in diameter (for towing log rafts).

The Second Officer was Egyptian, who no doubt had some qualifications, but whose sole attribute appeared to be that he had shaken hands with King Farouk. The Chief Engineer was a Welshman, about 72 years old, and with a second-class certificate, who had come back to sea for war service after many years ashore. Within a few days of my arrival a Straits Steamship Company Chief Engineer, Mr. d'Aranjo, took over from him. The Second Engineer was Turkish, his sum total of English appearing as 'job no bloody good' and 'job yes bloody good'. The Third Engineer and Radio Officer were Egyptian and there was a refrigeration engineer named Morgan. Later the Second and Third Engineers, Radio Officer, and I think Morgan, were replaced by men from the UK.

The ship's armament included a 1914 Hotchkiss gun with the rifling worn almost smooth. The DEMS gunners were from the Maritime Regiment. **Empire Adur** was nearing completion of her conversion into a refrigerated cargo ship by dividing the after hold. One part was insulated while the other contained the refrigerating machinery. The forward hold was used by the FMO (Fleet Mail Office) for carrying parcels, foodstuffs and kitbags for the troops in Italy.

The ship went to Port Said to load up meat from New Zealand which consisted mostly of lamb carcases but there was also some boned beef of box-like shape rather like bales of rubber. (This was meant for service hospitals.) The meat had been landed by lighter at Port Said into refrigerated storage and then transferred to the **Empire Adur** on her arrival. These transfers allowed sufficient warming for the lamb to start rotting from the inside, so the procedure was later changed and the supplying ship waited until the **Empire Adur** could go alongside for direct transfer.

The first few voyages were to Tripoli and Malta. Then when the large ships went as far as Malta, this became the loading port, loading direct from ship to ship. They usually joined a convoy at Malta before proceeding to Taranto via Sicily. Invariably the ship had priority berthing, passing through the Mare Piccolo to her berth where the meat was discharged on to wharf and thence to lorries for distribution. The escort for the voyage was often provided by the Italian Navy. Taranto was the great Italian naval base and most of it appeared to be a vast 'red light' district.

Empire Adur was an old ship, unable to move far without her boiler furnace burners playing up. Later, at Malta, Naval engineers swore they were made from old gas piping. Every so often there would be a loud "woomph" from down below and smoke many feet high would emit from the funnel, much to the consternation of nearby vessels and irritation of the naval escorts. Invariably, she belched forth black smoke: the escorts threatened to divert us to other ports, to let us proceed independently, and even to sink us. All to no avail. When however as sometimes did happen, convoy orders were to make smoke, **Empire Adur** came into her own. Within a few minutes she could envelope the ships in a black pall. She was in so many ways a trial and a headache to all. However, after the high-octane carrying **Pahang** and the ammunition carrying **Kepong** I was content to be there - nothing in the cargo could go off with a bang.

Among her disconcerting vagaries was that the nut holding on the steering wheel would slacken and fall off. On at least two occasions in convoy at night the Indian helmsman walked out of the wheelhouse carrying the wheel with him!

One night in March 1944 when anchored inside the breakwater at Taranto after discharging the cargo, the boiler had a blowback and set the stokehold on fire. After considerable effort the fire was put out with extinguishers and the ship sailed to Malta for repairs. New burners had to be sent from the UK, which would take some time.

Harold stayed in a hotel in Valletta for three weeks whilst waiting for another ship. His first room had walls several feet thick and there were steps up to the window high on one wall, but when his Captain complained to the agent, Harold was moved to the penthouse honeymoon suite with a bed large enough for four people and a luxurious sitting room. He often visited two naval lieutenants in their flat where they were ruled by the Maltese maid, aged not much over 14, who used to roast them if they came home late. He also dined with aristocratic Maltese friends who suffered no shortages in their household: there was even Black Label whisky.

Harold took passage to Alexandria in a Princess class 25-knot Canadian Pacific ship from Vancouver. The colonel in charge of troops expected him to take his turn at inspecting the prisoners on board and checking their food and welfare. Harold explained that he was a civilian with no knowledge of the

applicable conditions and refused to do this. The £70 compensation for his lost possessions still rankled. The colonel would not give way, so Harold ignored his call when it came.

Harold travelled by train from Port Said across the Nile and the desert to Cairo station and then on to Alexandria, where he was met by the agent and taken to rejoin the **Kepong** on 3 April 1944. It was during his absence that she made her famous trip to Leros. The Captain, Archibald Brown, was an elderly man from the Hebrides and was content to leave most of the running of he ship to Harold, who commented that the cargoes continued to be shells, bombs small to huge, incendiaries, detonators etc. and sheep.

The war in the Mediterranean now took him further afield, to Tripoli, Bone, Cagliari and Thessaloniki, Ancona in the Adriatic, where a heavy snowfall was experienced, Haifa, Naples, Brindisi, Bari and Barletta, which is on the East coast of Italy. For the Italian ports, Augusta in Sicily was the first call for onward routing and convoy forming.

At Thessaloniki they had to rig fire-hoses to fend off thieves. On one visit to Bone, in Tunisia, a submarine berthed alongside. A visit to Bari was a few days after an ammunition ship had exploded causing utter devastation.

To help cope with cold weather the doors of the officer's cabins which opened on to the weather deck had been sealed and new doors fitted opening in to the dining saloon.

Changes in the officers brought a new bachelor Chief Engineer, Willie Tait (sometimes unfairly known as "Irritate"). While Willie Tait was unwell in bed, the new Second Officer invited five Wrens on board, one of whom went into Willie's cabin and jumped up on to his bunk to introduce herself; at which Willie was much put out.

In a port in the south of Sicily, the ship had a boat down. The soldiers from the Maritime Regiment asked to use it as they had seen oranges growing. They quickly returned when the owner of the orange grove appeared with a shotgun.

In a two-column convoy winding its way through the minefields in the Straits of Messina, Harold went to take over the watch at 4pm. He found the officer on watch in fits of laughter and just putting away the Aldis lamp Apparently an American ship carrying ammunition had considered that **Kepong** had come too close for comfort and had signalled that she would be reported for endangering a ship "laden with powder". The immediate reply from **Kepong** had been "Max Factor 9?"

Once Harold watched American army stevedores unloading ammunition so carelessly that many of the rounds were damaged and spilt cordite was being shovelled in to the back of a lorry. When he remonstrated with the sergeant in charge he got a very rude answer. Someone must have noticed what was going on because the next day American army officers

arrived on board and asked Harold what he had seen. The sergeant was sent for and the stripes were torn from his sleeves.

While in the Bay of Naples Harold was asked by the Italian stevedore-manager to obtain a sack of white flour so that the family could make pasta. This was duly provided and Harold was entertained in their house. In return the manager provided the ship with large quantities of fruit, latterly on the stem so that it would keep longer. Pompeii was within easy walking distance and Harold and others frequently visited it, wandering freely among the ruins in sight of Vesuvius. The opera in Naples had been shut by the Germans but by now was thriving with every seat taken. Harold went on a number of occasions. No one else from the ship would go with him.

Iron from Spain to England

The ship sailed to Gibraltar in March 1945. With naval divers on board they went to Huelva to load iron pyrites; the divers conducting a bottom-search for limpet mines. On returning to Gibraltar they joined a small convoy for England on 25 March. The convoy split up and the **Kepong** headed up the English Channel and on a sunny day Harold saw the beautiful green English countryside for the first time in nearly six years. The ship anchored off Southend pier on 3 April before joining a coastal convoy to Hull, arriving on 5 May. There the iron pyrites was discharged.

Harold saw the repairs started and was then free to travel to Sheffield, for his first leave for nearly six years. *(To be concluded)*

MEMBERS' QUERIES

An unsolved mystery raised by LNRS Member Charles Dawson ; can anyone help?

A SAIL-TRAINING SHIP FOR MERSEYSIDE?

The training of young men for future employment in the merchant service has always been considered most appropriately carried out in sailing ships as a way of developing character in an atmosphere of dedication to the task and the comradeship of others.

It is probably a surprise to many Merseysiders that the great seaman and novelist Joseph Conrad was in 1920 asked by Lawrence Durning Holt, (1882-1961) Manager from 1908 to 1953 of the Ocean Steam Ship Co, better known as Blue Funnel, to put forward his ideas on the design of a sail training ship for the company's up-and-coming officers. Conrad rose to the task with enthusiasm. On 20 July 1920, he wrote a short letter of thanks in his idiosyncratic English to Holt, followed five days later with a memorandum in considerable detail, twelve pages long. Regarding training ship voyages,

Conrad considered Australia or New Zealand as the best destinations, *"out by the Cape and round by the Horn"*. His reasons were,

> "*the healthy climate, the number of meteorological regions traversed which will develop sound judgement as to weather, the comparative facility of the voyage, combined with a great variety of general experience which a round trip of that sort will offer. The length of passages need not be an objection; the complete training of a young seaman ought to include the experience of many days together at sea between water and sky. It would have a spiritual and practical value for him even if he is destined never to be out of sight of land for more than a few days in his future professional life*".

A period of 18 months was his suggested length of time of sail training in a cadet's four-year apprenticeship. Assuming that the ship would be expected to be self-supporting, it was Conrad's deliberate opinion that her size should be limited strictly to the tonnage which would enable her under modern conditions to pay her expanses. He therefore suggested, "*however shocking it might appear to the minds of men who own and manage fleets of large steamships*", - 1,400-1,500 tons as the appropriate tonnage, citing the Liverpool "Sierra's", as his favourite choice for type. There were fourteen of these, with Spanish-sounding names, most of them iron vessels - four were of steel - with ship rig, ranging in tonnage from 1,385 to 1,855. They were built between 1875 and 1889, six on the Clyde, the rest in England, including three in Liverpool, two by T Royden & Sons and one by W.H.Potter & Sons. The **Sierra Cadena** built by Royden as the **Calistoga** in 1884 was the largest, an iron ship of 1,855 tons, 268.1 feet long. Conrad advocated a very roomy forecastle head and a long poop extending as far as the main rigging. The object of this was to reduce the area of the main deck as much as possible, helping to make the ship more comfortable. Ships with long poops are always the driest in all weathers and safest for the individuals having to move about the deck in heavy weather. The main deck would have on it a deck-house in the space between the fore coaming of the main hatch and the foremast, leaving a clear passage across at each end having wide alleyways on each side. The house would contain the vertical boiler for raising steam for the windlass, the accommodation for the ship's crew and the berths of the ship's petty officers. Under the forecastle head there would be space at the sides for various store-rooms, or the electric light plant, if carried, could be installed on one side and the store-rooms on the other.

Conrad could not help here relating back to his own experience when he was chief officer of the **Torrens**, to which he was appointed on 25 November 1891, suggesting that he was probably one of the few left to quote this experience! She was of 1,270 register tons and the greatest number of people he had on board was 113. There was also room for 50 passengers, a

milk cow, for the children, and a fair amount of other livestock, yet her space was not inconveniently crowded and no passenger, generally making the round trip, ever complained of cramped accommodation. What would modern cruise passengers think of that? Conrad detailed the various quarters he was acquainted with and suggested a similar arrangement for the proposed ship.

He went into detail about lighting, what watch system should be used, and what anchors, sails and boats she should carry. On the latter, he went into great detail regarding boat practice, recounting that in his days when they had a test, generally at eight o'clock in the morning at the change of watches, the whole operation from start to finish had been cut down to seven minutes. Conrad did not touch on navigational studies, but did remark that the greatest care and accuracy should be required from the cadets acting as assistant officers of the watch - and generally from all senior boys - in keeping the ship's dead reckoning; a point of seamanship rather than navigation.

He finished by pleading that the ship should have no auxiliary propulsion of any kind. A ship's safety, he said, apart from the "Act of God", rests entirely in the hands of the men who are aboard of her, from the highest to the lowest in their different degrees. Machinery, per se, will not make a ship safer and the saved space would be useful for other purposes.

Holt's suggestion, as to size of cadet crew, was for 60-80 cadets; Conrad suggested keeping to the lower figure, or even less. Here he had in mind the possibility of some accident and its effect on the public mind.

As far as is known, no such sail training ship was ever built by Blue Funnel, but recently, Mr. Stan Amos, a member of the Blue Funnel Association, a band of "old boys" some 1100 strong, showed me a detailed drawing by a George Turnbull of a five-masted sailing ship 390 feet long with twin screw diesel auxiliary propulsion. We can imagine Conrad's comment on that! This drawing had turned up some years ago at a model boat club meeting, when a member of the public presented a box containing some Holt memorabilia. These were drawings of the **Xanthus** oil separation barge, built by Cammell, Laird in 1927, together with the drawings of the sailing ship. Also in the box were some lifeboat drawings, and since these were stamped with the Alfred Holt & Co stamp and drawn at the same time by George Turnbull it seems reasonable to assume that the drawing of the five-masted sailing ship was to be proposed to Holts.

I have been unable to find George Turnbull's name as one of Holt's naval architects; I have these listed as Wortley, Flett and Meek. This is an appeal to anyone who may be able to help with more information on the history of this find.

THE LIFELINE

By LNRS member Estelle Lumb

In November nineteen forty, when these home-torn islands stood,
When hope depended on vast tides of iron, timber, food,
Munitions, copper, chemicals, machine tools, petrol, oil,
Our merchant seamen crossed the world with blood and sweat and toil.

From Nova Scotia, homeward bound, a motley convoy sailed.
The **Mopan** lightly forged ahead and **Morska Wola** trailed
But thirty-seven merchantmen ploughed on in company,
A lifeline racing death across three thousand miles of sea.

Four rows of ships, nine columns, wheeled in frequent zig zag drill.
And to keep them all on station needed every master's skill,
While firemen sweated heaving coal and cold, cramped lookouts scanned
The gently swelling ocean for a U-boat close at hand.

Eleven tankers: any one might be a raging pyre.
The **Atheltemplar, Athelempress** and **James J. Maguire**.
The **Delphinula, Erodona, San Demetrio**:
Their beamy holds could fuel a fire to set the sky aglow.

If **Trewellard** were torpedoed, her unlucky men might drown:
Twelve aircraft, steel and pig iron could so quickly pull her down.
Her hull would fill; her keel would tilt; in seconds she would be
A massive coffin dropping to the bottom of the sea.

The **Beaverford** was carrying a lethal cargo too:
Few mariners remained alive when ammunition blew.
And any man escaping the gigantic blast would still
Face dying from exhaustion in the North Atlantic chill.

The master of the **Beaverford** knew his lease would be short;
He'd felt a strange uneasiness before the ships left port
And told some friends their special meal would be their final one.
So, gravely, he stood waiting for his time to die to come.

And near the centre lay the escort, weapons stern and bow:
The **Jervis Bay**, a liner once, armed merchant cruiser now.
Like **Rawalpindi, Scharnhorst's** prey, she'd quickly been equipped
With six-inch guns. But high, thin walls could easily be ripped.

A thousand miles had passed but that huge graveyard still stretched east
And the working and the watching of the convoy never ceased.
Some smoke rose north and then they saw a battleship appear.
The **Ramillies**? Or **Resolution**? No, it was the **Scheer**!

The **Admiral Scheer** had broken out, the sister of **Graf Spee**.
And now she smashed the ocean where the nearest vessels lay,
So closely ranged, so poorly armed, so slow, so far from land.
But **Jervis Bay** was changing course; to save the rest she'd stand.

They all prepared to scatter as she steamed full ahead
Towards the pocket battleship, to shield them as they fled.
Her armament was ancient, yet the great white ensign flew:
No matter what the cost might be, the freighters must get through,

So Captain Fegen fired red rockets, signalling 'make smoke'.
And then his ship, not thickly hulled but filled with heart of oak,
Took **Scheer's** next hot salvo as each quartermaster's wheel
In Britain's hidden lifeline turned its heavy-laden steel.

As six eleven-inch guns matched range the fires began to grow,
Electrics shattered, steering jammed and sea poured in below.
In little more than twenty minutes, now a flaming wreck,
She settled mutely, dead and wounded littering each deck.

Cold twilight gloomed as all who could abandoned **Jervis Bay**
And the bristling raider's captain sought more valuable prey
Among the fleeing merchantmen, now left to fend alone,
To stay afloat by skill and will and bring their cargoes home.

The **San Demetrio** was near and soon began to blaze.
But by some miracle she held and ghosted round for days,
Till sixteen crewmen, weak and sore but resolute, returned
To work her back to Scotland with much precious fuel unburned.

The **Rangitiki** - looking like a trooper by her size -
Was Captain Kranke's quarry but the smokescreen took his prize.
Then **Andalusian**, midships hit, was lucky enough to hold,
And vanished in the murkiness the favouring wind had rolled.

No fortune's hand for poor **Maidan**: her sailors gave their all;
She quickly ripped apart and sank in one great fireball.
And then **Trewellard**'s turn arrived to burn and fall a tomb:
A further seventeen lost lives; in minutes only spume.

Now starshell swept the darkness till it trapped one, picture-bright.
And **Kenbane Head** became the next to sink that bitter night.
From jolly boats survivors watched as high waves heaved around
Their broken tramp until she went. Then **Beaverford** was found.

Her guns were never meant for this, yet Captain Pettigrew,
With all the powers of providence, good seamanship and crew,
Held off the heavy Kriegsmarine, caused a long delay
While slower vessels laboured on and darkly slipped away.

Their masters witnessed flashes and the distant, angry sound
Of thunder-cracks as Kranke's guns again began to pound.
But **Beaverford**, torn, burned and crippled, doggedly held on
Till a deep torpedo came to kill: one thrust and she was gone.

A furious roar as valiant bows rose high above the waves,
And seventy-seven more were sent to lie in unknown graves.
But **Scheer's** hunt was finished and, although by chance she passed
The **Fresno City** and sent her down, the rest were safe at last.

The **Jervis Bay's** great sacrifice was honoured. She became
A paradigm of duty done; the nation knew her name.
For Valour were the words inscribed on Captain Fegen's Cross,
Marked for all the men who died and all who mourned their loss.

But please remember **Kenbane Head, Trewellard, Beaverford,**
Maidan and **Fresno City**, and the toil, the sweat, the blood,
On every ship which perished as her flag flew bravely red,
Paying the price of lifelines with her wounded and her dead.

The Lifeline gives a somewhat compressed account of the attack on convoy HX84, on 5 November 1940, by the German pocket-battleship **Admiral Scheer.** I came across the **Beaverford** story in "Canadian Pacific", by George Musk, whilst researching the career of my grandfather, who had been her master in the early 1930s. I then read about a dozen more books (some of them are listed below) that gave differing versions of events; so it was difficult to piece together exactly what happened. The blowing up of SS **Beaverford** at about 10.45pm seems to have been widely witnessed, but I was unable to establish how long she had been under continuous fire. Although, at 10,048g, she was the second largest merchant ship in the convoy, it seems hardly possible that she could have delayed the **Scheer** for any length of time. But Captain Kranke evidently believed that she was better armed than she was (one 3 inch gun; one 4 inch gun) and, having been ordered not to hazard his ship, he behaved in an exceptionally cautious way.

Before the war, the SS **Beaverford** had been 'adopted' by the pupils of a school in Tottenham. When they heard of her loss they put up a memorial consisting of a watercolour of the ship by S. Stott and a bronze plaque, but these were removed within 25 years. I have managed to trace the plaque, which was found in a box of scrap metal, treasured by its finder for 30 years, and is now owned by a naval researcher. The painting is still missing.

Sources: Canadian Pacific, by G.Musk; The Jervis Bay, by G.Pollock; Armed Merchant Cruisers, by K.Poolman; The Sinking of the Kenbane Head, by S.McAughtry; The Red Duster at War, by J.Slader.

***Beaverbrae** sistership the **Beaverford**.*
*The **Beaverbrae** was herself sunk in the North Atlantic on 25th March 1941*

BIDSTON OBSERVATORY

From Astronomy to Oceanography

The work previously undertaken by the Observatory at Bidston, Birkenhead, is being transferred to another location in Liverpool. The Web Site of the Proudman Institute, the last operators of the Observatory, contains the following summary of the Observatory's history, and is printed below with the kind permission of the Institute

1609 The first reference to a wooden windmill on Bidston Hill appeared in manuscripts.

1763 A signal house on Bidston Hill was first mentioned, although Bidston had probably been used as a lookout from pre-Roman days. A telegraph service was set up to give early notice of the arrival of ships in the Port of Liverpool. Over one hundred signalling poles were erected, extending from north of the lighthouse to beyond the windmill,

belonging mainly to the merchants in Liverpool. As the ships carrying their cargoes were spotted out at sea, the relevant flags were raised and could be seen from Liverpool. The advance knowledge of their ships' arrivals enabled the owners to hasten the unloading of their cargoes.

1771 The first Bidston lighthouse, an octagonal structure, was built.

1791 The wooden windmill was destroyed in a gale and was replaced by the present one.

1834 The Royal Navy recommended that there be an astronomical observatory in the Port of Liverpool. The exact longitude of Liverpool was then unknown, so all the ships' chronometers rated in the port would have carried an error with them, resulting in the loss of life and property. Mariners also did not know the weather conditions when they left port and consequently sometimes ran into storms.

1845 Liverpool Observatory was built on Waterloo Dock, with the objectives:

To determine the exact longitude of Liverpool.

This was achieved when the difference in longitude between Greenwich and Valentia, Ireland, was calculated, in conjunction with two intermediate stations, one of which was Liverpool Observatory.

To give accurate time to the Port of Liverpool.

This was determined by observing the stars with the transit telescope, thus calculating Greenwich Mean Time. A daily signal was given at 1 p.m. by the release of a time ball.

To test and rate ships' chronometers against the stars.

Accuracy was achieved by setting up chambers with regulated temperatures in which to carry out tests.

To commence meteorological observations in order to provide local forecasts for shipping.

1864 Due to the expansion of Waterloo Dock, the decision was taken to close Liverpool Observatory and build a new one on top of Bidston Hill, where there was also the advantage of clearer skies for astronomical observations.

1866 Land was purchased from a local landowner, Mr Vyner, and Bidston Observatory was built, faced with sandstone excavated from the site.

There was an equatorial telescope in the west dome, which was used mainly for the observation of comets, and a transit telescope in the east dome, which was regularly used for the determination of time from the stars. These telescopes are now in Liverpool Museum.

There was a large instrument room - the through room on the ground floor - which contained two warm air chambers. Each of these could hold up to one hundred chronometers. These chronometers were tested over several months at varying temperatures and had to be very

accurate before they were considered safe to take to sea. Sextants, barometers and thermometers were tested in the basement.

One o'clock was still indicated to the citizens of Liverpool, but now by the "One O'clock Gun". This was situated at Morpeth Dock, Birkenhead and was connected by telegraphic line to Bidston Observatory. It was fired from Bidston by the staff each working day, except for a six-year break during the Second World War. It was also fired at midnight to mark the beginning of the 20th century. The original cannon was a relic of the Crimean wars, and after it was replaced by a naval Hotchkiss gun, it was on display in the Observatory grounds for many years.

1867 Meteorological observations began.

1872 The original lighthouse was replaced by the present one.

1875 The windmill ceased working.

1897 Several seismographs were set up in the deep cellars for experiments in the then new science of seismology.

1913 The lighthouse ceased operations, having acted as a guide to mariners for 142 years.

1924 The Liverpool Tidal Institute, under the directorship of Professor Proudman at Liverpool University relocated to Bidston Observatory. Tidal predictions, which were calculated by hand, were produced on a commercial basis.

1929 The Liverpool Observatory of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board and the Tidal Institute of the University of Liverpool amalgamated becoming the Liverpool Observatory and Tidal Institute. Two tide predicting machines were now in use, and the tidal expertise of the Institute received worldwide acclaim.

Weather forecasting at Bidston ceased, although observations continue to be made to the present day.

1939-1945 Much valuable work was done during the Second World War. The staff worked seven days a week, from early morning to late at night, analysing and predicting tides towards the war effort. Tidal predictions were swiftly predicted for the seas around Burma, France and Holland. During these years one of the tide predicting machines was placed in an underground room in the Observatory grounds for security reasons. Photographic facilities were obtained, so that further copies of the predictions could be quickly provided in the event of their loss at sea.

1961 On the retirement of the Director, Dr Doodson, The Liverpool Observatory and Tidal Institute was renamed The University of Liverpool Tidal Institute and Observatory.

1969 The Institute became a component body of the Natural Environment

Research Council and was renamed the Institute of Coastal Oceanography and Tides. An expanded marine research programme was embarked upon, with a corresponding increase in staff.
The "One O'clock Gun" was fired for the last time on July 18th.

1970 The Institute's first mainframe computer was installed.

1973 Three previously separate NERC Institutes were amalgamated, becoming the Institute of Oceanographic Sciences, including Bidston Observatory.

1975 The Joseph Proudman building in the Observatory grounds was completed, to accommodate the increase in staff and also the latest computer.

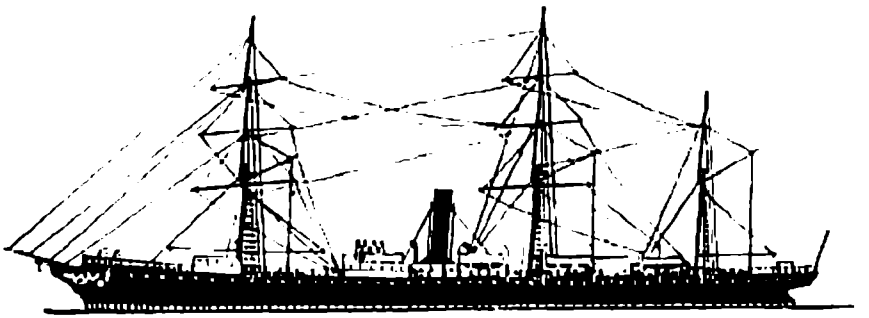
1987 The Institute at Bidston was renamed the Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory.

1992 An automatic weather station was installed, replacing the manual station which had been operating since 1867.

1994 The Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory, together with the Dunstaffnage Marine Laboratory near Oban, and Plymouth Marine Laboratory became the Centre for Coastal and Marine Sciences.

2000 The Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory once again became an independent institute under the Natural Environment Research Council.

At the time of preparing this article the future use of the Bidston site has yet to be determined



Chimborazo built 1871, broken up 1897, Cuzco, Garonne and Lusitania were similar

BIOGRAPHY OF Mr. WILIAM BUSHELL

*Dr Ken Russell contacted the LNRS whilst carrying out research into his family history, in particular the history of his great-grandfather, William Bushell. The following is part of a brief (tongue-in cheek) account which was written on SS.**ORONTES** and found among William's papers. It was a puzzle to his relatives as to how and why a Merseysider should have sailed for all of his sea-career with the London based Orient Line.*

The "Autobiography"

I fancy all writers make apologies to their prospective readers, for attempting to put anything on paper that is likely to occupy the valuable time of the aforesaid prospective readers. Perhaps I put this down as mere bluff or leg-pulling, and I beg leave to omit any apologies.

Like the majority of boilermakers, William Bushell was born very young, and in 1856 he first saw daylight. If he has been a marvellous man, he must have been a more marvellous child for, strange to say, he had as many teeth when he was born as he has now. Nothing can be discovered of his early infancy for his parents seem to have lived a nomadic kind of life, moving from Wiltshire by stages, until they finally anchored in the one-eyed city - Birkenhead. It is from this place that the future "Iron Butcher" of Orient fame first started out.

At the early age of nine our hero started work, what he was working at goodness only knows, however he does not seem to have been very successful, judging by the remarks he often makes, as to how his father used to drop the hammer on his head, this doubtless is the cause of some of his eccentricities.

When he reached his fifteenth year, he went to serve his time at the great firm of Bowdler Chaffer & Co. By his own account he made great strides there for he fell off several stages. And in time was able to put in red-hot rivets under water. Part of his time he was engaged in riveting the hull of the **Ocean Queen**, but nothing can be discovered of his ability in this direction, for this ship went to sea and was never heard of again.

His first ship, the old **Chimborazo** gave early evidence of his handicraft, for did he not cut down an iron bulkhead and put bars up in its place? This job, however was easily superseded in all the ships he had been in since. It would be too large a job to enumerate his various repairs, but we will give a few.

In the **Lusitania** the H.P. eccentric rod broke and Mr. Bushell repaired it, as he also did the discharge pipe. In the Austral, who fixed the air-pump bottom? Why, Mr. Bushell, and it was Mr. Bushell who was working early and late on the propeller blade of the same ship, while the Engineers were ashore riding donkeys and other things.

While in the **Ophir**, covers were made for Weirs pumps, and it is still green in the memory of some of us, how Mr. Bushell made the rudder for the RMS. **Orontes**. Not only did he do this, but he also repaired several patent corkscrews for the bars, not to speak of the ash shoot he made for the Titanic model."

The full story

The Bushell family, although originating from Hawarden in North Wales, were living in Chippenham, Wiltshire in 1856. John Bushell, the father and master shoemaker, had moved there to provide footwear to the labour force employed constructing the Great Western Railway, but he is listed as a railway labourer in 1860, when his son William was born. A year later the family were living and working - in Birkenhead.

We think that John was working in the Laird shipyard. When 15, William became an apprentice boilermaker with Bowdler Chaffer, a Seacombe shipbuilder and for the next five years worked on a variety of ships. He was part of a system of cheap labour that was becoming standard practice in the shipping service industries: many more apprentices were taken on than really required; they worked as time-served men on learner's wages. As soon as their apprenticeship ended they were sacked. A steady increase in the number of ships being constructed tended to conceal this aspect of cheap labour.

William had to assist the riveters on the shell plating of ships and on the construction and maintenance of boilers. He probably worked on one of the most famous steam yachts, the **Sunbeam**, built by Bowdler Chaffer for Lord Brassey the First Lord of the Admiralty. Brassey entertained royal families and other dignitaries from several European countries on the **Sunbeam**, and Lady Brassey wrote three books of their voyages. William is also said to have worked on a ship called the **Ocean Queen** that disappeared on her maiden voyage, however no vessel of this name can be traced. It is almost certain this was the **Tagus**, which disappeared on her maiden voyage in December 1877. It seems that Bowdler Chaffer built the vessel speculatively, shortly after William completed his apprenticeship. Leylands who were backing the company took over the vessel on the stocks.

It is thought that William worked for a time in Lairds in 1877, but he was about to make a successful career move. The family house, not far from Duke Street, was close to Birkenhead Docks and William would have seen four Pacific Steam Navigation Company ships laying idle for almost the whole of his apprenticeship. These fine passenger-cargo vessels **Lusitania, Cuzco, Chimborazo,** and **Garonne**, built in 1868 for the Liverpool - Valparaiso run. They made occasional cruises to Europe, but mostly had lain idle. In 1877 a new company, Anderson, Anderson & Co was about to enter a growing

passenger trade from London to Australia. Andersons arranged to charter the four laid up PSNC vessels for their newly formed Orient Line.

The first, **Lusitania,** sailed in June 1877 followed by **Chimborazo** in August and **Cuzco** in September: the **Garonne** was not used for the Australian service. Although the Suez Canal was open, the route outward to Australia was, via Cape Town, calling at the Cape Verde islands on the way.

The principal difficulties of operating those ships on long voyages were the provision of bunker coal and fresh water. The outward passage was arranged to take advantage of the wind conditions of the "Roaring Forties"; the westerly winds that gave sailing ships average speeds of up to 10 knots between the Cape of Good Hope and Australia. The **Lusitania**'s first passage outwards was made at the astonishing speed, for those days, of 13 knots arriving Melbourne in 40 days compared with the shortest voyages by sailing vessels of 90 days *. Homeward bound without such favourable winds the route through the newly opened Suez Canal was used and the voyage was approximately the same length of time.

The engines of these ships, then ten years old, used large amounts of steam that in turn, required wasteful amounts of water. For this purpose seawater was used in the boilers. The evaporating steam left behind salts that solidified in the boilers and formed scale rendering the boilers less efficient. Boilermakers on these vessels were carried to descale the boilers every three or four days.

We know that William was a free agent at this time, and on the spot when, in May 1877, the Orient Line was recruiting experienced engineering staff for the four ships. Taken on as boilermaker on the first voyage of the **Chimborazo,** he made his first trip to sea, sailing from Liverpool to the Thames in July 1877 and thence to Australia in mid-August. As a boilermaker he had the status and pay of an engineer officer equal in fact to the 5th engineer.

In the early 1880's he was serving on **Lusitania,** followed by several voyages on the Orient Line's Austral and the **Ophir** to the turn of the century. In 1908 he joined the almost new **Orontes.**

Sometime towards the end of the First World War William Bushell swallowed the anchor leaving the Orient Line to work as a boilermaker on Tilbury Docks until retiring aged 65 in 1921. He died in Tilbury in 1925.

NOTE The use of sea-water in the boilers continued on into the 1940's, albeit for auxiliary boilers

** Ed Some sailing vessels actually returned times of between 67 & 70 days*

Ocean's Skirmish with LNG

By LNRS Member J.E.Cowden.

Liquid natural gas or LNG has come to prominence over recent years as a result of the industrialised world's increasing demand for "clean energy". This does not mean that natural gas itself is anything new, for like other hydrocarbon fuels (coal, oil etc) its origins lay in the decaying forests of the world, hundreds millions years ago. For many years the gas was produced in quantities exceeding that of immediate local requirements and was therefore burnt. Nowadays the wastefulness of this practice is acknowledged.

First thoughts were given to water-borne LNG transport in 1952 when the Union Stockyard and Transit Company joined with the Continental Oil Company to form Cornstock Liquid Methane Corporation in a joint venture to transport LNG from the US Gulf to Chicago. A 6,000 cubic metre barge was built equipped with balsa-lined tanks and subjected to an extensive testing programme, but this ill-fated project never came to fruition as the LNG, in direct contact with balsa, caused irreparable damage.

In 1957 the North Thames Gas Board started what was virtually a feasibility study into the large-scale sea transport of LNG. The vessel concerned was a dry cargo ship, which was fitted with freestanding aluminium alloy tanks insulated with a sandwich of plywood and balsa. The capacity was 5000 cubic metres. This vessel, named **Methane Pioneer**, carried her first cargo of LNG from Lake Charles, Louisiana, to Canvey Island in early 1959 and continued to carry LNG until tests were completed in 1961. This successful operation was rapidly followed by the ordering of two purpose-built LNG carriers in a joint venture between the British Gas Council and Conch International Methane Limited. The Shell Company soon joined the original two partners. These two ships, the **Methane Princess** and **Methane Progress**, each 27,400 cubic metres capacity, entered service in 1964. Both ships used the same tank system as the Methane Pioneer operating between Algeria and Canvey Island. The new vessels used the same storage system as their predecessor with the exception that plywood was replaced by polyurethane foam in the insulation.

Ocean's (Ocean Transport and Trading Limited) initial interest in the LNG trade occurred in the late 1960's and by 1969 they had undertaken a lengthy investigation into the concept. The following year, as part of a joint venture with the Dutch shipping company, Nederlandsche Scheepvaart Unie, a two ship order was placed with Chantiers de L'Atlanique, St Nazaire, the **Nestor**, under the British flag and the **Gastor** under the Dutch.

***Methane Pioneer**, a converted C1 type standard ship could carry 2200 tons of LNG*

***Methane Progress** was broken up in 1986*

The Principal dimensions of the two new ships were:-

78,951 tons gross, 51,244 tons net, 78,641 deadweight.
902.02 ft x 138.02 x 89,03 with a draft of 40.03.
Single screw, 2 Stal-Laval geared turbines;
34,000 SHP, giving 19 knots at 109 RPM
Two Foster Wheeler Verolome boilers provided by Chantiers,
Ateliers de St Nazaire, Penhoet.
Each ship had a crew of 35

The estimated cost of each vessel was £25 million. However, by the end of 1972, circumstances had changed radically in the main trade for which the **Nestor** was destined, the export of LNG from Indonesia to the United States of America and the oil price-rise of 1973 made the crucial American market impenetrable. The gas interests there, were shrouded in protective layers of regulatory bodies, patriotism, environmentalism and general protectionist sentiment. If the United States was closed, opportunities in Europe and Japan were similarly inaccessible, for purchasers in both regions had long term contracts with gas suppliers and it was impossible for a small independent carrier, like Ocean, to break into the markets.

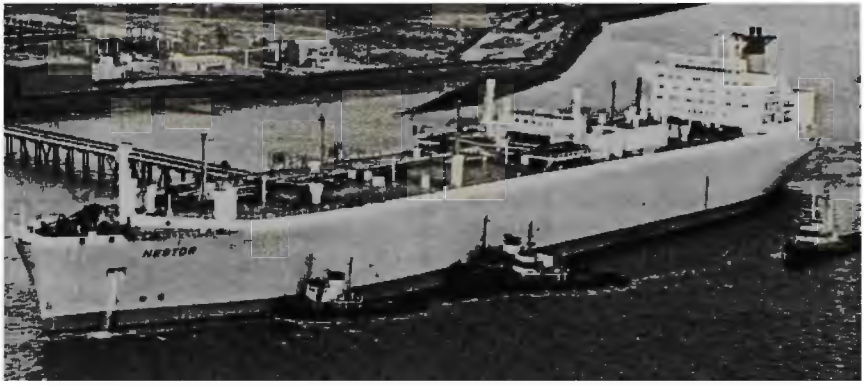
The **Gastor** was delivered during 1976 with the **Nestor** being delivered, on schedule, in 1977. However, by this time the building costs had escalated to nearly £63 million, for each vessel. Meanwhile the fears which had been envisaged in 1973 proved justified. Despite protracted negotiations with the American charterers (Pacific Indonesia LNG Company) and the United States Department of Energy, both the **Nestor** and the **Gastor** were unable to enter their intended trade so went into immediate lay-up at Loch Striven, Scotland.

As it was hoped that employment would eventually be found for both the ships they were kept partly manned. After a number of years they were returned to the builders to be brought up to-date, at an additional cost of £12 million, each. Afterwards they returned to Loch Striven and were placed in mothballs.

Due to the very high book value of the **Nestor**, Ocean took the decision to write down the worth of their ship, resulting in the book value being reduced to £5 million, its scrap value

In 1990, 13 years after completion and without having completed a single commercial voyage the two ships were sold en-bloc to the Shell Company for £10 million. Shell placed them under the ownership of Bonny Gas Transport Ltd (Chemikallen Seettansport GMBH) Hamilton Bermuda. The **Nestor** was renamed **LNG Port Harcourt** and **Gastor** the **LNG Lagos**, both registered in Bermuda, both under the British flag.

Sources. *Ocean. (House journal of Ocean Transport and Trading Limited)*
Blue Funnel Legend. Malcolm Falkus.



*The **Nestor** berthing at Canvey Island during a trial visit, probably just after delivery*

The Three Masted Ship Riversdale

By Rick James

Riversdale	Official Number:	102129
	Registry:	Victoria, B.C.
	Scuttled at Royston, B.C.:	November, 1961

Construction Details

The **Riversdale** was a prime example of a British built square-rigger of the late 19th century. While steamship technology had still yet to come into its own, thousands of windjammers like the **Riversdale** were running before the trade winds in the deepwater trade. As W.L.A. Derby noted in his 1937 book *The Tall Ships Pass*, "...it was the zenith of sail and the outcome of centuries of experiment. Lacking the daintiness, the handiness and the sweet lines of their progenitors, they nevertheless represented, at their prime, sail's epitome of combined strength, seaworthiness, economy and longevity."

The **Riversdale** was a three-masted ship built in Port Glasgow, Scotland, in 1894 by William Hamilton & Company. She was a sister to the **Barfillan, Hyderabad,** and **Blackbraes;** all launched from the W. Hamilton & Company shipyard in 1892. All four were steel fully rigged ships of

approximately 275 feet length and from 2,205 to 2,207 Gross Registered Tons (GRT.)

The **Riversdale** measured 275.8 feet in length, 41.9 feet in breadth, and was 24 feet in depth. Gross registered tonnage was 2,206 tons and the net 2,057. The windjammer was of clincher, or lapped steel plate, build, with one deck and an elliptic stern. Her Liverpool registry states that she had a 'demi-woman' head. The ship's figurehead, a matronly looking woman, currently is on display in the Maritime Museum of British Columbia in Victoria, B.C. The **Riversdale** was of ship rig, that is, her three masts were all square rigged.

Operational History

The 1894 Liverpool Registration for the **Riversdale**, notes that the ship was first registered to C.A. Lichtenberg, merchant of Liverpool. While Lichtenberg raised the mortgage for the ship, it was the R.W. Leyland and Company who ordered her and signed the contract with W. Hamilton and Company in November 1893. On the 17th December 1896, the **Riversdale** was officially sold to the Leyland Company for £17,200. She was the last sailing ship built for Leyland; from 1894 onwards the company only ordered steamers. Leyland's sailing ships were identifiable by their black painted ports

Riversdale was in and out of a variety of major world ports over the next 20 years; anywhere where merchant sailing ships were required to transport the bulk cargoes all in high demand at the time such as coal, coke, lumber, wheat, and nitrates. In 1895, for instance, *Lloyd's List* recorded her at San Francisco, Portland, and Astoria on the west coast of the United States, probably to take on wheat or lumber. In January 1896 she took Albion Merthyr steam coal from Penarth, Wales, to Singapore, then carried on to Portland and Astoria before returning to England the following spring. On the 12th April 1897 she was at Barry, Wales, probably taking on coal once more.

Voyages 1898 -1909:

March 1898 left Calcutta and arrived at Hamburg in August 1898.

February 1899 arrived San Francisco, was in at Iquique, Chile in June and back at Hamburg December 1899.

March 1900 left Hamburg and arrived Portland, Oregon in August.

March 1901 arrived in London, England, at San Diego, Cal. in October and Portland in December.

(The **Riversdale** grounded near Sylvia de Grasse Reef, Astoria [near the mouth of Columbia River] on 27 December. Apparently with no damage.)

January 1902 left Astoria and arrived at Hamburg in May.

January 1903 in at Portland, Oregon, arrived at Sydney, Australia in May, left Newcastle, New South Wales in August and arrived Valparaiso, Chile in September.
March 1904 arrived Melbourne, Australia and was back in England at Fleetwood in September. **Riversdale** left the Clyde in December.
March 1905 arrived in at Adelaide, was at Acapulco, Mexico in July and arrived at Port Ludlow, Puget Sound (via Victoria, B.C.) in December.
April 1906, after calling in at Port Townsend in February, arrived at San Francisco in April, arrived at Buenos Aires in July and was at Sydney, Australia in December.
February 1907 left Newcastle, arrived at Valparaiso in March and was back at Newcastle, Australia by September.
January 1908 left Newcastle, arrived in at Valparaiso, in February and left Caleta Buena, Chile in October.
March 1909 the **Riversdale** arrived back in Europe at Antwerp.

As British shipowners changed over to steamships at the turn of the century, they sold many of their sailing ships to German interests. Under the German flag the big square-riggers carried engines, coke, coal, patent fuel, and briquettes outbound from Europe and returned home laden with nitrates from Chile or grain from Oregon or California. (Nitrates mined in the high deserts of Chile were highly valued as a necessary ingredient for good quality fertilizer and gunpowder.)

Once J.H. Welsford & Company of Liverpool took over the Leyland Shipping Company in 1909 the new owners sold off over the next three years the company's remaining seven sailing ships. (The proceeds from these sales may have helped to finance the J.H. Welsford & Company's purchase of the Union Steamship Company in Vancouver, B.C. in 1911.) The **Riversdale** was sold to Schluyter & Mack of Hamburg, Germany, for £4,150 who renamed her **Harvestehude.**

The **Harvestehude** departed Antwerp, Belgium, on the 13th February 1910. After rounding Cape Horn, she arrived at Carrizal, Chile, on 2nd July, stopped in at Antofagasta, and loaded nitrates at Mexillones (Mejillones del Sur). She was on her way back to Europe on 11th October 1910, arriving at Hamburg on the 27th January 1911. She made the Germany - Chile voyage in 1911 and again in 1912, both via Wales (probably to take on coal) on the outward leg. As she departed Hamburg on 1st January 1912 she was in collision with the steamer **St. Abbs**. She carried on with a provisional Certificate of Seaworthiness requiring that a damaged plate be replaced on her return to Hamburg.

Early in 1913, the **Harvestehude** had a long passage of 187 days from Plymouth, England, to Santa Rosalia, Mexico, taking a lengthy 37 days rounding Cape Horn. At this time she was commanded by Captain Friedrich

W. Carstens, known among the deep water sailing fraternity as the "Devil of Hamburg." From Santa Rosalia, **Harvestehude** sailed to Portland, Oregon, where most of her crew jumped ship. In October 1913, the square-rigger sailed for Europe, "...having been furnished a crew made up of almost every sort of beachcomber which could be scraped up...", recounted Captain Harold D. Huycke, Jr., in his book *To Santa Rosalia, Further and Back.* Captain Huycke also interviewed **Harvestehude** crewman, Paul Schmidt, who recalled that their trip home was particularly miserable. After the ship's arrival in Hamburg, she loaded coke for Santa Rosalia once again and left on 7 June 1914.

Up until the First World War, most German windjammers worked the Cape Horn trade since the west coast of the Americas was still proving a rewarding place for obtaining charters. A steady source of employment was Santa Rosalia in Baja California, where a major copper mine and smelter were situated in the bleak desert port. Owned by the Compagnie du Boleo, and backed by the Paris Rothchilds, it was the second largest copper producing operation in Mexico. The smelter had a ravenous appetite for fuel and German shipping firms found that they could keep many of their ships fully employed delivering quality German coke to the operation. The trade proved so rewarding that by 1914, "...it was a rare sight indeed when any flag, other than the German, was seen flying from the monkey gaff of deep-watered square-rigged ships in the port of Santa Rosalia", writer Captain Huycke claimed.

On 6 June 1914, the Harvestehude could be seen being towed down the Elbe River. A month later, the last of the parade of German coke carriers outbound for Santa Rosalia that spring, the barque **Orotava,** departed Hamburg. While most of the ships were still at sea, World War I broke out in Europe that August, and by late fall all German merchant shipping was effectively driven from the Pacific Ocean. As a result, over a hundred square-riggers sat on their anchor chains, trapped in ports all along the west coast of the Americas. Twelve German sailing vessels found themselves interned in Santa Rosalia and Guaymas, Sonora, for the duration of the war. Even after the Armistice was signed in November 1918, anchor chains continued to collect barnacles and the ship's decks to blister beneath the harsh Baja sun for three more years.

Finally, in 1920 it was announced that the ownership of the 12 square-riggers was to be allocated amongst the victors of the Great War. Subsequently, the Allied Reparations Commission awarded Great Britain two of the vessels, Italy four, and France six, including the **Harvestehude**. While the Allied nations pondered what to do with their new acquisitions, they discovered that most of the ships required a considerable financial outlay in order to return them to operating condition.

At this point, the unfortunate ships came to the attention of Robert Dollar. The San Francisco lumberman had expanded his business empire by exporting lumber to the Orient and acquiring his own steamships to avoid high freight rates. However, Dollar sold most of his steamers for a profit during the First World War, when badly needed merchant ships brought high prices. With the return of peace, Dollar hoped to regain his position in the North Pacific lumber trade through the short-term use of sailing ships bought at bargain prices. The lumber baron made an offer on the 12 square-riggers in Mexico and got the lot for under $350,000.

Barge

The **Harvestehude** never sailed again. After sitting idle in the Oakland estuary of San Francisco Bay for two years, the **Harvestehude** was sold to the Coastwise Steamship and Barge Company in 1924. Coastwise Steamship was a Vancouver, British Columbia based subsidiary of a Puget Sound steamship and barge fleet owned by Seattle resident James Griffiths.

Griffiths had the neglected ship towed to a shipyard in Winslow, Washington, where he had her masts and rigging dismantled and her interior spaces opened up. A reporter with the Vancouver *Daily Province*, who visited the barge in April 1929, was impressed with the interior woodwork in the crew's quarters, once the captain's cabin. The finishing was "... the finest on any craft on the Coast, for the cabins are finished in mahogany and walnut and decorated in the best taste of the pre-war German artists and artisans." (Someone probably failed to inform him that the barge was actually Scottish built.)

The hulk took on her old name **Riversdale** and was given a Canadian registry at Vancouver. The old windjammer was put back to work once again as a bulk carrier. Now she was employed transporting copper ore and concentrates from Anyox and Stewart (in northern British Columbia) and from the Britannia Mines in Howe Sound, to a large smelter located in Tacoma, Washington. On the return trip, she hauled coal north to Anyox.

In 1935 the barge was sold to the Island Tug & Barge Company. Victoria, B.C. resident, Harold Elworthy, had formed Island Tug & Barge Ltd. in 1925 with the small tug **Island Planet**, ex - **Quintsa** and $500 start up capital. From this modest beginning, Island Tug went on to become one of the largest, if not largest, operator of tugs and barges in Canada. A leading factor contributing to the water transportation company's early success occurred when pulp and paper mills owners discovered that they could run the boilers of their steam plants with 'hog fuel;' the sawdust and wood waste left over from lumber sawmills.

As a result, by the late 1930s, Island Tug had accumulated a fleet of thirteen retired sailing vessels, purchased as cheap bottoms to haul wood chips and hog fuel. The old steel hulls, now fitted with wooden

superstructures so a helmsman could see out over the cargo, loaded hog fuel at the Chemainus and Port Alberni sawmills on Vancouver Island and delivered it to pulp and paper mills in Port Angeles, Washington and Ocean Falls on the central coast of British Columbia. They also carried hog fuel from Port Alberni to the Port Alice pulp and paper mill on northern Vancouver proved too much for the riveted plates of the old square-rigger **Riversdale**. In a 1958 winter gale, old leaks reopened, which turned her load of chips into a sodden, heavy mass. Luckily, the barge's towboat managed to get the wallowing, waterlogged hulk into Powell River, where repairs were made. She managed to put in two more years of service before being finally retired.

Breakwater Ship

In November 1961, she was towed into Comox harbour and scuttled on the outside of Royston's hulk breakwater. **Crown Zellerbach No. 2**, ex-**Comet**, joined her there the next year. The managers of Crown Zellerbach's Royston log dump probably hoped that sinking the two huge barges on the outside of the breakwater would give the deteriorating ships on the inside some badly needed protection. However, the hulls had been somewhat structurally weakened when they were gutted for barge service and then endured years of abuse by having tons of logs dropped in their holds. It was only a matter of months before the strain of resting on an uneven sea bottom, accompanied by battering from southeast gales, collapsed their midship bulwarks. Their stern sections fell over sometime later.

In 1970, Capital Iron stripped the **Riversdale** of fourteen tons of fittings, including bollards, fairleads, windlass, and capstan which went to aid in the restoration of another former R.W. Leyland and Company square-rigger, the **Wavertree**. Some historically minded Americans retrieved that hulk from Argentina in 1970 and the restored windjammer is now on display at the South Street Seaport Museum in Manhattan, New York. In British Columbia, although a few of the former steel Cape Horn square-riggers were still afloat as barges as late as the 1960s, none were saved. All that remains are the broken and rusted hulks at Royston. Yet the proud Victorian bow of the **Riversdale** still stands proudly as a reminder of a time when British built square-riggers dominated the sea-lanes of the world.

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Riversdale: New York Maritime Register, 1898 - 1914. Herman Melville Library, South Street Seaport Museum.

Riversdale: Transport Canada: Vancouver Ship Registry. 1924: Vol. 15, entry 84, p. 244.

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Villiers, A.J. "Rounding the Horn in a Windjammer," The National Geographic Magazine, February 1931,pp.191-224.
Walker, David. Champion of Sail: R.W. Leyland and his Shipping Line. London: Conway Maritime Press Ltd., 1986.
Wells, R.E. "West Coast Barges," Victoria Daily Colonist, 27 February 1972, p. 12-15.

Personal Communications in early 1990s:
Ron Greene, former owner Capital Iron & Metals Ltd.
Art and Don Elworthy, Island Tug and Barge Company.

Readers Write

LNRS Member Alan McCelland to Liverpool Daily Post 23rd May 2003

Move It

Research completed recently by Dr Baird of Napier University, Edinburgh, demonstrates that shifting 10-15% of available general freight to high speed RoRo craft between Merseyside and the Clyde could be an attractive proposition. Environmental benefits would include the relief of road congestion and pollution.

However there would need to be new, coherent transport policy initiatives to ensure viability. The movement of bulk commodities by water also has much to commend it, especially if at long last the potentialities of the integration of broad waterways with coastal shipping were developed in the UK as they are in Europe.

QUICK QUIZ

1 Alfred Holt had a twin funnelled ship between 1958 and 1962 - what was her name?
2 Which shipping company had a nationwide transport system as well as its ships?
3 What are the trade winds and what is the average wind speed?

Answers on back cover

WATER TRANSPORT IN MALAWI

By LNRS member Alan McClelland

Although cheap, fuel efficient and environmentally friendly water transport all too often remains a neglected mode, as evident in the United Kingdom. It has even more to commend it to Third World countries which have access to the sea or to long stretches of navigable lakes and rivers. As a consequence of visits in 1997 and late in 2001, the writer has become particularly interested in the situation in Malawi, which given its geography might be expected to have maximised use of inland shipping, and possibly the integration of some elements of it with open sea operations. Malawi is 900 km long and between 80 and 160 km wide. By contrast Lake Malawi is 570 km long and 16-80 km wide, and is the third largest lake in Africa. Regular commercial services on the lake have been operated from a base at Monkey Bay since 1935. At the end of 1983 the Malawian merchant fleet consisted of seven motor vessels, including a tanker of 350 tonnes deadweight capacity. A cargo passenger ship, the **Ilala** ran, and still maintains, a weekly round trip service which should have increasing potential for the tourist trade. Lake Malawi is subject to storms. A predecessor of the **Ilala**, the MV **Vipya**, sank in a gale in July 1946 on her fourth voyage with the estimated loss of 150 people. Units of the Malawian fleet, when serviceable, continue to carry freight between various lake ports as required. Water from Lake Malawi flows in the Shire River and thence into the Zambezi. In the Malawi Commerce & Industry Handbook 1997/98, it was reported that a "comprehensive assessment of the Shire-Zambezi network had been completed in 1996", *[1]* that determined that, subject to work on certain channels including reed cutting being undertaken, barges of limited draught could be employed to link Malawi with the Indian Ocean port of Chinde in Mozambique. Interestingly a few years earlier a senior expert from a Liverpool based maritime consultancy had raised the notion of employing small landing craft to serve the people in estuarial and coastal villages of Mozambique from Vila do Chinde.

In the event the return of peace to Mozambique has led to a concentration on the development of overland routes between Malawi and the Indian Ocean, including the development of the Nacala corridor. On the advice of international agencies, and with their help, much attention has been concentrated on the improvement of roads within Malawi itself. The Shire-Zambezi scheme appears to have been abandoned. In 1997 the writer pondered the possibilities of the employment of vessels of the river-sea type, e.g. the water jet-propelled **Sea Orade** completed in Germany in 1990, capable of operating "with about one metre of water under the keel". *[2]*

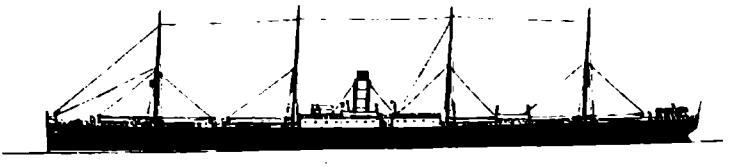
Given the total circumstances it is not surprising that, not withstanding refinements in maritime technology, water transport in Malawi has

languished in recent years. Shifts of emphasis in transport policy coupled with a shortage of spare parts for propulsive and deck machinery for the ageing lake fleet have created major problems. Reports have said, "There is an urgent need to rehabilitate some of the older vessels and probably replace those that are not economical". *[3]*

The amount of cargo and passenger traffic on Lake Malawi has declined over a number of years. There was a fall of 14 percent in the number of passengers carried in the period 1999-2000, from 94,857 in the first year to 81,000 in the second. Cargo transported fell from 11,494 to 5,000 tonnes in the period. By comparison 179,000 passengers and 28,000 tonnes of freight were shipped in 1990 and 169,000 passengers and 19,000 tonnes of freight in 1991. [4] It is acknowledged that the new operator of lake services faces a lack of working capital and a debt inherited from its predecessor, Malawi Railways Ltd.

Malawi's transport systems, their problems and potentialities, have been the subjects of at least three investigations in the recent past. In addition to the work of the Liverpool based port and maritime services consultancy and the assessment of the Shire-Zambezi water route referred to earlier, the Volpe Centre of the U.S. Department of Transport has been involved. In pursuit of privatisation at the insistence of foreign donors of aid the Malawi Government had taken 35 undertakings out of public ownership by late 2001, including Lake Malawi shipping services.

Sources
1 Malawi Commerce & Industry Handbook 1997/98 (P. 67&70).
2 (M. Heinimann & C. Cheetham, "Rhine Sea Ships", 1990, (P 43)).
3 Malawian Economic Council's, Economic Report 2001, (P23)
4 Economic Report 2001
Acknowledgements: John Howard and Richard John (personal communications)



*Cunard vessel **Carinthia** built 1895, stranded of Haiti 1900*
(See Page 7)

OBITUARY

Lieutenant - Commander Leonard Hill, OBE, RNR

On September 25th 2003 The Times reported the death of Lieutenant -Commander Leonard Hill, on 2nd September aged 94. The following is a summary of the published obituary.

Born in 1908 Leonard Hill served as a cadet with Paddy Henderson & Co before moving to J & J Denholm. Later he underwent training with the RNR, which led to him taking command of the Royal Research Ship **Discovery** II in December 1935. Whilst in that post he and his crew rescued two American explorers, whose plane had run out of fuel whilst attempting to fly across the Antarctic. The rescue was achieved on 16th January with the ship venturing to almost 79 degrees south. In recognition of the rescue he was awarded an OBE and elected a Younger Brother of Trinity House.

Further voyages to the Antarctic region followed. His wartime service involved command of a series of warships in North Atlantic and Arctic convoy duties, culminating in the sinking of a U Boat in the Channel approaches in April 1944.

In 1946 he became Assistant Surveyor and Water Bailiff to the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board, becoming the Deputy the following year. With the MD&HB he was heavily involved with the repair of the war-damaged docks, as well as overseeing surveys of Liverpool Bay. In addition he had oversight of salvage operations in the port, including the recovery of the sunken **Empress of Canada** in 1953/54. Later he became harbourmaster, retiring in 1972.

*The burnt out **Empress of Canada** in Gladstone Dock*

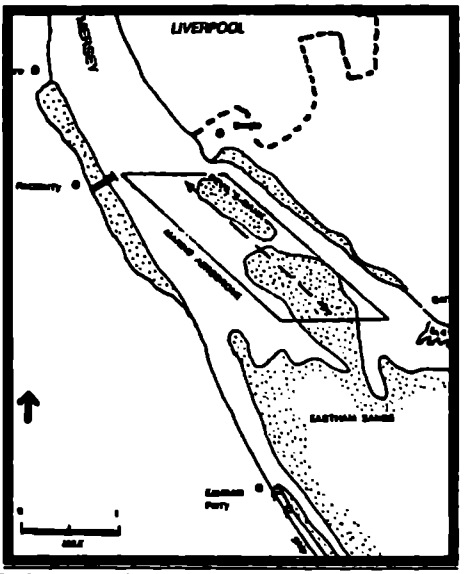
And finally

THE LIVERPOOL MARINE AERODROME

In 2002 the book, "Wings Across the Border" by Derrick Pratt & Mike Grant was published. The book deals with the history of aviation in North Wales and bordering counties. Chapter 8 deals with proposals to form a base for flying boats on the Mersey. The following is a very short précis of that chapter. The authors became aware of the notion of a seaplane base, due to its inclusion in the list of alternative targets for Luftwaffe aircraft "visiting" Liverpool.

On 22nd September 1928 Liverpool Corporation underwrote a demonstration flight by an Imperial Airways flying boat, from Liverpool to Belfast. The flight departed from a licensed area of the estuary designated, "Liverpool Marine Aerodrome" which was operated by the MD&HB. Further flights followed from the 24th September to 4th October . Possibly because of developments at Speke the exercise was not repeated in 1929. Although in 1931 plans were put forward to build a flying boat terminal with associated slipway, hangars and ancillary buildings, close to Speke Hall. Initially accepted, the plans were cancelled on economic grounds in April 1932.

In 1934 an idea was put forward for a transatlantic service from the Liverpool Marine Aerodrome, connecting with internal flights from Speke. The Marine Aerodrome extended from Garston Docks to Rock Ferry Pier (See Map). This idea seems to have been dropped as it appears that an unnamed consortium of Scandinavian ship-owners was planning a, Stockholm - Speke - New York, Zeppelin service! In 1937 whilst considering the use of Speke Airport in the event of war, the Ministry of Aircraft Production considered it advisable to make provision at Speke for slipways for the handling of flying boats, on the site first proposed in 1930. As far is it is known nothing was built.



The "site" of Liverpool's Marine Aerodrome between 1928 and 1933

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS - 2004

JANUARY	15th	Arctic & Antarctic Pack Ice *[Dr D Thomas, University of Bangor]*
FEBRUARY	19th	The Stranding & Return of the SS Great Britain *[G Bodey, LNRS]*
MARCH	18th	Respectable Reefers *[A McClelland, LNRS]*

All Meetings are held in the Education Suite at the Merseyside Maritime Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool commencing at 12 .30pm,

(Coffee and biscuits available from 12 noon)

THE MONDAY FACILITY - 2004

Members' access to the Archives and Library of the Merseyside Maritime Museum, Mondays has been arranged for the following dates:
(Hours 10.30 - 12.30 & 1.30 - 3.30)

JANUARY	26th			
FEBRUARY	2nd	9th	16th	23rd
MARCH	1st	8th	22nd	23rd

QUIZ answers

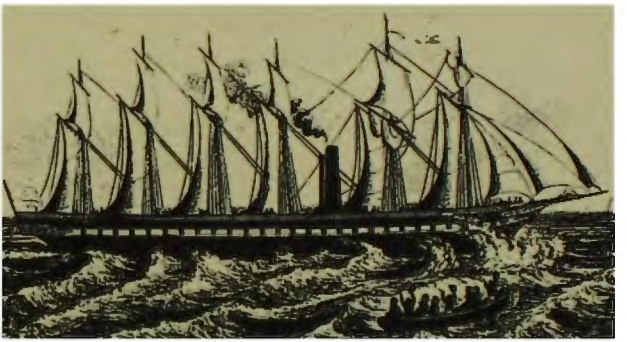
1 **Gunung Djati** - Built as **Pretoria** in 1936 and used by Blue Funnel in the Pilgrim trade.
2 Canadian Pacific ran an extensive network of railways right across Canada.
3 In two belts roughly 10 and 30 degrees of Latitude either side of the equator, at an average speed of force 4 - a moderate breeze of 11 to 16 knots.

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

THE BULLETIN

Volume 47, Number 4 March 2004



THE COUNCIL OF THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

Memberships and General Correspondence
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society, Maritime Archives and Library, Merseyside Maritime Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool, L3 4AA, UK.

Bulletin Editor
Antony J Barratt, 24 Cross Green, Upton by Chester Chester CH2 1QR, UK.
(Email tony.barratt@btopenworld.com)

Items for inclusion in future editions of the Bulletin can be emailed to the Editor or sent by post to the above address

Front cover
The SS Great Britain, which is the subject of an extensive article in this issue and which will be concluded in the June Bulletin.

Baltic Rescue

From a White Star Line Publicity Brochure 1877

A letter to the Times, dated November, 1875:

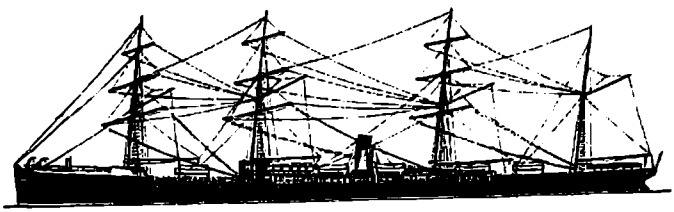
"Shortly after midnight of the 18th inst., as the **Baltic**, which left New York on the 13th inst., was under steam and canvas, and going at about 14 knots an hour, the attention of the officers on watch was attracted by what appeared to them to be the masthead light of a steamer some miles off. The proper look-out was kept, and on passing the light, at some five miles to the starboard of the **Baltic**, the officers on the watch observed the absence of the regulation lights which are hoisted by steamers at night when on a voyage. They at once communicated with Captain Gleadell, the commander of their ship, who gave orders that his course should be altered in the direction of the light.

As the **Baltic** approached the object for which she was now making, it became evident that the strange sight was caused by a blazing tar-barrel on a hull to which only one mast remained attached. The **Baltic** had 245 passengers and a crew of considerably over 100 hands on board and great was the excitement among them. The night was fine but a very heavy sea was running. Nearly everyone was on deck, as the engines were stopped at within about a quarter of a mile of the wreck. Captain Gleadell, with his officers, was on the bridge, and he gave the order for Mr. Irving, the Chief Officer, to man one of the boats and proceed to the floating hull, for the purpose of ascertaining whether there was anyone on board of it. The half-hour during which the boat was away was to us a time of the deepest anxiety and interest. Mr. Irving and his crew worked gallantly through the great Atlantic waves, and did so, it need scarcely be observed at imminent peril to their own lives.

Happily, they returned safely with the captain and 15 of the crew of the **Oriental**, for this the wreck proved to be. She was a sailing vessel of some 2,000 tons burden, and had sailed from London for St. John, New Brunswick, about three weeks before. On the 16th inst. she sprang a leak, and gradually becoming waterlogged, she settled on her beam-ends during the forenoon of the I7th inst. On that day the captain got out his four boats; one of them was swamped, though without loss of life; and another, with ten men, by some means got parted from her companions, which remained about the wreck until it was reached by

the boat of the **Baltic**. When brought on board the **Baltic**, the captain of the **Oriental** had no knowledge of the position of his boat with the ten men; but Captain Gleadell, being of opinion that there was still a hope of rescuing these seamen, resolved to move about gently until daylight. By between 4 and 5 a.m. the tar-barrel to which I have before referred communicated its flames to a number of others, and to all the inflammable material of the ship, and awfully grand was the sight of the huge fire rising, as it were, from the depths of the ocean and illuminating the vast waves for many miles around. All through the small hours of the morning Captain Gleadell caused blue rockets to be sent up from the deck of the **Baltic**. These were seen by the crew of the missing boat, and at 7 a.m. we saw them a few miles off, and had the pleasure of taking them on board very soon after. Their boat was hoisted on board also, and after a delay of about eight hours from the time the **Baltic** had steamed towards the wreck we pursued our course to Queenstown, which we reached on the evening of the 22nd.

The crew of the **Oriental** had suffered severely from the cold during their exposure, but owing to the attention paid them by Mr. Clarke, the Purser of the mail steamer, they were quite well before many hours, and were all landed at Liverpool in sufficiently good condition to enable them at once to proceed to the Sailors' Home".



*The **Baltic** built by Harland & Wolff in 1871 (3,707gt) served with White Star until lost in a collision in February 1898*

MERCHANT SEAMEN'S RECORDS

(Concluding Part)

By Michael Watts

This is a summary of an article, which appeared in the "Cheshire Ancestor" (with permission of the Cheshire Family History Society and the Author) in 2001, which might be useful to maritime researchers. [NB Any prices quoted below are those current in 2001]

3. OTHER TOPICS

The following topics are also covered in some detail in the RSS Leaflet:

3.1.1 - Deaths at Sea, Merchant Seamen and Passengers

Registers of Births and Deaths at Sea. 1965 to present day

Register of Births, Marriages & Deaths at Sea 1891-1964 (BT334 at the PRO)

Registers & indexes of Births, Deaths & Marriages at Sea 1851 to 1890 (BT158)

3.1.2 - Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths of Passengers at Sea.

BT160 Registers of Births of British Nationals at Sea

BT159 Registers of Deaths of British Nationals

BT153 Registers of Wages and Effects of Deceased Seamen 1852 to 1881

BT154 Indexes of Seamen's names & Indexes to Ships Names 1853-1889

3.1.3 - Monthly Lists of dead Seamen 1886-1889:

BT156 Monthly Lists of Deaths of Seamen.

BT157 Registers of Seaman's Death Classified by Cause

3.1.4 - Deaths at Sea - Returns of Death

The earliest surviving returns of death date from 1914 to 1919 are now held at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. No returns exist between 1920-1938

Returns from 1939 to 1964 are also held at the National Maritime Museum Returns from 1965 to the present day are held at the Registry of Shipping. Please note that there are also some gaps in these records

3.1.5 - BT341 Inquiries into Deaths at Sea, Papers and Reports.

These documents contain statements, log book entries, medical reports and other relevant information regarding the particular death at sea. These cover the years 1939 to 1946 and the year 1964. The Returns of Death which originally accompanied these papers are now held at the

National Maritime Museum (See above). These records are organised in year order and in alphabetical order of ship name. They correspond to the Registers of death held in BT334.

3.1.6 - Casualties and Deaths

Casualties and deaths, lists (C & D) for the years 1920-1938 are held at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Casualties and deaths on fishing vessels (List D) for the years 1920-1938 have also been transferred to that office. These records are organised by the official number of the ship. The official numbers of ships can be obtained from the extensive collection of Lloyds registers held at the National Maritime Museum. Many lists C & D are included in the 1939 - 1950 logbooks and crew agreements held at the Registry of Shipping.

3.1.7 - Graves of Seamen/Memorials

The Registry of Shipping and Seamen holds no records of the last resting places of seamen. Those who were lost/buried at sea and have no known grave are commemorated on the Tower Hill Memorial, London, and are also included in the Tower Hill Memorial Registers for both World Wars.

3.1.8 - Rolls of Honour, Wars of 1914 - 1918 and 1939 - 1945

These records are held at The Public Record Office in their classification BT339. These include the Rolls of Honour of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets, Ships list and Seaman list, The Albert Medal register, Nominal lists and Runnymede Memorial.

3.1.9 - Daily Casualty Registers., War of 1939 -1945

These records comprise of 7 volumes of the daily casualties to Merchant Shipping between 8th June 1940 to 15th September 1945. These are held at the Public Record Office in their classification BT347.

3.2 – Registers of Certificates of Competency and Service

3.2.1 - Masters and Mates

These registers are arranged in 6 classes, which are held at the Public Record Office, Kew.

3.2.2 - Certificates of Competency: Masters and Mates Foreign Trade.
BT122. (1845 -1900) Held in Numerical order of certificate number.

3.2.3 - Certificates of Service: Masters and Mates: Foreign Trade.
BT124. (1850 -1888). Held in Numerical order of Certificate number.

3.2.4 - Certificates of Competency: Masters and Mates: Home Trade.
BT125. (1855 -1921). Held in Numerical order of Certificate number.

3.2.5 - Registers of certificates of Competency: Masters and Mates of Steamships: Foreign Trade.
BT123. (1881 -1906) Held in Certificate number order.

3.2.6 - Registers of Certificates of Service: Masters and Mates: Home Trade
BT126. (1855 - 1888). Held in certificate number order.

3.2.7- Alphabetical Register of Masters.
BT115. (1845 - 1854) The means of reference to these series are the indexes to the registers
BT127. Index to the Registers that give the date and place of birth and the certificate number.

3.2.8 - Registers of Passes and Renewals of Master' and Mates' Certificates 1917 to 1968 - BT317.

3.2.9 - Registers of Changes of Masters 1893 to 1948 - BT336.

3.2.10 - Engineers
BT139. Certificates of Competency: Engineers. (1863 - 1921) and
BT142. Certificates of Service: Engineers. (1862 -1921).
The means of reference to these records are the indexes to registers in
BT141. Certificates of Competency; Engineers.
This index is arranged alphabetically by surname, and gives date and place of birth and the certificate number
BT143 Registers of Certificates of Competency and Service, Miscellaneous. (1845 - 1849)

3.2.11 - Fishing Boats
BT129. Certificates of Competency: Skippers and Mates of Fishing Boats. (1880 - 1921) and
BT130. Certificates of Service: Skippers and Mates of Fishing Boats. The means of reference to these records are

BT138. Indexes to Registers of Competency and Service: Skippers and Mates of Fishing Boats. These records are held in alphabetical order according to the seaman's surname.

3.3 **Merchant Seamen Prisoner of War Records 1939 to 1945.**

These records are held at the Public Record Office, in their following classification BT373.

These are organised by the name of ship from which the seamen were captured. The information is held in pouches in alphabetical order. These records contain the names of those men captured from merchant ships and where they were held in captivity. These records also include additional information supplied by the Red Cross and also information regarding the deaths of POW's.

3.4 **Apprentices**

Index of Apprentices
BT150. (1824 -1953),
BT151. Apprentices Indentures (1845 - 1962) and
BT152. Apprentices Indentures for Fishing (1895 to 1935)

3.5 **Royal Naval Reserve: Rating Records of Service** BT 377.

3.6 **Passenger Lists 1878 -1960**

Passenger lists for the period before 1890 have not survived in England, with the exception of a few relating to vessels in the United Kingdom between 1878 and 1888. These, and the surviving lists for the period between 1890 and 1960, are held at the Public Record Office.
BT26. Inwards Passenger Lists (1878 to 1960)
BT32. Registers of Passenger Lists (1906 to 1951)
BT27. Outward Passenger Lists. (1890 to 1960)

3.7 **Useful reference material held at the Guildhall Library London includes:**

Filby, P.W.: Passengers and immigration lists index (and annual supplements) that cover North America. It can be found in the Reference Collection at R 325/2 and lists individuals by surname and shows where the passenger list can be found;
The Morton Allan Directory of European Steamship arrivals ... 1890 - 1930 at the ports of New York, Philadelphia, Boston & Baltimore, Closed Access LB 286, is also useful.

British Immigration to Victoria - assisted immigrants 1839 - 1891 (microfiches 3), Index of New South Wales Convict Indents (fiches 29) Immigration Index to assisted immigrants arriving Sydney 1844 - 96, Closed Access 387/5, and Hughes, 1A: 9 assorted lists to Port Phillip, c1839 - 51, Closed Access 387/5, cover Australia.

Guildhall Library holds a number of shipping indexes that were compiled for the popular immigration ports in Australia and New Zealand. These include:
Shipping arrivals and departures, Victorian ports, 1798 -1855 (2 vols.).
Shipping arrivals and departures, Sydney, 1788 -1844 (3 vols.).
Shipping arrivals and departures, Tasmania, 1803 -1843, (2 vols.) and
Shipping to New Zealand 1839 -1889 (known as the Comber Index), all Closed Access 387/2. Some other books held by the Library also provide potentially useful information, such as Dictionary of Western Australians. 1829 -1914, Closed Access 325/941 and British settlers in Natal 1824 - 1857. Closed access 325/684

4. FULL POSTAL ADDRESSES OF THE RECORDS OFFICES MENTIONED IN THE RSS LEAFLET:

The Registry of Shipping and Seamen,
P.O. Box 165 Cardiff CF14 5FU
Tel:02920 768227 Fax:02920 747877
MCA Website: http://www.mcagency.org.uk

The Public Record Office,
The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU.
Tel: 020 8876 3444 Fax: 020 8878 8905 Website: http://www.pro.gov.uk

The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, SE10 9NF.
Tel: 020 8858 4422 Fax: 020 8312 6632 Website: www.nmm.ac.uk.
The Archivist, Maritime History Archive,
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's Newfoundland A1C 5S7
Tel: 709 737 8428 Fax: 709 737 3123
Website: http://www.mun.ca.mha E-Mail: mha@morgan.ucs.mun.ca

The Guildhall Library,
Aldermanbury, London, EC2P 2EJ
Tel: 020 7 332 1868/1870 Fax: 020 7 600 3384

The Southampton Archives Services,
Southampton City Council, South Block Civic Centre, Southampton
SO 14 7LY
Tel: 023 8083 2251 Fax: 023 8083 2156
E Mail cityarchives@southampton.gov.uk

5. CONCLUSIONS AND REFERENCES

The above mentioned series of documents cover the whole of the United Kingdom including crew lists for ports in England, Wales, Scotland the whole of Ireland.

Other References:
My Ancestor-was a Merchant Seaman, how can I find out more about him?
by Christopher T Watts & Michael J Watts, Soc of Genealogists, London 1986 (Second Edition, published 2002)
Records of Merchant Shipping and Seamen
by Kelvin Smith, Christopher T Watts and Michael J Watts, PRO Readers' Guide No20 1998

STOP PRESS
The Fifth Register of Merchant Seamen's service 1941-1972
This register referred to at the top of page 10 of The Bulletin Volume 47 No 3 is now available at the Public Record Office under Ref BT382 and therefore the paragraph in italics no longer applies.

ASPECTS OF THE WORK OF THE MARITIME & COAST GUARD AGENCY

By Brian George, Watch Officer, M&CA. Mr George gave a presentation to the Society at the November meeting on the work of the M&CA with particular reference to the Liverpool Coastguard Station. The following is a summary of the presentation.

The Coast Guard is generally considered to date back to 1822, however recently some documents have come to light implying that some form of service may have existed as early as the 1760s. Originally it formed part of the Revenue but has been attached to several Government Departments including both the Admiralty and the Army.

In recent years it has undergone several changes in structure. First it merged with the Marine Pollution Control Unit and the ship surveyors to form the Coast Guard Agency and then with the Maritime Accident

Investigation Service and the Receiver of Wrecks, to form the Maritime & Coast Guard Agency. Over the years the emphasis of the Coast Guard activities has shifted to concentrate on the search and rescue role.

The Liverpool Coast Guard Station was at Crosby until 1982, when a new station was built at Formby Point. About two years ago it was proposed to close the Station but this plan was eventually dropped and £1 million has been spent on upgrading the building and its equipment. In 1982 the Liverpool District stretched from Talacre, on the Welsh shore of the River Dee to mid way along the Cumbria coast. More recently the northern boundary has been extended to the Mull of Galloway. In addition following the closure of the Isle of Man Station those waters are now "watched" from Liverpool.

As with almost any other walk of life the Station now relies heavily on computers, which are used to plot the potential movements of casualties, from positions given at the time of making the distress call. The system can also display the location of search vessels and aircraft and even help plot search patterns. Even with all this computer power the Watch Officers still also rely on their own local knowledge or the knowledge of other experienced "locals", like fishermen.

Currently there is also a 24-hour "headphone" watch on Channel 16, the Distress Channel, although in the very near future this will change to a loudspeaker watch. This change has been brought about by the changes in radio communications that have taken place over recent years. Many of the new systems sound an alert to tell the Watch Officer that a Distress Call is about to be made. Normally there are four watch officers on duty in the daytime and three at night.

When a distress call is received the Watch Officer has to establish as much information as possible to assist in determining what resources need to be deployed. The importance of this was demonstrated by Mr George by reference to a recent distress call for a "missing" fisherman and his small boat. He turned out not to have gone to sea, indeed the fishing boat was safely locked in his garage at home! Whilst planning the response to a call and to help try and eliminate actually implementing unnecessary searches extensive investigations are made by local officers, which can include making calls at local public houses and even checking shore line CCTV film, if available.

Once it has been established what is required the Watch Officer can call on numerous other bodies for support, as well as assistance from any vessels in the area. This support can range from Inshore and Offshore Lifeboats, RAF Rescue helicopters even Police helicopters,

although these are not equipped with winches. If necessary RAF Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft can also be called upon. The M&CA also has a number of Emergency Towing Vessels located at strategic points around the UK.

The Liverpool District has large areas of mud flats and cliffs and incidents in these areas are dealt with by Coast Guard Auxiliaries. These are trained volunteers equipped with vehicles carrying rescue equipment.

In the past Coast Guard Officers were recruited from former Royal and Merchant Navy personnel. With the decline in the numbers serving at sea, open recruitment is now also undertaken. To go some way to make up for the lack of sea experience staff can be assigned to serve on sail training ships and or on the Service's Emergency Towing Vessels.

Over the last 10 years the number of emergencies in the Liverpool District has more than trebled. For this reason the Agency, has expanded its education campaigns to both boat users in general and children in particular.

Not all Coast Guard Stations are the same; they each have their own special characteristics. Liverpool does not have its own radar installation as there are several onshore and offshore systems that can be tapped into, when necessary. Dover Station on the other hand has extensive radar facilities to enable it to monitor the Channel Traffic Separation Scheme. Falmouth, with worldwide coverage, has of late been developing its skills in long distance search and rescue having co-ordinated several rescues in the Indian Ocean.

FEED BACK

From LNRS Member David Hawkins

I was interested (indeed excited) to find in the LNRS BULLETIN for September the article on page 17 on some early Laird vessels. I was very soon comparing the details given here with my own list of Laird ships (a copy of which is in the Society's records). I found the details given in the article compared well with those I had, but I can make the following comments.

For 10 **INDUS,** while I have the owners as Hon. East India Cr have also the entry "Ordered for Savannah".

For 13 **GLOW-WORM,** I have the owner as Assheton-Smith (with a hyphen).

My record for 15 **ROBERT F STOCKTON** has the owner as "Capt. Robert F Stockton, U.S.N." and describes the vessel as "Iron vessel with Ericsson screw".

A vessel which is not mentioned in the article is 14. **VOADOER,** an iron paddle steamer for the Rio Janeiro Co.

There were also many further iron vessels for the East India Co.

From LNRS Member Charles Dawson

Following on from the biography of William Bushell, in the December edition of the Bulletin, I thought the following list of fastest times by sailing ships might be of interest to members. They are taken from Greyhound of the Seas by Carl C Cutler, Wellinborough, 1984 p479/80

Ship	Days	Depart Liverpool	Arrive Melbourne
James Baines	63	10/12/1854	12/2/1855
		"Land to land 58 days"	
Empress of the Seas	66½	1/6/1861	6/8/1861
Red Jacket	67	4/5/1854	12/7/1854
		"Was in tow for three days"	
Rip van Winkle	70	2/8/1852	11/10/1852
Ocean Chief	71	19/5/1854	8/8/1854
Young America	71	18/4/1858	29/6/1858
Champion of the Seas	71	No dates given	
Donald McKay	71	No dates given	
Lightning	73	6/1/1855	20/3/1855

From LNRS Member James E Cowden
(A summary of the contents of two letters)

Following the article on the Harrison Line Sale, in the September 2003 Bulletin, I thought fellow members might interested in learning more about one of the purchasers of some of the Harrison Line models. Mr Arne Simonsen, the proprietor of the Scan Group of Denmark and an avid collector of ship models. He purchased the models of the **Dalesman** (1940), **Craftsman** (1947), **Biographer** (1949), **Barrister** (1954) and the **Trader** (1966). He also purchased the ships bell of the **Trader** and a collection of Charente Steamship House China, a mantle clock, plus over 200 books, posters and pictures.

In all Mr Simonsen spent £46,802 30p. The models have joined models of vessels from the Clan Line, East Asiatic, Maersk Lines as well as other well known shipping lines of yesteryear, in his collection.

*Picture of James Cowden alongside the model of the **Trader** on display in the Scan Group's Office in Copenhagen*

Regarding the article in the December 2003 Bulletin on the Ismay Grave. Two other graves may be of interest.

The Larrinaga family set up a fine fleet of tramp steamers on Merseyside. Being of Spanish descent they named their fleet after family members, for example **Niceto de Larrinaga** and **Pilar de Larrinaga**. The family lived in the Princess Park area of Liverpool, with their last office being in the Corn Exchange Buildings, Fenwick Street. The large gravestone to the family can be found in the Smithdown Road Cemetery.

Sir Alfred Lewis Jones, who brought the African SS Co. and the British & African SN Co. together to be managed by Elder Dempster, with Jones acting as Senior Partner. The gravestone of Sir Alfred is in the Anfield Cemetery, Priory Road, Liverpool

SS GREAT BRITAIN – EARLY HISTORY

Summary of the presentation given to the Society at the October meeting by LNRS Vice Chairman Gordon Bodey

Introduction

In 1970 the SS **Great Britain** was retrieved from the Falkland Islands where she had lain as a hulk since 1886. Between 1886 and 1933 she had been used at Port Stanley for storing baled wool awaiting export and then as a coal store, but was then abandoned. In 1937, to prevent her becoming a hazard to shipping, she was towed to Sparrow Cove (some 3 miles from Port Stanley), run against the ground and scuttled. That she could be recovered in one piece when 127 years old, albeit in a dilapidated state, owes much to the soundness of her original construction.

The **Great Britain** was built to capitalise on the success of the SS **Great Western**, which went into service in 1838.

On April 8th 1838, the paddle-driven **Great Western** sailed from Bristol for New York on what was, hopefully, to be the first wholly steam-powered transatlantic crossing. Having taken 15 days 5 hours to complete the crossing it was found on arrival off the Battery, New York at 4pm on Monday, April 23rd that the SS **Sirius** (commander: Lt. Roberts) had arrived some five hours previously and had also crossed under steam-power only. However, the **Sirius** had set off 3 ½ days earlier than the **Great Western** and had started from Cork, a passage some 225 miles shorter. It was also reported that **Sirius** had run out of coal within sight of New York and that some of her wooden fittings had to be used as fuel to complete the passage under steam.

Sirius left New York on May 1st for the return crossing and arrived at Falmouth on May 19th; **Great Western** left Sandy Hook at 5pm on May 7th and arrived at Bristol at 10 30am on May 22nd , having taken 14 ½ days. While **Sirius** was to make only one more round voyage, **Great Western** was to make a further 35 round crossings over the following six years, averaging 15 ½ days westward and 13 ½ days eastwards.

Soon after this successful first voyage her owners, the Great Western SS Co, (GW SS CO) a subsidiary of the Great Western Railway (GWR), who promoted the ship as an extension of the railway whereby passengers could travel from London to New York with a minimum of disruption to their journey, began to make plans to build another similar vessel to run in tandem with her [1]. The original members of the Building Committee: Capt. C Claxton (now managing director of GW SS Co.), I K Brunel, engineer Thomas R Guppy and Bristol shipbuilder William Patterson who had built the **Great Western**, were asked to undertake the new project, which they agreed to do. After at least five re-designs (and three proposed names viz: ***City of New York***, ***Mammoth*** and ***Great Britain***) a considerably larger and entirely different kind of vessel was to materialise.

Construction

Great Britain's predecessor **Great Western** was oak-framed, with her wooden hull being copper-sheathed below the waterline, and driven by side-mounted paddle wheels. Brunel soon realised that to build the much larger **Great Britain** of timbers of the requisite strength would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. Also, the sizes of the timbers needed would inhibit the amount of passenger and cargo-carrying space and thus defeat the purpose of building the larger vessel; and, timber-built, her displacement would be prohibitive.

Fortuitously, the recently built (by Laird's at Birkenhead) General Steam Navigation Company's iron vessel **Rainbow** paid a visit to Bristol in October 1838 and was inspected by Captain Claxton's team, and the advantages of constructing the new vessel of iron were quickly grasped. Not the least of these was an estimated reduction of at least 35% in her displacement and the consequent increase in her carrying capacity. At this stage, though, she was still to be paddle-driven.

However, other problems now presented themselves:

- With no precedent for such a large iron-built vessel, the section sizes of the frames and the thickness of the plates - and their tying together - to provide adequate strength largely came down to educated guesswork
- Although the ability to produce, shape, and join the required plates and sections was by then well established, handling the materials in the confined space of the building dock would be cumbersome and laborious
- The technology did not then exist to make the large-sized forgings that would be needed for the paddle wheel driving shafts and this deficiency was to lead James Nasmyth to invent the steam hammer - though not needed for this purpose as events turned out.

The chief difficulty, however, was that no commercial builder would take on the job. Due to the then lack of experience: costing, agreeing a price, and the logistics of the build, would have made it a very high-risk undertaking and could have spelt commercial suicide for the builder. Events were to prove these fears to be well founded. The initial projected cost was £76,000, but the total cost recorded by the GW SS Co, was £117,295-6s-7d. There was also great antipathy at that time on the part of many shipbuilders to building in iron. As a result, the GW SS Co was obliged to undertake the building of the vessel, and its engines, itself.

Construction began officially on July 19th 1839 in a dock excavation, the entrance to which had been closed with a caisson, on the south bank of the Floating Harbour (opposite Brandon Hill), Bristol under the superintendence of engineer Thomas R Guppy. It was December, however, when the keel was put on the blocks. The dock, its associated workshops, foundry, engine shop, cranes etc. cost an additional sum reportedly in excess of £53,000.

When the hull had risen to about a third of its height an event occurred in May 1840 that was to change her design radically - a vessel called **Archimedes** visited Bristol.

Here it is necessary to return to 1836. In that year on May 31st Francis Pettit Smith (then aged 28) of Hendon, who was a farmer by occupation but an avid and very skilful model boat maker by inclination - and who devised various propulsion methods for his models – patented a method of propulsion using an Archimedean screw (the early versions being made of wood and spring-driven), which he initially installed in one of his models. This he demonstrated to friends on a pond at his Hendon farm, and to the public at the Adelaide Gallery in London. By November 1836, with the technical assistance of Thomas Pilgrim, an engineer, and the financial assistance of a banker, Mr Wright, he had had built an 8 ton steam-powered vessel of some 4½ hp driven by a screw of two turns and 2ft diameter. After a mishap to the screw when the after turn sheared off improving the performance, he decided to fit a single-turn screw instead.

At the end of September 1837, and after various other trials, Smith, in order to prove the propulsion's worth, had this small vessel (34ft long by 6½ft wide with a draught of 4ft) steam from the Thames and round to the Channel. Here he ran her between Ramsgate, Dover and Hythe and back again, in some very boisterous conditions. Her performance fully justified his faith in his invention and he invited the Admiralty to consider its use in their ships. However, he was advised by their Lordships to install the device in a larger commercial vessel first, and if it could reliably maintain a speed of 5 knots the device would be re-considered. Smith was happy to do this and *Smith's Patent Propelling Co.* - backed by Sir John Rennie, the eminent civil engineer, and Mr Wright - was formed to build a 237 ton vessel that was launched on 18th October 1838 from Wynne's yard at Millwall on the Thames, and named **Archimedean** (soon to be changed to **Archimedes**). **Archimedes** was to make her first trial trip on May 1st 1839, which proved most satisfactory. Her screw was made of iron plate reinforced with wrought iron bars and set at an angle of about 40°.

On May 30th her boiler exploded killing the second engineer. The cause was ascertained and the boiler rebuilt, and after trials on the Thames and at Sheerness **Archimedes**, which was now running regularly and reliably at up to 8 knots, visited Portsmouth in October 1839. In a trial of speed against a naval paddle steamer [2], **Archimedes** triumphed easily.

It must be pointed out that Smith did not claim that his device was an original invention. In fact there were at least fifteen other notices published of methods of propulsion by propeller before 1836, and going back as far as Robert Hooke in 1681. Indeed, Charles Cummerow had patented a method very similar to Smith's on June 10th 1828, and had also advocated that it be placed in the deadwood (the lowest aftermost part of the hull) of the ship.

Others had advocated, described, experimented with, or patented such a method of propulsion without proceeding further. Smith's claim to be the father of screw-propulsion rests securely upon his achievement in doing all of the above and then proceeding to put it into successful commercial use, and all within five years

When the **Archimedes** visited Bristol in 1840 as part of a round-Britain trial trip, mainly in order for an Admiralty observer, Captain E. Chappell, RN to assess her performance under a variety of conditions [which was to result in the first screw-propelled vessel being built for the Royal Navy: the sloop **Rattler**, laid down at Sheerness in 1841, and launched in 1843; also designed by Brunel and Guppy], Brunel was invited to view her, which he did. As a result he and Guppy took an excursion trip on her as far as the Holmes, two small islands some 20 miles down the Severn estuary from Avonmouth, to assess her capability. Guppy was sufficiently impressed to ask afterwards to proceed to Liverpool in her to make further observations, and did so. [3]

Having reported his findings to Brunel, and after much subsequent discussion with the Board, work on **Great Britain**'s engines was halted and the GW SS Co borrowed the **Archimedes** in order to assess her performance over some months with different sizes and designs of propeller - eight in all. A very favourable report by Brunel persuaded the Company's Board to sanction the re-design of **Great Britain** to be screw driven. Her propeller, however, was to be of an entirely different design to that of Smith's and the method of delivering the shaft's power to the propeller was also to be different.

Apart from the perceived efficiency of screw propulsion it would also bring a great saving in machinery weight (something over 90 tons), and most of the machinery weight would be shifted downward giving added stability to the vessel. Also, the vessel would be some twenty feet narrower in the overall beam than if paddle-driven. Work got underway again in spring, 1841.

Structure

Great Britain's hull shape was very similar to that of 18th C. wooden-walled warships and was widest at the deep load line. It was built on a wrought iron flat-plate keel 20inches wide and 7/8thinch thick; the forward, and after ends being of one inch thickness (and trough-shaped to accommodate the stem and stern post respectively). Sections of plate were fire-welded into fifty-foot lengths; each length was scarfe-jointed for 18in to its neighbour and riveted all over the joint at 4 ½in intervals. Overlying, and riveted to the keel plate was a flat reinforcing plate 10in, wide and 11/16thin thick. In addition, at 9ft on either side of the centreline of the mid-section of the hull, there was a vertical bilge keel, 110ft long, about 6in deep and 1¼in thick. They were fastened to the hull by 5 by 5in angle irons on either side, and the bottom edges were level with the bottom of the main keel plate. Their purpose was to provide adequate support for the hull under the engine

compartment when it sat on transverse blocks when the ship was dry-docked - not as roll damping devices, which were not then appreciated.

The vessel's stem was a single-piece forging twelve inches in depth and five inches thick at the forefoot, increasing to 16in in depth, but 2½in thick, at 8ft above the foot, then tapering to twelve inches in depth and 1 ½in thick at the upper deck. The screw frame was also a single forging.

Internally, the frames and deck beams were of L-shaped angle iron 6in by 3 ½in by 5/8in thick, and spaced (nominally) 18 inches apart amidships and 24 inches apart at both ends (where smaller section angle iron was used). The frames enclosing the engine-room space were doubled with the webs facing each other and riveted together. There were also additional intermediate frames lining the engine space.

Frames and deck beams were braced together by angled angle-iron struts (the upper deck beams by iron rods) riveted to both, and where the frames crossed a lapped joint in the outside plating a tapered plate liner was inserted in the space formed between them, then riveted through frame, liner and plate to ensure a solid connection. All the joints were double-riveted.

Fore and aft iron plate tie bars to stiffen the structure ran the length of the hull, and were riveted to the outside of the angle iron struts joining the frames and deck beams of the upper cargo deck.

The outside of the ship was plated with 6ft to 6ft 6in wide by 3ft high by 11/16in thick plates for the garboard strake (the first row of plates attached to the keel plate) and three strakes above, then above these, 5/8in thick plates amidships (3/8in thick at the ends) up to the deep load line. Above this level the plates were 1/2in thick, but strengthened at the top of the upper strake by; an outer moulding strap 6in wide by 1 inch thick and an inner strap 7in wide by 1 in thick (welded in 60 foot lengths). All the plates were butt jointed vertically; the joints, being arranged to be between the frames and staggered to avoid coinciding. They were fastened together inside with vertical iron straps, double-riveted to the plates. The strakes were lap-jointed horizontally up to the sixteenth strake and the joints double-riveted. The three strakes above this level were butt jointed, and again fastened with internal straps. Oddly, the lowest three strakes overlapped upwards - those above in the usual downward manner.

As built, **Great Britain** was a flush-decked vessel with only one deckhouse other than the companion hatches and skylights. This was situated immediately aft of the funnel and seems to have been used as a navigation room. It had a port-to-starboard stanchion structure above it attached to the funnel and to the gunwales which acted as a flying bridge. There were no bulwarks as such, but to serve the purpose the gunwale was lined with stanchions, surmounted by a rail, which were covered with a rope mesh.

Internally, the hull was divided into six main compartments by iron watertight bulkheads (although the two after ones only reached up to the underside of the Saloon deck):

- The foremost of these separated the forecastle and forepeak from the forward passenger accommodation and cargo space, and was of extra strength
- The next two were located forward and aft of the engine-room space
- The fourth and fifth (and less than full height) ones separated the after coal space from the cargo space, and the end of the shaft tunnel from the stern respectively.

There were two cargo decks and they were made of iron plate; the lower one being supported by longitudinal upright 1/2in thick iron-plate sleepers. The middle pair of sleepers was 3ft 3in high and ran the length of the ship; the others varied in length and height as the hull narrowed and curved. They were held between pairs of angle-iron brackets riveted to them and to the frames below; the underside of the deck being attached to the outside of the top of the sleepers by separate 3 ½in by 3 ½in angle iron brackets.

Wooden pillars situated directly above the lower cargo deck sleeper supports supported the upper cargo deck and were held in position by angle-iron supports, riveted to the deck plates and bolted through the pillars at top and bottom. Pillars were also used in the dining saloons to carry the load of the promenade deck. Above this the upper deck was supported by a row of pillars down the centreline of the promenade deck, and by longitudinal iron bulkheads offset from the outer lines of pillars below in the dining saloon.

Each of the decks had 3ft wide iron plate stringers running down both sides the length of the hull (like shelves): the upper deck stringer plates curved downward toward the ship's sides (as did the upper deck beams); those on the other decks were level. All were ½in thick except on the main deck where the stringer plates were 5/8in thick, and were riveted to the tops of the deck beams and to the frames. Overlying the outside half of the upper deck stringer plates were tie bars made of scarfed-together lengths of Baltic pine of massive section and running the length of the hull. These were bolted to the frames and to the stringer plates. The two decks below had similar tie bars but on these decks there was one above and one below each stringer plate. Surmounting the gunwale was another large-section stringer of Baltic pine.

The upper deck was covered with five-inch thick red pine planking laid fore and aft, and below this the promenade deck was laid with four-inch thick pine planks also laid fore and aft. The main deck (situated at the deep load line) was laid with five-inch thick pine planking laid athwart ships to provide transverse stiffness to the hull. The planking of all the decks was cross-braced underneath with wrought iron straps.

Propulsion

Four direct-acting engines were installed in **Great Britain**, and were based on a design of 1822 by Sir Marc Brunel, I K Brunel's father. Each was a single cylinder of 88in diameter with a piston stroke of 72in Pointing upwards, they were placed in pairs at each end of the crankshaft on opposite sides of the hull to each other, and inclined towards the centre line at about 30° from the vertical. The base of each cylinder was bolted to a heavy frame on an angled bedplate riveted to the hull just outside the bilge keel area. Each cylinder was encased in a cast iron box packed with insulation and secured to massive athwart-ships A-frames made of hardwood sheathed in iron plate, which themselves were secured to the internal framing and to the plates of the ship's sides.

The piston rods transmitted their thrust to connecting rods attached in pairs on an outwardly protruding crank pin (which also carried an arm that operated the bilge, air, and hotwater pumps) on each of the 6ft. long, guitar-shaped cranks at the ends of a 17ft long wrought iron crankshaft whose diameter in the middle 40in section was 28in and weighed 16 tons.

Held in another (inner) pair of massive A-frames, the crankshaft was situated 17ft 6in above the screw shaft (centre to centre), and (its centre) 25ft above the keel plate - and rotated in two bearings 30in long and 24in in diameter. The crankshaft, its cranks, and the crank pins were bored out to allow cooling water to be pumped through them.

The way that the motion of the crankshaft was transferred to the propelling shaft was a completely new idea and was viewed with great scepticism at the time. A dual drum drive operated through four side-by-side chains; each chain comprising alternate sets of two and three case-hardened links, ie ten links across each row. A drum of 18ft 3in diameter was keyed on to the middle of the crankshaft and between the rims of the drum, set into recesses, were transverse bars made of teak which acted as 'teeth'. Below it, keyed onto the screw shaft, was a similar drum 6ft in diameter with 'teeth' made of lignum vitae, which were set into recesses around the boss; both drums were 38in wide.

On the underside, and at the top and the bottom, of each chain link was a v-shaped projection that meshed with a groove between each bar. The motion of the top drum moved the chain forward, which in turn moved the bottom drum forward. The chain drive was most efficient when there was a small degree of slack in the chains; this also made the replacement of broken links a simple job, although this was an infrequent occurrence. The 'teeth' materials not only provided a smooth, vibration-free motion but also made it very quiet. For each revolution of the crankshaft, which was intended to operate at 18 revs per minute at maximum speed, three revolutions were made by the screw shaft.

To provide the necessary driving force, a single 34ft long, 31ft wide, and 21ft high shell was partitioned longitudinally into three sections to form three boilers. Each boiler was fired by four furnaces at both ends (each with its own flue system, all of which were conjoined to a central outlet beneath an 8ft diameter, 39ft -high funnel) - 24 furnaces in all. The boiler room occupied a 50ft length of the total engine-room length of 80ft. The operating steam pressure was 41bs per sq in.

When full and operational the boilers, in addition to their own weight of 200 tons, held 200 tons of water. As they were flat-bottomed, a considerable degree of support was required to prevent them from sagging and was provided by the same sleeper supports that ran under the lower cargo deck. While coal consumption would have been variable, the accepted average daily amount used under constant steam seems to have been about 60 tons.

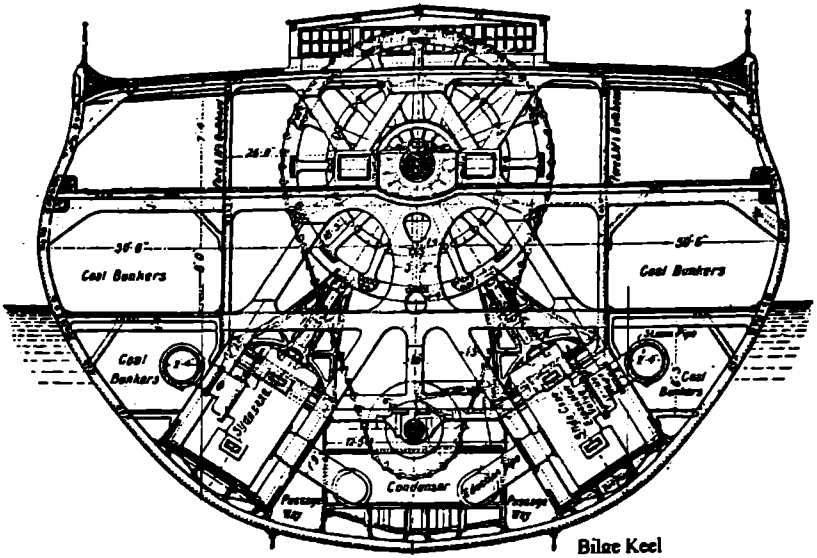
The screw shaft was built in three sections: that adjacent to the engines was a solid forging 28ft 3in long by 16in diameter in the journals; the middle section was 61ft 8in long by 30in in diameter and was a hollow tube made of a double thickness of 3/8in plate riveted together with 1³/₈in countersunk rivets; the tailshaft was a solid forging 25ft 6in long by 18in diameter at its widest, but of 15in diameter where it passed through a gland (packed with leather to ensure a watertight seal) in the sternpost. Prior to passing through the sternpost it was carried in a bearing bolted to the latter.

Propulsion was effected by a single six-bladed propeller of 15ft 6in diameter and 25ft pitch (the blades being at an angle of 28°). The blades of the propeller were made of wrought iron and to the end of each was riveted a palm-shaped iron plate 4ft 3in long by 2ft 10in wide by 7/8in thick. These were smoothed, painted and varnished to lessen frictional drag.

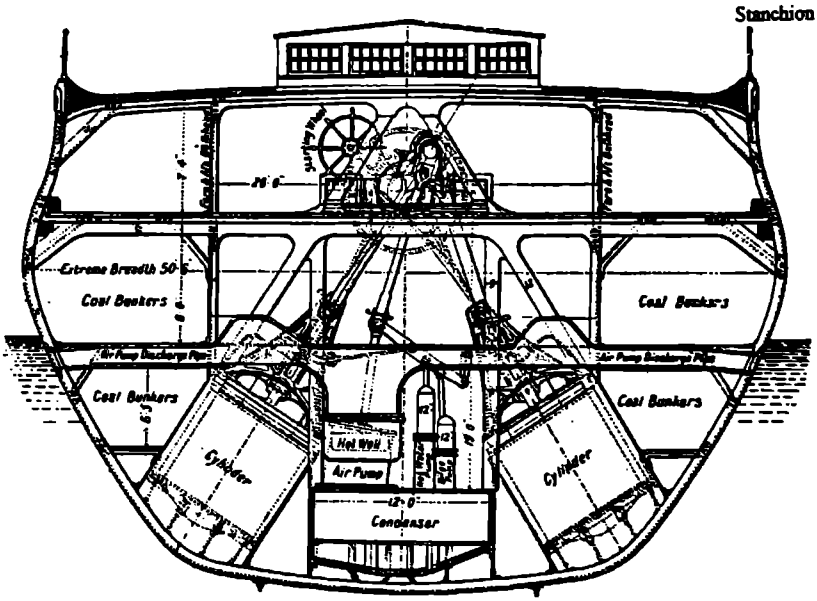
It was not intended that **Great Britain** be wholly steam propelled - wind power would be utilised whenever it offered. As built she had six masts, with only the main mast being stepped onto the keel. All the other masts were stepped in wrought iron 'tulip'-shaped mounts bolted to the upper deck and hinged above the mount - supposedly to be lowered when under steam power only. This facility is not recorded as having been used and it is most unlikely that it could have been. She could carry 1,700 square yards of sail and all the standing rigging was made of wire rope, which was then a novelty.

To complement the propulsion system a balanced rudder, 14ft 6in tall by 7ft 6in wide, made of wrought iron plates riveted to an internal frame was carried on a raked rudder post of 9in diameter at the top reducing to 7in diameter at the heel, which was mounted on an extended section of the keel plate strengthened by angle iron welded to its underside. The rudder in turn was manoeuvred through a raked rudder stock. The unsheltered steering wheel was located on the after end of the upper deck.

At that time it was usual for the tiller rope (or chain), having passed around the steering drum, to be attached directly to the end of the tiller (located in the

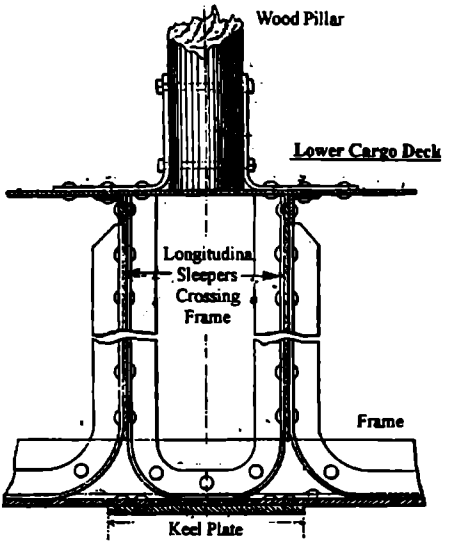


Section through centre part of engine room – looking forward

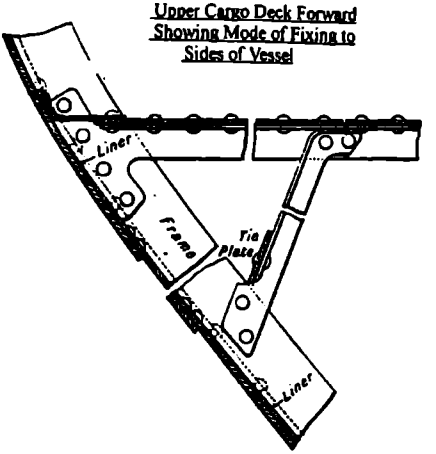


Section through fore end of engine room – looking aft

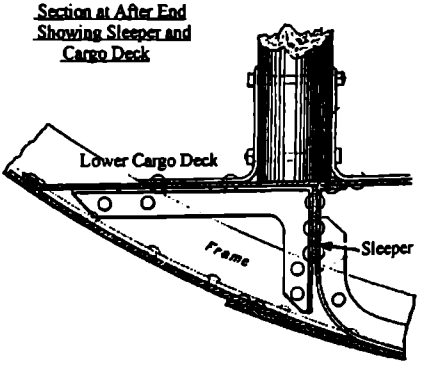
Section Showing Lower Cargo Deck and Plate Sleeper Supports



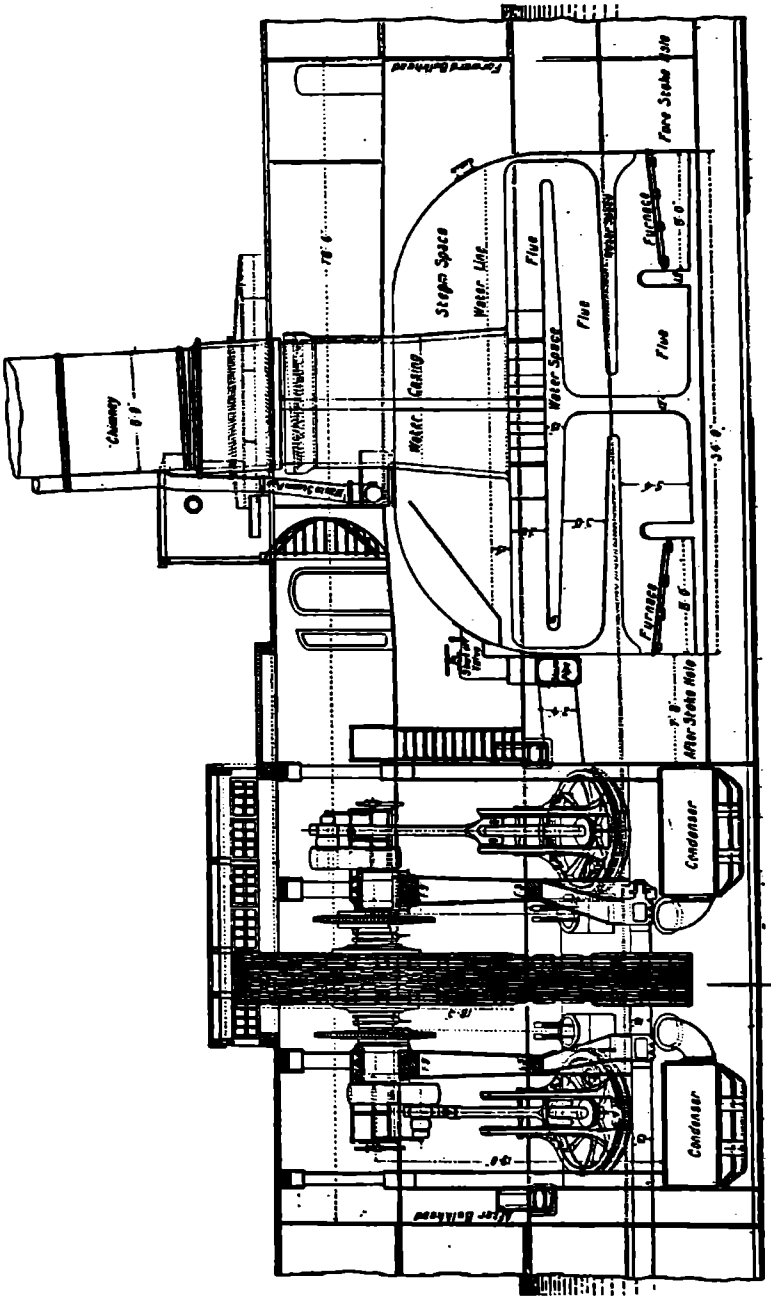
Upper Cargo Deck Forward Showing Mode of Fixing to Sides of Vessel



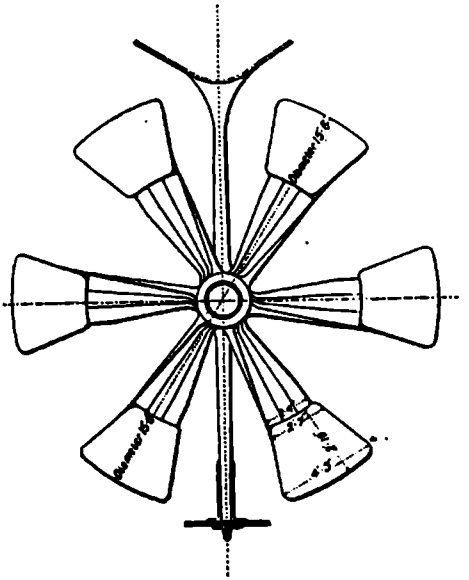
Section at After End Showing Sleeper and Cargo Deck



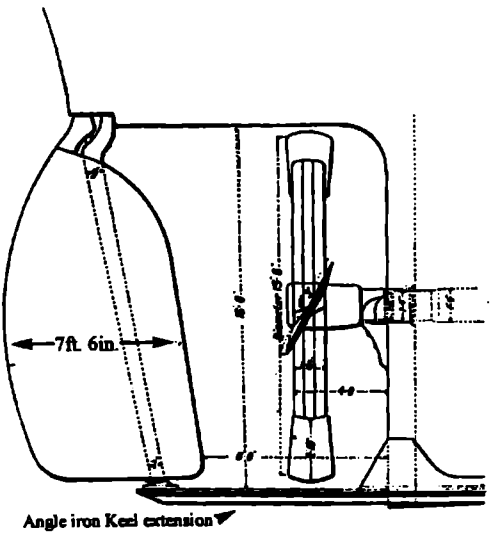
Supports and tying - details



Longitudinal Section through engines and boilers



End elevation of screw propeller



Elevation showing screw propeller and rudder

amount, or if a strong sea threw the rudder over (as could occur frequently in heavy weather), a large amount of rope would have to be wound on to bring the tiller back to the mid position, and while it was being wound on the helmsman could not exercise close control of the vessel.

To alleviate this problem, John Rapson invented (and patented in September 1839) what came to be known as *"Rapson's Slide"*[1]. Just beneath (and part way along from) the free after end of the tiller were two fixed transverse guide bars separated by a space. Entrapped in the space, but free to slide to and fro, was a short flat bar (the slide), on top of which was attached a socket through which the tiller handle passed and in which it could move freely. To each end of the "slide" was attached the tiller rope, which passed directly sideways and upwards over guide pulleys to the steering drum situated directly above the slide mechanism. The whole formed a continuous closed loop that was always taut and under control enabling the tiller to be returned to the fore and aft position easily. It is thought that this device, or a variant of it, was used in the **Great Britain**.

Passenger and Cargo-carrying Capacity

On the promenade deck were two saloons; the first-class being aft (110ft long by 22ft wide), and the second-class forward (67ft long by 21ft 9in wide). On the next deck down, the main deck, were the dining saloons: the lavishly fitted-out, first-class "Grand" saloon aft being 98ft 6in long by 30ft wide; forward, the second-class 61ft long by 21ft 9in wide. Headroom in the public spaces varied between 6ft 6in and 7ft 9in.

The cabins, termed 'staterooms', were placed in pairs on either side of twelve-foot long alleyways (closed by a door) leading off at right angles down each side of the promenade and dining saloons. There were 139 in all; of these, 26 were single-berth and 113 two-berth, giving a total of 252 berths. The rooms (one inboard and one outboard) each measured 6ft 6in by 6ft and were 6ft 6in high. In the two-berth rooms were two bunk beds (one on the deck and one above it) on one side of the room with a twelve-inch wide settee opposite. A washstand containing a bowl and a water jug, a bulkhead-mounted oil lamp, and a coat hook completed the fitments.

Below the passenger decks there was about 20,000 cu ft of cargo-carrying space [the after lower cargo deck with the 30in diameter mid-section shaft running through it (and boxed in) was unsuited for stowing cargo and was used for passengers' luggage], giving a theoretical cargo capacity of some 500 tons. However, facilities to handle and stow cargo were primitive in the extreme; all of it was manhandled down a small hatchway just aft of the foremast at the break of the forecastle, and then through trunkways to the cargo spaces. As the height within the cargo decks did not allow a man to stand upright, everything had to be dragged along the deck. This was also the

only way to the after upper cargo deck. Consequently, in practise, cargo capacity would have been somewhat less than 500 tons. Fresh water tanks were located in the forepeak and aft beneath the mid shaft area and between them held about 14,500 gallons.

Crew Accommodation

The captain's day room was on the centreline at the forward end of the 1st class promenade and separated from it by a lobby. The other officers were accommodated in the topmost of three levels in the forecastle. The deck crew lived in the two levels below.

Outboard of the transverse bulkheads (26ft apart at this level) enclosing the machinery space amidships, on each side on the upper tween deck, was a space 74ft long by 8ft wide. Inboard of these spaces was a passageway and outboard, WC facilities, crew accommodation and the galleys. The engineers' cabins and stokers' rooms are thought to have been down one side; cooks, stewards, and servants rooms down the other.

By the time of her final fitting out she appears to have been equipped with six lifeboats in davits on the after half of the upper deck, and one inverted on chocks between the fore and main mast. Each boat reportedly had the capacity to carry 80 people.

Great Britain's length was 289ft between the perpendiculars, and 322ft overall; 50ft 6in wide at her broadest, and 32ft 6in deep. Her displacement at a load draught of 18ft was 3,618 tons. She carried a crew of 130 officers and men.

Floating-out and Trials

On July 19th 1843 the building berth was flooded prior to the naming ceremony which took place in the presence of Prince Albert, and was watched by an estimated 30,000 people lining the slope of Brandon Hill. The Prince had been due to name the ship but passed the honour to Mrs Miles, wife of one of the Company's directors and who had named the **Great Western** exactly six years before. The small steam vessel **Avon** had a line to the **Great Britain** and had towed her out into the harbour and in front of the dignitaries' pavilion when, at the crucial moment, the line broke allowing the **Great Britain** to veer away, and causing Mrs Miles to miss the target. Prince Albert promptly hurled another bottle of wine scoring a direct hit and showering people below with broken glass and wine. This was at precisely 3.15pm. The ship was then towed directly across the harbour to Gas Ferry Wharf for fitting-out.

Prior to building, an understanding had supposedly been reached with the Bristol Dock Co. that the 44ft -wide lock from the Floating Harbour into

the Cumberland Basin, and the 45ft -wide lock from the basin to the River Avon would be adequately widened by her floating-out date, and on this understanding she had been built 5ft 6in wider than the widest of the locks. By the due date, work on widening the locks had not begun.

Whilst negotiations were proceeding to have the work carried out, a barrage of suggestions was received from the public. Among them:

- A Mr. Austin proposed to place canvas cases under the bilge areas the length of the vessel (and double-banked at the bows and quarters to prevent her heeling over when she rose), which would be inflated by men on deck with air pumps. Being then almost out of the water she could easily be towed out without altering the lock entrances. He said the cases were gas-proof and stronger than any metal. Possibly anticipating a rush of business he patented the idea before advertising the procedure.
- A Mr. Edmondson proposed that the great force of magnetism be used to lift her high enough to carry her over the entrance. His idea was to construct giant moveable gantries along the lock sides equipped with electro-magnets [Joseph Henry in the U.S. had demonstrated in 1829 that such a device could lift over a ton]. He claimed to have stood across the street from a lamp post and on activating such a device the lamppost had bent over. However, he could not say how, once airborne, he would set her down again.

An idea (possibly by Guppy) [4] that seems to have been given serious consideration was to place sealed iron tanks under the hull, but the risk was considered too great.

In the end it came down to picks and shovels; the GW SS Co. being allowed by the Dock Co. to do the work on the locks provided that they were restored to their former state when the vessel had passed through.

In the third week of October 1844, **Great Britain** passed into the Cumberland Basin where fitting out continued while work on the lock to the Avon proceeded. On December 10th she was towed from the Basin into the lock to the River Avon, but started to touch the sides when three parts into it. Captain Claxton had her pulled back out immediately and more of the masonry was removed. On the night of Wednesday 11th December she was able to pass into the river where she remained until 8.05 the following morning when three steam tugs took her down the river to King Road at the mouth of the Avon. Even at this early hour many thousands of people turned out to cheer her on her way.

She arrived at King Road (at the mouth of the Avon) at 10.15am where shortly afterwards steam was raised. At 11.30am with her engine shaft going at six revolutions per minute she gathered speed to 4 knots toward the Holmes against a stiff breeze. At noon the revs were increased to 9 ¾ per minute and a speed of 6¾ knots was recorded by log. The engine shaft revolutions were taken up to twelve and held there for some time and her

speed rose to 8 knots. Having reached the Holmes the helm was put hard over and she came round in a circle of half-a-mile diameter in nine minutes. The helm was then put over 30° when she completed the same manoeuvre in only six minutes and in a smaller distance.

On her way back to King Road she achieved 8¼ knots at thirteen revs, and 11 knots at sixteen revs. At this trial she was drawing only 12ft forward and 14ft 6in aft and her propeller was not fully immersed, but no untoward motion or vibration was experienced.

A final trial took place on 20th January when a distance of 95 nautical miles (as far as Foreland Point and back) was covered in 8 hours 34 minutes, an average speed of 11 knots. During the trial a maximum speed of 12²/₃ knots was recorded at 18²/₃ revs per minute. **Great Britain** was now deemed ready to start her career and her first major passage was to be from King Road to Blackwall on the Thames - a distance of some 567 nautical miles as computed by her commander Lt. Hosken RN Her chief engineer was H S Harman.

Leaving King Road on the evening of 23rd January 1845, **Great Britain** was off Lundy Island just after noon on Friday 24th January with a gale blowing, and she was rolling heavily but easily. At 3.20pm she was struck on the starboard side by a large wave that stove in three of her port lights and did some other damage on the upper deck. Otherwise, the vessel ran and steered well.

Once past the Lizard she averaged about 10 knots up the Channel before anchoring off Deal for almost 6½ hours awaiting the tide. In the Thames estuary, she overtook numerous vessels including the small steamer **Waterwitch** (of the GSN Co), going some three knots slower. She arrived at Blackwall at 3.30pm on Sunday, 26th January having spent 59½ hours underway on the passage (if timed from passing the Holmes) in which time she had averaged 9½ knots.. Some use of sails was made during the passage.

Great Britain's stay in the Thames (mostly in the East India Dock) was to last until Thursday 12th June. Although many thousands of people visited her (Queen Victoria and Prince Albert made the tour on 23rd April), it is not known if the continuing flow of visitors was the sole reason for her extended stay in the Thames, but an earlier entry into service might have been of greater publicity value and commercially more profitable.

Whatever the reason for the delay in starting for Liverpool, on Thursday 12th June at 4.30 pm. **Great Britain** was towed out into the river by the Woolwich steam-boat **Ariel**, and sailed for Liverpool via Cowes, Plymouth and Dublin arriving at Liverpool on July 4th where, over nine days, she was visited by upwards of 30,000 people. **Great Britain**'s first commercial voyage commenced from Liverpool on Saturday, 26th July 1845 when, amid the now familiar tumultuous send-off and firing of cannon, she headed under full sail down the Mersey for New York, carrying only 45 passengers and 360

tons of cargo. The incident-free passage took 14½ days, but on arrival she was besieged by such vast crowds (some reportedly travelling from as far as 400 miles away) that forcible restraint had to be applied to prevent the ship being overrun when she moved onto her berth.

Having been open to public view for nearly a fortnight (at 25 cents a head, the proceeds going to charity) she returned to Liverpool without incident and was put into drydock to assess the hull for any wear and tear. The hull being found to be sound and un-fouled the ship was loaded with a large cargo and on 27th of September again sailed for New York, this time carrying 102 passengers. This voyage, however, was to see the start of a run of incidents - two of which were to bring her to the brink of disaster.

Footnotes:

*[1] In the event this did not happen and SS **Great Western** was reported as being sold to the Oriental Steam Navigation Co. in 1844 for £32,000. She had originally cost £61,711-15-10d to build. However this report seems to have been premature.*

*[2] This may have been the **Volcano***

[3] Thomas R. Guppy was a wry ingenious engineer in his own right and did not merely carry out the bidding of Brunel. Indeed, Brunel not only consulted Guppy on all matters relating to the ship but also valued his opinion and relied upon his judgement whenever changes were proposed. It was Guppy who oversaw the day-to-day building operations, conducted the trials, and who later presented a paper to the Institute of Civil Engineers on the project.

*Also- **Archimedes** RN Trial Trip - Commenced May 21st from, The Nore, then Portsmouth, Southampton, Plymouth, Falmouth, Bristol, Tenby, Pembroke, Liverpool, Douglas, Greenock, Campbeltown, Fort William, through the Caledonian Canal, Inverness, Aberdeen, Leith, Tynemouth, Hull, Blackwall: arriving there July 7th having covered about 1,970 nautical miles in 230 hours of underway time - an average of just over 8 ½ knots.*

[4] Guppy had recently patented iron lifeboats and iron buoyancy tanks for them,

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CAPTAIN H W WILKINSON, MASTER MARINER

Concluding the story of Captain Wilkinson's sea going career, serving with the Straits SS Co as recounted to M A Savage and P E Threadingham

Singapore and the Straits Steamship Company

Harold was sent to Grangemouth to join the **Bruas** building there and which was taken over by the Straits Steamship Company. Harold arrived there on 22 October 1945 but it was a month before she was completed. The ship loaded a full cargo at Leith. Sailing on 7th December she was at Port Tewfik (Suez Canal) on 1st January and arrived at Singapore on 24th January 1946. As Chief Officer, Harold kept the morning and evening watches.

A month later Harold was promoted to Master and commanded the **Empire Seasheltie** and others of the same class around the Malayan coasts, visiting some 20 ports. There were 20 or 30 of this class built in the United Kingdom for the invasion of Malaya. They carried 350-400 tons of cargo and had originally been designed to be run up on beaches. They had been taken over by the Straits Steamship Company, sailed out to the Far East in batches, and were later given Malay names. On taking over his first command Harold was escorted to the ship by the Senior Master acting as Marine Superintendent because the Master he was relieving had been raising hell ashore the previous evening. However the handover was courteous and efficient.

Harold reverted to Chief Officer in the **Bidor** (Captain Pealson) for one voyage to Bangkok to load teak and rice. Harold made his requirements known for the stowage of the cargo, but these were ignored, so he arranged for a double-bottom tank on one side to be flooded so that the ship listed. His stowage plan was soon re-instated. It was not unusual in this period to find small craft broken down and these were towed to Singapore. The company regarded this as a good-will gesture and no salvage money was claimed.

Harold and his wife's first home leave (six months, including passage time) was in 1949 when they returned to England in the **Selandia** (Danish East Asiatic Company), which was a badly run ship with a drunken catering staff. They sat at the Chief Engineer's table: a man who was full of anti-British views, particularly after a few drinks.

Their return was in the **Autolycus** (Blue Funnel) but in the Red Sea Harold developed appendicitis and was landed at Aden to be operated on by an army colonel in a hospital in Crater. The meals (consisting

mostly of mountain goat) were brought by locals but Harold enjoyed visits by the CofE padre who had considerable local knowledge. He continued his journey two weeks later in the **Clytoneous** and on the 1 April 1950 Harold and Edith moved into company accommodation.

In about 1950, Harold graduated to the "B" class (**Bruas, Bidor, Bentong**), usually on the Bangkok run. Their diesel engines had to be stopped before reversing which could give difficulty when turning the ship in a confined space, requiring a large number of reverses, as the number of engine starts was limited by the capacity of the air-bottles. Such manoeuvring appeared to be necessary in the upper reaches of the Rejang River at Kapit (Sarawak) but Harold took a Malay skipper with him who knew the river and who acted as pilot. (There was no large-scale chart.) Part of the way up the river he kept the ship well into one bank: there was a small notice attached to a tree which read "ROCKS"! The 180 degree turn at the top would normally be made to starboard so that, with the propeller going astern, the paddle-wheel effect would help push the stern to port. However the "pilot" advised Harold to stay close to the right-hand bank and then go hard-a-port when a terrific stream near the left bank carried the bow round and one astern movement was all that was required. (The river here can rise 57 feet after rain in the hills.) The rapids started fifty yards above the berth, where a floating platform was used for loading cargo. In the early 1960s Harold's most frequent voyage was from Singapore to Bangkok (840 miles), usually carrying rice from Bangkok to Singapore, occasionally to British North Borneo, or Sarawak. From time to time the cargo included 2-300 tons of teak.

Harold became so well known in Bangkok that he was invited to sit on the selection board for Bangkok pilots, but was never available at a convenient time to do so. On a later trip the Bangkok chief pilot came on board to take the ship up river to the rice mills but he was as high as a kite and Harold refused to go. This provoked a row, but when the chief pilot had been persuaded to leave another pilot was waiting on the jetty to take his place. At one time his Chief Officer was a Malay with a home-trade certificate. Rather unusually they each took a sight when on passage from Bangkok to Borneo but even though the results were 30 miles apart, extensive checking of both sets of workings revealed no errors. Eventually Harold discovered that his Chief Officer took the time of his sight from the chartroom clock instead of the chronometer (deck-watch).

On one occasion a New Year party at the Wilkinson's went on into the early hours but Harold was due to fly to Sarawak at 6am. After about half an hours sleep, they set off for the airport and ran out of petrol. Edith was told to lock herself in the car while Harold caught a taxi. Edith plucked up her courage and also found a taxi, driven by a Sikh. The AA took her back to the car in the morning: it was alongside a petrol pump.

In 1957 Harold moved to the **Katong**, one of the three cargo ships built in Germany and taken over as reparations. They were very well built and good ships in bad weather. He later moved to the **Kinabalu**. Not originally fitted for SE Asia, the company installed air-conditioning When visiting Tawau in command of the **Kinabalu**, Harold was ordered to Tarakan in Indonesian Borneo. This was a time when relations with the Indonesians were decidedly strained, but the harbour authorities were helpful and Harold was greeted with salutes by the sentries when he visited the headquarters building. The Harbour-Master was a naval officer who had, at one time, been an employee of the Straits Steamship Company. There was a minor difficulty when it was time to leave as permission had to be obtained from Jakarta. The harbour transmitter was not powerful enough and so the signal was sent from the **Kinabalu** (in Romanised Malay).

A similar visit to the Palembang River, Sumatra also went well until the time came to leave, but it was soon apparent that the pilot felt that he should be given a carton of cigarettes. With these provided, the difficulties vanished. On another visit to Tawau, Edith and Harold were invited to supper at the agent's bungalow. While there, a team of sailors hauled a gun past them up the hill and fired some twenty rounds into Indonesian territory.

While Harold was in the **Kimanis**, the ship made a number of rescues including an Indonesian fishing boat half way across the South China Sea. The boat's engine had broken down and the crew had been without food for five or six days, so both the crew and the boat were lifted on board. The Sarawak authorities were not pleased by this arrangement, so the crew was landed in North Borneo and sent back to Indonesia on the next ship. Another time a member of the crew of a fishing boat was found in the water when about half-an-hour out from Singapore.

In 1960 Harold commanded the **Kunak**, 4.874 tons and the largest ship of the Straits Steamship Company fleet (and occasionally the **Keningau** or the **Kimanis**). She could carry up to 64 First Class

passengers and 5-600 deck passengers (Chinese, Malays, Indonesians, Dyaks, Indians). There were three kitchens to cater for the different diets.

After the war the shelter decks were fitted with double bunks and thin mattresses were provided but promptly stolen. Harold's principal worry was the prospect of coping with a child-birth while at sea, but he found that all that was necessary was to make interested noises and the women passengers would cope admirably.

The Master usually did his own pilotage (there were no pilots for Borneo waters), except when going to an unfamiliar berth in Singapore such as a dry-dock. Later Harold had to have "pilotage exemption" and he was sent to Mr. Mackay of the port of Singapore authority who said "good God, 1 can't ask you anything". Harold duly received his Pilotage Exemption Permit on 27 February 1970 "by reason of his having entered and cleared the Port of Singapore not less than twelve times in the past twelve months . . and having satisfied the Authority that he is familiar with the Port Regulations. Signals. Navigational Restrictions and Limitations . . ."

Kunak carried passengers and dry cargo from Singapore to Sarawak, where she anchored 17 miles up the river. The passengers, who were landed by launch, completed the last seven miles to Kuching by bus. Miri was an open anchorage with a heavy swell in the NE monsoon where passengers were lowered into the launch in a basket. Victoria Harbour, Labuan Island, with its 18th century graves of pirates and British seamen. From where a ferry would take passengers to Brunei. The ship then went on to Kota Kinabalu (near Mount Kinabalu - the highest in SE Asia - 13,455 feet, 4,101 metres), Kudat at the Northern end of Borneo, through the Malawali channel (an eight hour passage which included a 90° turn to starboard, shortly followed by 90° to port, with rocks close by on both sides - there were beacons consisting of old railway lines piled into the coral which made the passage comparatively easy in daytime but it was decidedly tricky at night: there was an island about thirty feet across standing three feet high and with a small lighthouse about five feet high; this could be used to take a radar range, the turn being started at a range of about a mile and a half, using only ten degrees of helm to avoid listing the ship: the second turn was easier, being started with a particular mark abeam). Then to Sandakan, where Harold and Edith once went on a picnic in the agent's launch to Berhala Island - (this was the place where Europeans were interned during the Second World War), Lahad Datu, which was only a whistle-stop unless

there was cargo to unload. At one time Lahad Datu was raided by pirates. Semporna, another place raided by pirates - who abducted a dozen girls, through a very narrow channel at the top end of Trusan Tando Bulong; very close to reefs - a daytime passage only, and to Tawau. The ship arrived at 4pm, stayed the following day and left at 6am the next morning. Since Harold had particular friends at the hospital, Lydia Williams the Matron and Mae Cameron the Sister, his routine at Tawau invariably included morning coffee at the hospital.

The indigenous people of North Borneo are Dyaks: Dusans, Kadazans, Murat and Orang Laut (sea dyaks), all head-hunters in their time. Harold visited Long Houses which contained shrunken heads. Harold also recalls that before the First World War there was a strong German influence and some traces remained, including several small ships which were painted brown - and consequently known as the Chocolate Soldiers.

The Chief Officer was Ian Campbell later replaced by a Chinese. He was a qualified First Mate. The Second Mate had a Home Trade certificate and the Third Mate usually had a Gunner's certificate, indicating that he was competent to take charge of the ship in coastal waters and could navigate using bearings of shore-marks, but was not qualified in ocean-navigation. (There were two Gunners Certificates, No. 1 and No. 2.) The Chief Clerk was Jimmy Teo, a Chinese who spoke perfect English and was responsible for a staff of 2 manifest clerks, 4 tally clerks, 2 more clerks and 4 watchmen. Jimmy had a particular liking for quoting Rabbie Burns and would always commence an answer to Edith with "Yes Sir, Madam".

The ship carried Chinese catering and engine-room staff (except for the senior engineers) and Malay deck-hands. The carpenter was called the "mystery". **Kunak** carried 12 Cadets, mostly Chinese but with the occasional Eurasian and very occasional a Malay.

Passengers included the Rajah and Ranee of Sarawak and Sir Cedric and Lady Turner. He was the founder and Chairman of QANTAS. He thought that the two narrow passages through the reefs were more spectacular than the Great Barrier Reef, being so much more compressed. Sir Cedric had a reputation for being difficult but fortunately hit it off with Harold and wrote a letter of appreciation to the company. Other passengers included Ben Travers the playwright (who much enjoyed being taken for coffee at the hospital in Tawau), the American and Dutch Ambassadors to Malaya and their wives, a High

Court Judge and Queen's Counsel travelling to a murder trial and TV cameramen and commentators from the BBC. The passengers sometimes included a prisoner, usually on his way to court, who was accompanied by a guard with an elderly firearm. (There was a cell in the after superstructure.) Doing his rounds, Harold once found a prisoner sunning himself outside the cell. The guard had gone to lunch, leaving the prisoner to look after his rifle!

On one occasion the ship carried a circus complete with two elephants from Borneo to Singapore. One elephant learned to drink pop offered by Edith by turning its trunk so that the mouth faced upwards, which provided many entertaining moments.

The ship normally carried four "Traders" who supplied customers en-route and took orders. Their employers provided them with a substantial working capital. One important passenger was usually the chicken-man whose job it was to see that eggs hatched to provide day-old chickens for delivery at ports of call, thus making a better profit, since the freight for eggs was approximately $3.50 per basket whereas live birds would have been 60 Cents each.) Once Harold flew over Sarawak in a Dakota, on his way to Kuching to relieve a skipper, adding further variety to his far-from-boring career.

In 1970 Harold had an operation on each eye for glaucoma, the first took place at the Mount Alvernia and the second at the Gleneagles Hospital (which was run by the British community). He then travelled to England where he had a cataract operation on his right eye. All seemed well when they returned to Singapore in early 1971.

Harold made two short voyages to Kuching and then joined a palm oil carrier bound for Basra but while crossing the Arabian Sea his left eye went completely blind. The ship was diverted to Bombay where he was taken to the Breech Kandy Hospital (where there was a British Matron and some British sisters). A few days later the Company flew Edith to Bombay and put her into an expensive hotel but she would not eat there for fear of the cost since she had not realized that the Company were paying for her trip. Harold's consultant was a Parsee and two nurses were engaged to look after him, one very black from southern India and the other from Goa. After a fortnight Harold and Edith flew to Singapore and after some weeks spent settling their affairs and saying their farewells, they left Singapore on the 14 July after 32 years with the Straits Steamship Company. He had visited 44 countries and about 140 different seaports in his seagoing career so this was a traumatic end to life in the Far East.

Preserving a Great Maritime Epoch

Extract from Sea Breezes Magazine June 1939, by kind permission of the Editor

Speaking at the inaugural meeting of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society, Colonel Vere Cotton expressed his regret that he had no connection with shipowning and that his only interest was in ships that sank, through the medium of insurance.

He stressed one or two points which, he said, were worth considering. The side of the work which had been sketched by the Society was mainly, of course, in connection with records. Fortunately they had not only a very fine collection of records in the public libraries, but also a magnificent collection of ships models. Obviously there was no more suitable place for records of the port to be deposited than in the libraries, and he hoped very much that they would get increasingly strong shipping records.

That largely depended on those present. One of the things which had struck him was the courage of those embarking on such a task. When one thought of the wealth of material available one might well be appalled at the amount of work that could be done in that particular branch of research.

He had mentioned the libraries. There were the records of the great shipowning companies; of mercantile companies, which were not necessarily shipowners now; and companies which used to own ships. His own firm, Rathbone Bros. & Co., were well-known shipowners at one time, and they still had a little material dealing with the days when they had ships. It was interesting to recall that his firm imported the first bale of American cotton that ever came into the port.

There was the Customs House which he described as a perfect mine of information, the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, marine insurance companies, which should also prove another gold mine, and last but by no means the least, there was still a great deal of oral information which they could pick up if they were quick about it.

There were many, he continued, naturally more interested in sail than steam and there were also still many people, who had served many years ago in the old sailing ships, to be found in the port, and he was quite certain that a systematic record of the oral information which they could give would do very much to illuminate the documents.

For those who wanted to research further back, he pointed out that they should not overlook the information which was obtainable as regards ships' rigging, etc., on the monuments in their churches, on

carved and stained glass. Research would show that there was quite a lot to be gained from medieval glass and sculpture.

He suggested that they should try to organise on the group principle and that they should have what one might call a director of studies who would allot tasks to those willing to undertake them. In that way they would be grouped rather than individually thereby maintaining the interest of those who were not out to write a book themselves.

A small body adequately organized for teamwork would do far more than a body content to say hear, hear, when others went over the top.

He would like to picture the future when they had a real shipping Gallery where their wonderful models could be exhibited and also the day when the Society might have a room of its own, in or near the libraries and museums for its headquarters.

The Bar Light Vessel in 1949
A Floating Museum of Early Radio-Telephony

By Joanna Greenlaw Author of "The History of The Radio Officer in the Merchant Navy"
Reproduced by the kind permission of the Editor "Leading Lights", The International Lighthouse Journal

People who write books, especially if they are best sellers, find that their work makes friends (usually) and in these 'world wide web' days the phenomenon is on a global basis.

So it was not surprising that my most recently published book, "The History of the Radio Officer in the British Merchant Navy and on Deep Sea Trawlers" (alas I couldn't get it any shorter) introduced me to a rather unusual specialist - a gentleman fascinated by lightships.

In the course of casual conversation I happened to mention that over fifty years ago I frequently visited the Bar Light Vessel, plunging and being brought up short, on it's two heavy anchor chains amid the swirling tides and cross currents at the mouth of the River Mersey, and he asked me to write down what I could remember of it. At the time I was a very junior technician employed by the Marconi International

Marine Communications Company Ltd (another mouthful!) at their Liverpool Depot, and as such was given the unpopular task of paying regular visits to the Bar Light Vessel to check up, and if necessary repair, the antiquated radio-telephony ship to shore installation on board.

There were two reasons why nobody liked the job. The first was having to go out, in often very bad weather and board the pitching and tossing vessel whose peculiar motion as it heaved backwards and forwards and sideways, often stopping with a tremendous jerk as the chains brought it up short, could be horrific. Somehow I don't remember ever going out on a nice day. The second reason was the antiquated, almost crumbling nature of the ancient, mass of brass terminals, cotton-covered wire coils, antique valves, bakelite knobs, brass tuning condensers all held together in a huge framework of mahogany woodwork. You must understand that it was not a compact equipment; on the contrary it seemed to fill the large, dimly lit cabin which housed it. One could not exactly walk inside it, but that was the impression it made when I first set startled eyes on it.

The most striking thing about the transmitter were the valves, which did not have pins that fitted into a base; instead wires sprouted from the glass envelope and went to brass terminals, which obviously had never been undone since the 30's. I was told that if they packed up there were no replacements available, though perhaps some modern circuitry could have been wired in. Things in the early days were made to last. I remember serving at sea during the war on a ship called the **Lorca**, built in 1925, where the carpenter who had worked on the ship when she was built and had sailed on her ever since, told me that the foremast electric bulb (110 volts DC) had never needed changing.

My big fear each time when I went out was that some vital component, or wire connection would simply disintegrate if I happened to touch it, but that incredible piece of electronic survival hardly ever gave trouble, and if so it was usually a dirty contact on the handset or a bit of retuning required. There was of course a receiver, but after over half a century I can't remember much about it. Probably it may have been of a later vintage than the transmitter.

The lightship men, as I remember them, so to speak, seemed of the period of the transmitter. They were always very hospitable, offering a pint mug of very strong tea and huge corned beef sandwiches, but

unfortunately I was always too sea-sick to accept. I was never sea-sick during my previous seven years deepsea, but the motion of a lightship in bad weather is like nothing else on earth.

I am probably doing my good friends an injustice, but their attitude to their radio-telephone reflected it's importance to them. Above all it could summon help if they needed it, but also it provided a link with their families. It was a feature of their lives, and possessed something more than inanimate gadgetry.

The best analogy I can think of comes from the same period, on a small craft that had ploughed its way back and forth between Liverpool and the Isle of Man for over thirty years. The pride of the old Captain's life was an ancient rotating-loop direction finder fixed on the roof of the wheelhouse with its rotating wheel and direction pointer coming down from the wheelhouse deck-head. With this contraption, as old as the transmitter on the Bar Light Vessel, he could home into the entrance of the Mersey as easily as walking up the road to his home. The equipment was powered by batteries, and it was one of my tasks to occasionally check these and change them if necessary. The Captain, a dear old man, loved his direction-finder as if it were his child, and he believed that wires coming down from the loop were hollow, and 'the electricity' ran through them like rain-water down a drain-pipe. And as I was leaving ship he would anxiously enquire 'Have ye oiled the tubes ?' To which I would reply with an emphatic 'Yes'.

The equipment on the Bar Light Vessel was supplied by Marconi Marine, as they did everything else in those days, on a 'rental-maintenance' contract. The capital cost of the equipment when manufactured must have only been a small sum - the valves would have been the only item. So over the years, from the 20s through to 1949 the return on capital must have been an accountant's dream. And Marconi Marine charged its customers three months in advance (and usually paid all bills three months in arrears if they could get away with it).

Sadly I doubt if, over fifty years later, any photographs survive today, and probably it would not even be possible to fix the date when the equipment finally ended up on the scrap-heap. But if inanimate things could have a life and a story to tell the old R/T equipment on the Bar Light Vessel would have been worth listening to.

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society Award 2003

A summary of the Award winning Dissertation by Sarah Kennedy BSc (Hons Maritime Business and Management), of John Moores University, Liverpool.

Ro-Ro Tugmaster Economics Dissertation.

The aim of the Dissertation was to find ways of reducing the costs on the operation of tugmasters on a Ro-Ro terminal. The reason I chose this subject was due to my working on a Ro-Ro terminal as a placement after my second year at University. Here I had a good insight into the day-to-day operations on the terminal, and also had an insight into the spiralling costs that tugmasters could incur.

A case study of a shipping company was used to enable accurate data to be found and analysed. There was a focus made within four ports and comparisons were made to see where the highest costs were. It was essential that visits to each of the ports were made in order to analyse the conditions that the tugmasters were subjected to. For example, the ground surfaces of each port varied, some ports were smooth whereas others were in a poor condition with many potholes. These could have been a contributing factor to vehicle damage. A tugmaster is most commonly used within the operation of general cargo on Ro-Ro terminals. Due to the conditions that tugmasters are subjected to, it is inevitable that they will often be damaged and require repairing. Due to the high number of tugmasters in the fleet these amount to a large percentage of the annual costs.

The first thing that was done was to identify the areas of expenditure at each port and then to compare these results between ports. These were then placed into an order of importance and then possible areas of reduction were investigated. Once all of the possible ideas were looked at in depth, it was time to make recommendations as to cost saving ideas. It was found that each of the ports did not communicate their own ideas to the other ports, and there were many areas that could dramatically reduce the annual costs. I decided that the main place of focus should be the tyres as these were a major high cost area. These were the largest costs across the board, and were common to each of the ports. It was important to look at ways of reducing tyre costs, which in turn could prevent other areas of the tugmaster from requiring attention. If a tugmaster is driven with a damaged tyre, then there can be a knock on effect and more damage caused. Also if only one tyre is

damaged, it is necessary to change all of the tyres. This is because the other tyres will not grip properly if only one tyre is replaced. There was an investigation into the reason behind replacing tyres, to determine whether replacement was through wear and tear or damage. It was concluded that damage was the most common reason for tyre replacement, so the recommendation to use remoulded tyres was made, making a saving of around 75%.

Other areas such as maintenance and repair costs were investigated, as were fuel costs and employee responsibility. I also compared the age of tugmasters, to see if, for example, older tugmasters required more maintenance than newer tugmasters. It was not accurate to just compare the age with maintenance costs, as most new tugmasters were worked much harder. This was for reasons such as the stevedores preferring to drive a newer tugmaster as opposed to an old one, because they were more modern. So I then compared the hours that each tugmaster worked to the maintenance costs. It was found that new tugmaster should be brought in to replace older tugmasters, but the older ones should be removed from service.

Recommendations that were made included: -

1. The improvement of the terminal surface,
2. The introduction of new tugmasters to replace old ones,
3. The employment of a full time fitter to look after the machines, as this would prevent call out charges from outside fitters.
4. Each port should keep a stock of parts. This would prevent a tugmaster from being out of service whilst parts are ordered in.
5. Remoulded tyres should be used rather than new tyres.
6. Stevedore training and retraining, was recommended, with monitoring of each stevedore to ensure no misuse.
7. The assigning of a tugmaster to a stevedore would be likely to ensure that the stevedores look after the vehicle more. They would also be more inclined to report any defects as soon as they occur.

These are all relatively small changes, that could be implemented but that could dramatically reduce the annual costs.

Obituary Edward Paget-Tomlinson 1932-2003

By Mike Stammers

Edward (or "P-T'" as he was known to many) was as an author, artist and a man with a vast knowledge all things maritime. His family came from Greenodd on the shore of Morecambe Bay. After graduating from Cambridge with a degree in history, he worked at the National Maritime Museum before being appointed as a temporary Curator for Shipping, at Liverpool Museum in 1957. His task was to create a major maritime history exhibition to celebrate the 750th anniversary of Liverpool's Foundation. After a very successful show he was taken on to the permanent staff. He was a versatile and energetic curator: producing and illustrating new displays and catalogues, conserving anything from ship models to fall size steam engines and adding many new objects and paintings to the existing collection. He also took on the role of Hon. Secretary of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society and was particularly responsible for the Society's annual exhibition on board the Master Mariners' Club, the **Landfall**. On leaving Liverpool in 1969 he went to set up the new maritime museum for Hull.

His prime interest was in the British inland waterways and estuaries and their craft. This was evident from his magnum opus - an encyclopaedia of British Canal and River Navigations. This was first published in 1978 with a second much revised (and prize winning) edition in 1993. He also wrote other books and articles on a wide range of subjects ranging from the history of the Bibby Line to Swiss railways. Many were illustrated with his own pen and ink drawings and watercolours. He also illustrated other authors' books with atmospheric pictures of working boats and wonderfully clear plans and diagrams of working equipment. My own "Mersey Flats and Flatmen'" was greatly enhanced by his superb illustrations.

He was one of the founder members of the Boat Museum, Ellesmere Port and the Museum owes him a particular debt for saving and restoring the last Thomas Clayton narrow boat tanker (or 'tar boat'). He continued to be closely associated with the Boat Museum and its sister museum at Gloucester. At the latter, he staged some very successful one-man shows of his watercolours.

He was a modest retiring man who never sought the limelight but who endeared himself to many. His knowledge of all things maritime was prodigious and many historians and enthusiasts turned to him for help which was always given freely and generously. His passing will be mourned by a wide circle of friends.

EDWARD WILLIAM PAGET TOMLINSON

By LNRS member Arthur Alexander Williamson, C.Eng, M.I.MechE. MICWES.

Edward William Paget Tomlinson, who died on 12th November 2003, has been a great personal friend whom I met in the 1960s when he was appointed

Keeper in Shipping and Land Transport at the Liverpool Museum. He was appointed with the specific purpose of setting up a replacement display for the world famous shipping gallery in Liverpool, which was destroyed in the 1941 blitz. Edward came from a very secure family, financial, academic and social background so he could not be cowed by threats of dismissal and hence he was able to bring to all his work a personal integrity, a quality, which is rare nowadays.

The funds and facilities he considered necessary were not forthcoming so he emphasized his protest by resigning. After which there was such an outcry from the public for the return of the shipping collection to display and Edward put in much of the work, which has resulted in the present display. It was his energy and personality which persuaded Cunard to donate the magnificent model of **Berengaria** to the museum and to arrange for its delivery hence from their New York office, where it was on display, to the present site. I was at that time Principal Assistant Mechanical Engineer in the City Engineer and Surveyors Dept of the Liverpool Corporation with all the facilities of their Breckside Park engineering workshops at my disposal, and was able to arrange to assist the Museum in heavy lifting jobs and repairs etc. Breckside Park had then suitable engineering craftsmen with enthusiasm and a range of skills, which today receive very little general acknowledgment. They refurbished and moved into place the surviving Overhead Railway coach now displayed in the basement of the museum. Despite having received no formal training in engineering or workshop practice, Edward was very skilled at rebuilding items of obsolete machinery donated by the local industrial and shipping companies.

He did a lot of research into the relics of the old Liverpool Hydraulic Company which formed an early source of power for cranes etc in the city centre before the present electric grid system was installed. It was during this time that the wonderful collection of early railway drawings was preserved and donated to the city by the English Electric Co when they took over the Vulcan Foundry locomotive building works at Vulcan, near Warrington. I had the privilege of being entrusted by Edward with their cataloguing, and with writing the explanatory notes on their significance. He was an artist of great skill and over this field he could, and did, show in full and meticulously accurate detail all the complex mechanisms of locomotive valve gear.

Edward was an historian by profession, having read history at Trinity College, Cambridge. He had the time, and could afford the expense involved, of travelling about the country following up the declining information and on-site remains of canals. He was widely recognised as a world authority on canals, their development and mechanism and published several definitive works on the subject, his encyclopaedia of canals being widely quoted. He has been consulted by museums in Germany for details of the system of inclined planes, sometimes used in place of locks, to accommodate changes in

levels, in hilly country. This entailed frequent site visits and the consulting of 19th century drawings, etc, to try and find the evidence that remained of how these devices worked and were arranged. He always started at the description and as he then provided speculative deductions he took great pains to ensure that these were practicable, ensuring that they did not involve any anachronisms by suggesting methods were used which were not available at the date that the work was installed.

In brief, he was a man of probity and an historian of merit, being knowledgeable, accurate, honest, and painstaking.

Book Review

Harrisons of Liverpool: a Chronicle of Ships and Men, 1830 – 2002

By Graeme Cubbin World Ship Society and Ships in Focus Publications, 2003
ISBN 1-901703-487

It is a memorable occasion when a book eagerly awaited by many from the publishers matches their high expectations. The story of Harrisons as a resilient shipping company closely associated with the rise to pre-eminence of the Port of Liverpool well merited painstaking research, and through Graeme Cubbin it has received it. One marvels at how much detail and how many illustrations the author and his publishers have managed to compress into one volume.

Nearly 40 years ago the management of Harrisons in the years between 1830 and 1939 was investigated by Frances E. Hyde in *'Shipping Enterprise and Management'* (Liverpool University Press, 1967). In his contribution to that work Professor J. R. Harris highlighted the fundamental importance of the shrewd ship development and acquisition policies pursued by the company. Dealing with those matters at length, Graeme Cubbin's book makes a truly fitting sequel to that study in business history. He supplies not only crucial technical and operational details, but also records the role of the essential human element in peace and war. Here is a saga of much fine seamanship, devotion to duty and bravery.

After reading and then returning frequently to dip into *'Harrisons of Liverpool'* this reviewer remains intrigued by numerous items. Amongst them are those concerning the activities of the first **Gladiator** in the American Civil War, the details of the third **Gladiator** and **Counsellor***(s) 3&4* and the concept of the **Adventurer**. (AM was brought up on the tales of a retired chief engineer who lived next door). He little doubts that other readers will soon make their special lists!

'Harrisons of Liverpool' is a fitting tribute to one of the city's longest lasting, highly significant maritime enterprises.

Alan McClelland

AND FINALLY AFON DYFRDWY

In February what is probably the first commercial ship built to operate on the River Dee, for over sixty years, entered service. The RoRo barge **Afon Dyfrdwy** (River Dee) has been built by MacTay at Bromborough to transport the wing sections for the new Airbus A380 airliner, capable of carrying 555 passengers. The wings of the plane are too large to fit into the Beluga transport aircraft, used to carry the wings of the other aircraft made by Airbus.

The **Afon Dyfrdwy**, which is to be managed by the Holyhead Towing Company, is specifically designed to carry the 35 tonnes, 36 metre wing sections from a newly built wharf, adjacent to the new manufacturing plant at Hawarden, on the Dee, to the newly rebuilt Mostyn Docks where the wings will be rolled off and loaded onto a new, Chinese built, RoRo vessel for carriage to Bordeaux from where they will go to by road to Toulouse for marrying to other parts of the plane made elsewhere in Europe.

Looking like a low air-draught offshore supply vessel the ship has a length of 57.6m oa, a beam of 14.8m and a maximum draught of 1.5m Her air-draught is 4.3m to allow her to pass under the various fixed bridges en-route. Power is supplied by two Cummins 6CTA engines, each driving two Jastram azimuth jet thrusters and producing a speed of about 10 knots. Deadweight tonnage is 235 tons although the low-level cargo deck is fitted with a 300 ton capacity lift to allow the cargo to be lowered within the hull to meet the air-draught restrictions. Fitted with a comprehensive suite of radars and radios she also has GPS and tide gauge receivers. These are supplemented by a Pathfinder survey launch with its own GPS and bottom profiler. All no doubt very necessary to cope with the shifting sands of the estuary.

The advertisement for a master, mate and engineer, stress the importance of pilotage and ship handling skills on the following basis:

> *"Not only are there severe constraints imposed by the lack of water depth, the speed of the flood tide, the lack of airdraft under the bridges between Queensferry and Hawarden and the size of the vessel in relation to the upper river, but the channels in the Estuary also move rapidly and in certain locations will require physical monitoring work"*

Voyages outside the Estuary are also planned from time to time.

Accommodation for four crew is provided, each with a single cabin. There will not be a leave system but the crew will work a number of hours per week with annual leave being granted.

The first set of wings will be shipped in April and if sales reach the expected numbers there could be four wing sets per month being produced and shipped down river by 2008. Production of the A380 could last for over 40 years.

LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY
FORTHCOMING MEETINGS - 2004

MARCH 18th	Respectable Reefers *[A McCelland LNRS]*
APRIL 15th	Lloyds Register *[Mrs B Jones Senior Information Officer & Archivist]*
MAY 20th	Annual General Meeting

All Meetings are held in the Education Suite at the Merseyside Maritime Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool commencing at 12 .30pm,

(Coffee and biscuits available from 12 noon)

THE MONDAY FACILITY - 2004

Members' access to the Archives and Library of the Merseyside Maritime Museum, on Mondays has been arranged for the following dates:
(Hours 10.30 - 12.30 & 1.30 - 3.30)

APRIL	5th		19th	26th
MAY		10th	17th	24th
JUNE	7th	14th	21st	28th

MERSEYSIDE MARITIME MUSEUM LECTURE

March 26th	Ships, Shops & Empires – The story of food in the 19th & 20th Centuries *Gordon Jackson*
May 6th	Wilful Murder - The sinking of the Lusitania *Diana Preston*

Both lectures take place in the Museum Lecture Theatre at 7.15pm.
(Doors open at 6.30 pm). - Free admission.