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Front cover
*The reefer ship **Pinto**, built 1948 was similar to the MacAndrew's reefers referred to by Alan McClelland in his article on p38*

Letter *from* the Editor

When first asked to take over the editorial chair, it was for an indefinite period to allow John a well-earned rest after seven years in the hot seat. Unfortunately, for family health reasons, I too will soon have to stand down. But, hopefully feeling revived and refreshed, John is resuming the reins, from the December edition of the *Bulletin*.

I would like to thank all those members of the Council and the Society who have helped me over the last few months and a particular thanks to the members who have submitted items, no matter how long or short, for publication. It is quite a daunting challenge to start each edition and try and fill 45 pages with the right variety of articles, local and not so local, historic and not so historic. I hope members will feel that I have at least had some successes.

Could I implore members to keep the articles coming, as I have said they do not have to be a massive tome. What is important is that they are interesting, and hopefully record a particular situation or event, for posterity.

My last edition will be the September edition but even after that date any articles sent to me will be promptly passed to John, who will be receiving all the articles that have been sent to me, for his consideration.

In the best traditions of a voluntary society the Council have not let me escape, but have persuaded me to stay on and prepare the Society's Commemorative Publication for 2008, our seventieth anniversary.

Sarah Kennedy receiving the LNRS Award 2003 from the Society's Chairman DKC Eccles supported by Council Members AH McCelland (on the left) and MDR Jones(on the right)
(see page 40 Vol47 No4)

The Early History of Multi-hulled vessels

By LNRS Member Charles Dawson

Quite a few western individuals have claimed, or been named, as the first with the idea of a multi-hulled vessel. As we shall see, this in fact originated a long time ago and a long way from our shores. Differing coastal conditions have given rise to many different kinds of local craft, even round our coasts, but it has been in tropical waters where their very special conditions have led to the development of multi-hulled craft. The word "catamaran" is used in the west for twin hulls; "trimaran" has been coined from it for triple hulls. Catamaran is, in a way, a misnomer, for in the same way that words like veranda and bungalow went through a gradation of meaning when they arrived from India, so has the meaning of the word catamaran changed, and in this case, changed completely.

The word catamaran stems from the Tamil "katta-maram" of South India and Ceylon, meaning, "tied logs". This craft is of raft-like construction built up of an odd number - three, five or seven - of palm or pine logs. These are lashed together edge-to-edge -"carvel-built" - using vines or fibres, the edges of the logs being bevelled to produce a shallow U-shape to the hull. The logs are arranged with the slender part forward, and with the longest in the centre and the shortest outside, thus creating a stepped effect at the stern. Leeboards are lowered to counteract the lack of keel. The largest craft also has five upward curving stem-pieces to help the craft to skim at speed in pursuit of flying fish.

That local conditions could vary so much, we see from the many different forms that multi-hulled craft took. Among these can also be considered single-hulled craft, but with one or two outriggers, these being used for extra stability. The particular conditions determine whether single or double outriggers were to be used. The single form is used for its lightness and ease of handling amongst islands where surf and sudden squalls can be encountered. Under such conditions, the double form is unsuitable, because it can be a positive danger when the craft is thrown on its beam-ends by a sudden squall or surf, and the lee outrigger becomes fully submerged. Under these conditions the drag of the lee outrigger makes steering difficult and can cause enough strain to destroy the craft.

We can list the various types of craft as they appear, clockwise from Europe, from Madagascar to Brazil via the Coromandel coast, Malaya,

Java, the Sulu Sea, New Guinea, New Zealand, Tonga and Hawaii They are: Sakalavan, Katta-maram, Pra(h)u, Prau bedang, Caracor (from Java to New Guinea), Moro boat, Lakatoi, Tainu, Calie, Hawaiian double canoe, Jangada.

The first mention of the word in English (as "cattamarian") appeared in 1649. European navigators had first observed this type of surfboat off the Coromandel Coast of Madras, east India, where the sea is generally rough and there are three separate lines of breakers.

The Royal Navy first used the word "catamaran" to describe a floating stage composed of six watertight casks lashed together, three in a row, with a few planks thrown loosely over for a deck. The structure was used by sailors to clean or paint the side of a ship and the bottom above the waterline. During the Napoleonic Wars, the Royal Navy employed catamarans as small fire ships against Napoleon's flotillas at Flushing, Havre and Boulogne, but they were unsuccessful in their attempt to cut out and damage the French fleet.

Less than thirty years after the word came into English, the polymath Sir William Petty (1623-1687), who had abandoned a life at sea, was experimenting with quite large double-hulled vessels. John Evelyn's Diary entry for 22 March 1675, says: -

> *"He was the author of the double-bottomed ship, which perished, and he was censured for rashness, being lost* [the ship, not Petty - author's note] *in the Bay of Biscay in a storm when I think 15 other vessels miscarried. This vessel was flat-bottomed of exceeding use to put it into shallow ports, and ride over small depths of water. It consisted of two distinct keels crampt [sic] together with huge timbers etc so as that a violent stream ran between; it bore a monstrous broad sail, and he still persists it is practicable and of exceeding use".*

Captain Woodes Rogers made a circumnavigation in 1708-1711; this was the one on which, in 1709, he picked up Alexander Selkirk from Juan Fernandez Island, where he had been left by Captain Stradling of William Dampier's privateering expedition five years earlier. Selkirk's story of course gave Defoe his inspiration for his "Robinson Crusoe". Rogers' account of his voyage, "A Cruising Voyage Round the World" was published in London in 1712. In it, he described the "flying prows" as he called them [Malay "pra(h)u"]. They were 30' long x 2' broad x 3' deep with one mast in the middle, a mat sail like a ship's mizzen; head and stern

the same; an 'out-layer' on one side, "that may run 20 miles an hour, for they passed our ships like a bird flying". He was so fascinated by them, he carried one of them back with him to London, thinking it might be worth fitting up there as a curiosity on the canal in St. James' Park.

One of the most compulsive of the enthusiasts for double-hulled construction was Patrick Miller (1731-1815), one of Scotland's most successful bankers of the 18th century. He was one of the largest shareholders in the Carron Iron Company. In about 1786, Miller became interested in the mechanical propulsion of boats, adopting twin- and triple-hulled construction, with paddle wheels working between the hulls. At first, these were to be manually operated, but the pioneering **Dalswinton Steamboat** of 1788 was driven by a steam engine, for which the engineer William Symington (1763-1831) was responsible. After that, Miller backed out of further engagement with steamboats. This may have been partly because of a possible threat that James Watt might take action regarding patent infringement, but mainly Miller wished to turn his interest more towards his new estate at Dalswinton.

However, he did not relinquish the idea of applying manually operated paddle wheels, for use in calm weather, to mammoth sailing warships. At Edinburgh in February 1787 he had published a folio tract on his idea, copies of which he sent to a number of foreign governments. Pitt's government in London declined to offer financial assistance. Denmark rejected the idea as useless for warships but when he turned to Sweden, Miller apparently still believed that there might be a market for the principle of multi-hulled ships among the warring nations in the Baltic. In a letter in French to King Gustav III of Sweden, dated 9 June 1790, he offered the plans of a quite fantastic ship of the line, drawn by the Scottish artist/architect Alexander Nasmyth (1758-1840). The ship was to measure 246′ long x 63′ broad x 17′ draught, with three decks. The double hulls had manually operated paddle wheels between, together with five masts for sails, and with an armament of 144 guns (44 x 36lb, 42 x 24lb, 44 x 18lb and 14 x 8lb). Miller commented that a few vessels of this kind on the Baltic could have turned the stalemate of the Battle of Hogland of 17 July 1788 against the Russians and left no doubt as to who was master of the region.

The drawing of Miller's proposed mammoth warship is still preserved in Sweden. Miller apologized to the king for not having been able to dispatch such a huge ship to Sweden for a demonstration, but he

did offer a smaller version, still double-hulled and with five masts. She, in fact, had already been built in 1787 or 1788, and a drawing of her from that date, entitled **Experiment** of Leith, is also held by the Library of the University of Glasgow. She measured 100' long over deck; the breadth of each hull was 12', her greatest overall breadth was 32'; she had a draught of 7' and her displacement was 255 tons. Between the hulls were four (some sources say five) paddle wheels of 7' diameter, driven by capstans alongside. Mitre-gears transmitted the motion from the capstans to the paddle wheels, which could be lifted out of the water when the vessel was sailing. With thirty men at the capstans the ship was capable, Miller claimed, of a speed of 4.3 knots. A model of her dating from 1862 is held in the collection of the Science Museum in London.

The great Swedish naval architect Henrik af Chapman was consulted to comment on Miller's design for the mammoth warship. Sadly, the Scot's hopes for his ship were dashed by Chapman in his analysis of it headed "The English [sic] sea-spook". Here, Chapman refers to what appears to have been a Royal Society report on a double-hulled vessel of c. 1680-1700, although he could not remember the year. Presumably this related to one of Sir William Petty's creations. Petty had started his experiments with two twin-hulled ships built at Arklow, Ireland in 1662, during the time when he was living in Dublin. In October that year he demonstrated one at Dublin Bridge on the River Liffey. Samuel Pepys showed interest and trials were arranged on the Thames. Later, sea trials were carried out on larger vessels, and Chapman may have been referring to the one described by Evelyn in his diary, mentioned above.

Chapman made a number of calculations regarding the stability etc. of Miller's proposed warship and his conclusions, in its somewhat sarcastic title, leaves no doubt as to his negative assessment of it. His main point was that against a headwind, it would be impossible to propel it with the paddle wheels, but that it would move astern. He did however recognize that small ships could gain by Miller's idea, remarking that the double hull especially had the advantage that a greater sail area could be carried, and the light hull construction would give little water resistance.

After Chapman's rejection of Miller's proposition, the king's way of "rounding off the affair" was to present Miller with a gold snuffbox. The box is a mine of illustrative information. On the lid is a portrait of the king himself. Other faces are decorated with miniature painted maritime scenes.

On the bottom, the ship **Experiment** of Leith is shown at anchor off Skeppsholm, Stockholm. On the back appears a dock scene at Sveaborg, Finland; on the front is a view of the planned extension to Karlskrona naval dockyard, and on the shorter ends appear examples of vessels designed by Chapman. Not only was the king rounding off the affair with Miller, but he seems to have been bent on advertising Sweden's naval prowess as well.

The box was passed down through the Miller family, and in 1957 passed into the ownership of the Victoria & Albert Museum. The king's letter, accompanying the box thanks Miller profusely for offering him the results of his studies in Naval Architecture and praises his genius. He asks Miller to accept, as a mark of his thanks, "the box which accompanies the letter". David Macpherson in "Annals of Commerce", 1805 described a ship, obviously Miller's **Experiment**, by reason of the detail he presents, "that was sent to Petersburg but the frame was so much strained during the voyage that no one cared to venture home in her, and she was accordingly left in Russia". We can only speculate on what prompted her being sent on to Russia. She is said to have been sold there. It would be interesting to know if a record of her stay is to be found in Russian sources.

Despite Chapman's rejection of Miller's design, and his experience with her in the Baltic, the Scot later applied for, and was in May 1796 granted a British Patent for ships based on his principles. Nothing further is heard about the idea; indeed, by this time, Miller was putting his efforts into agriculture. It seems that the Francophile Gustav III's way of rounding off the affair with Miller when he presented him with the snuff-box, was, in effect, to tell him to "cultiver le jardin"; the snuff-box contained a small packet of "rutabaga" seeds, i.e. of the Swedish turnip. Miller had the seeds sown at the Dalswinton estate and from then on, the "swede" gained importance for British agriculture.

During the war of 1812-1814 between the UK and the USA, Robert Fulton, the American who had made a commercial success of the steamboat, turned his inventive mind to 'infernal machines', which the Royal Navy at that time called mines, torpedoes and booby traps. In addition, he designed the world's first steam warship, **Demologos**, 156' x 56' x 10', 2745 tons displacement, with twenty 32-pounder guns. She had two masts, somewhat unusually rigged with lateen sails. She was in effect a mobile floating gun platform, designed as a coast defence vessel against the Royal Navy, and stationed to protect New York harbour. She was,

The vessel ***Experiment***

however, launched too late, in October 1814, to go into service. She had a single paddle wheel between double hulls and was laid up in Brooklyn Naval Yard as a store-ship. She was destroyed there by an accidental explosion on 4 June 1829.

A Mr. Austin Ashe claimed the invention of a sort of double-hulled canoe, which was featured in an article in the "Illustrated London News", in November 1847, headed "Siamese boat on the Serpentine"; perhaps he had read of Captain Rogers' proposal. The craft consisted: -

> *"simply of two zinc tubes, of boat-like form, 24 feet long of 4½" diameter connected collaterally by semicircular braces of 10" span, the water passing freely between the boat-like tubes". The rower was seated on a sort of light framework chair."*

The note continues:

> "the principle has found to combine great speed and lightness with safety, but the zinc being too pliable to retain its shape, the inventor has commissioned Woolsencroft at Putney to build a wooden boat of the same design. It is proposed to test its speed with a first-class outrigger on the Thames. Without wishing to detract from Mr. Ashe's claim to the novelty, we may mention that a few days since, we noticed in the Model Room at Somerset House the model of a Market Boat, such as is used at the Point de Galle, in Ceylon, in which the load is placed on two boats precisely as the rower sits in Mr. Ashe's outrigger".

The Dover-Calais crossing of the English Channel, although the shortest, being at right angles across the narrow neck, could also be subject to unusually strong currents when North Sea water surged in at high tide. Consequently, in the middle 19th Century a spate of ideas regarding ship design appeared to alleviate the problem of seasickness and double hull construction became quite popular. The first of these, PS **Castalia** was also double-ended for quick turn-round. Named after Lady Granville, who launched her in June 1874, she was said to be the brainchild of a Captain Dacy. He had been for many years Master Attendant at the port of Calcutta and had observed the stability and trustworthiness of the native double canoes on the coast there. Dacy's brainchild **Castalia** owned by the English Channel Steamship Company was, at the time she was built, the largest cross-Channel vessel ever, measuring some 290' x 60', 1,553 gross tons. She had teething troubles with her boilers and paddles, but despite replacement of these, her speed on succeeding trials came nowhere near expectations. Her owners struggled on with her, but in addition to her slow speed, they found her so costly to run that they had to apply for

bankruptcy after only three years. She ended her days, from 1877, as a hospital for infectious diseases on the Thames.

In an attempt to vindicate his idea, Captain Dacey modified his **Castalia** design for that of PS **Express**, launched on the Tyne in April 1877. She again was double-hulled but this time had more powerful engines. Despite this her owners, again the English Channel Steamship Company, ran into cash problems and she was bought by the London, Chatham & Dover Railway, who renamed her **Calais-Douvres**. She became increasingly uneconomic to operate in the winter months when traffic levels fell off and was finally withdrawn from service in 1887.

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Editor's Note: - The word "catamaran" was once an English term of abuse for a bad tempered woman! Dickens, in Nicholas Nickleby, uses the term. Perhaps the Royal Navy had this meaning in mind when it launched its fire rafts at the French Fleet.

Manning Levels

By LNRS member JA Pottinger

One of the most striking features of shipping today in the eyes of seafarers of a past era is the very small numbers of crew and low manning levels on all types of ships, from the largest to the smallest.

The introduction of remote controls and advanced instrumentation in the engine room and on the bridge has certainly hastened the reduction in numbers, but equally no doubt the often, if sometimes unfairly termed, malign influence, of the accountant has had a part to play.

How many times do we hear of some stranding, or of a ship in distress, necessitating the lift off of the crew by helicopter, and note with some surprise that the total number of the crew is in single figures.

All well and good whilst everything is operating as planned, but not so well when something goes awry.

The diversity of nationalities of the personnel, often supplied by crewing agencies, and attendant multiplicity of languages, can often also add to the difficulties in efficient manning, especially in an emergency.

This is a far cry from the fifties and sixties, in the heyday of the post-war British Merchant Navy, when there were much larger complements all round.

The famous Brocklebank Line was no exception to this, albeit with Indian and Pakistani nationals it was averred that the numbers were somewhat augmented over those on "white crew " ships.

The triple expansion ships had a single Engineer Officer on watch in the engine room, but two were required on the turbine ships. All this is now over forty years ago, but I recall that the boiler room was looked after by a Tindal assisted by an Ag Wallah, who kept watch on the boiler pressure, water level etc., and cleaned the burners and atomiser tips during each watch.

On the triple expansion **Maihar** we additionally had two engine room hands, the top and bottom Tael Wallahs, who, as their title indicates, were responsible for the oiling of all the open bearings and sliding faces of the engine, additionally keeping the eccentric strap troughs topped up with water and checking the shaft tunnel bearings.

The bottom lad had the most arduous of the duties, and in the tropics, with bearings hotting up certainly had his work cut out to keep on top of the job. A measure of lubricating oil was assigned to each watch for these tasks, and it was not unknown for some of the stock assigned to a particular watch to be purloined by another, which caused great consternation and altercation.

On turbine ships we had two or three Lascar assistants in the engine room on each watch in addition to the Engineer Officers.

As I recall one Navigating Officer was on watch on the bridge at all times, assisted by a helmsman, or British quartermaster on some ships, additionally with a Puri Wallah, or messenger, to do just that.

When on standby, or when approaching or leaving port, necessitated doubling up the officers in the engine-room and on the bridge, also in coastal waters or in fog a lookout was posted on the forecastle head, all a far cry from that prevailing now.

Feedback

From LNRS Chairman David Eccles

Regarding two articles in the March 2004 Bulletin; the following may be of interest.

THE LARRINAGA GRAVES.

There are three burial plots in Liverpool belonging to the Larrinaga shipping family.

At Anfield Cemetery Don Ramon de Larrinaga, his wife and their daughter Anselma lie under a large Tomb-stone close to a ruined chapel at the east end of the Cemetery. Next to it another tombstone covers their son-in-law Teodoro de Larrinaga, his wife Maria, their daughter Esperanza and daughter-in-law Ethefreda whose husband Ramon lies alongside under a simple headstone.

The family plots owned by Don Ramon's sons Domingo and Miguel are in Allerton Cemetery. The Domingo de Larrinaga grave has a large memorial dedicated to his wife Minnie, the Miguel de Larrinaga grave has a long headstone. Both are located at the side of the path leading to the Catholic chapel.

BALTIC RESCUE

This entry is in the Liverpool Shipwreck and Humane Society minute book: -

"To Capt Benjamin Gleader, SS **Baltic,** for having rescued 16 of the crew from the wreck of the **Oriental** at 1.00am on the 19th November 1875 and afterwards picking up 10 more men who had got adrift in one of the ship's boats and were ten miles distance from the wreck - Gold Medal.

To Peter John Irvine, Chief Officer, for having gone in one of the steamer's boats and in two trips brought away 16 of the crew of the **Oriental** in a fresh breeze and heavy sea. - Silver Medal.

To each of the boat's crew viz. Richard Caulfield, Joseph Rigby, Samuel Dunn and John Jackson the sum of £2: 10s each.

To 24 of the crew of the ship **Oriental** which was abandoned at sea on the 19th November 1875 after having sprung a leak and having been dismasted in a Gale. Clothing worth £1 each."

Crossing on King Orry

By LNRS member Estelle Lumb

When they called for ships to save an army trapped across the sea,
The Isle of Man sent packets to its aid:
Fenella, Tynwald, Mona's Queen, Manxman and Ben-my-Chree,
Mona's Isle, King Orry and Manx Maid.

King Orry left the jetty packed with battle-weary men,
All glad to be alive and on their way,
All longing to see England's green and pleasant land again,
To forget the fields of horror and decay.

But their peace was quickly shattered by the captured guns which lay
In wait for vessels passing by Gravelines.
Explosions rocked and ripped the ship; a lifeboat blew away
And left beneath a bloody, mangled scene.

The soldiers flocked to starboard and created such a list
That the captain called, 'Go back or she'll capsize!'
But every man was paralysed, unable to resist
The message from his ragged nerves and rise.

So the captain called more urgently, 'Some men must move to port
Or everyone on board this ship will drown!'
But still they stayed together, each afraid of getting caught,
Though their frailty would take the ferry down.

And then a young lieutenant gave the Royal Tanks their lead:
'Will you men set an example to the rest?'
'Will you show them that our Regiment can answer any need,
That in all the British Army we're the best?'

With heavy boots the Tankies moved, then others swelled their band
And **King Orry** soon regained her former trim,
Then they crouched in silence, waiting for another shell to land,
As their chances of escape looked rather grim.

A soldier raised his head and spoke, 'We're out of range now boys.
I used to be a sailor - I can tell.'
But someone called, 'Get down you fool!' before the deafening noise
As her stern was splintered by a bursting shell.

They found themselves still living, though the crew who manned the gun
Were lying dead except for one cadet.
And **King Orry** kept on crossing in the soft May morning sun,
Spray flying by, not out of danger yet.

Two fighters swooped and gunned the roof above their huddled heads
And they wondered when the end would ever come.
But soon she closed the old white cliffs, her upper deck in shreds,
And a Fairey Battle waved a 'welcome home'.

A stream of wounded slowly flowed towards the English quay,
Some on stretchers, some assisted, some alone.
Then their quiet comrades followed, hardly daring to feel free,
A thousand heroes, weary to the bone.

King Orry stayed in Dover till the damage was repaired,
Then hurried back to do her waiting work,
To stand again bombarded with the little ships which dared
To carry off an army from Dunkirk.

King Orry, a veteran of World War I, was requisitioned by the Admiralty before the outbreak of World War II and served as an Armed Boarding Vessel on the Dover Patrol until 22 May 1940. She left Dunkirk's inner harbour, one of the last vessels to do so, on the morning of 27 May with 1,131 troops on board; many of whom had recently taken part in the fierce battle round Arras which halted the German advance for two days. The story of that crossing came from a privately published account by a tankman and was confirmed by another tankman. It was however **King Orry**'s only successful trip. On the afternoon of 29 May, whilst waiting to embark more troops, she suffered severe damage from bombing and shelling and sank early the next morning.

Sources:
Dan Dan The 'I' Tank Man, by R.W. S.Williams;
Island Lifeline, by C.Chappell
The Ships Which Saved An Army, by R.Plummer.

Unlucky Coincidences

By Kenneth Addison

San Francisco Bay, one the World's finest natural harbours, has the reputation of having a mild, even temperature that seldom varies more than a couple of degrees above or below the mean for the season. A well-known picture postcard shows the dull, red-painted Golden Gate Bridge atop a blanket of low-lying fog. Whenever the sun heats the area up, a fog moves in to shut out the sun.

In the late 1960's two ships of the same company, sister ships, approached each other in dense fog one inward, one outward. Horrified Coast Guard observers in the experimental vessel-movement control room tried calling the ships on every VHF channel to warn the masters that they were standing into danger. Their calls unanswered, they watched the two radar blips merge under the Bridge. It may have been antipathy that the two masters did not exchange the customary greetings over the vhf. The result of the collision was 23,000 tons of fuel oil drifting around and on to the shores of the Bay. An appalling environmental disaster.

This was the worst of the series of similar collisions occurring over the previous century. But two incidents not quite as serious are linked by coincidence. The wrecks of two tankers lie just under the surface near the Golden Gate: at low water their hulls and superstructure can be seen with their stems less than a ship's breadth away from each other.

The two sister ships were built in a San Francisco shipyard on slips about 40 ft apart. They were tankers each of 6,000 tons gross, 3,800 net, with a length of 409 ft and beam 55.5ft, and a loaded draft of 31.7 ft. The crew numbered 36. The oldest vessel, built 1914, was **Lyman Stewart**. The other vessel was the **Frank H. Buck** completed in 1920.

In 1922 the **Lyman Stewart** (of Union Oil Company) left a Bayside loading berth for Portland with a full cargo of fuel oil. When transiting the channel through the Golden Gate, a heavy fog "came down like a curtain", (according to the statement of the master) engines were reduced to 'slow bell' (slow ahead). The tanker began to pitch easily in a heavy swell that could have originated in the Philippines

Out of the fog loomed the American dry-cargo vessel **Walter A Luckenbach**. She struck the **Lyman Stewart** a glancing blow on the port side at Nos. 1 and 2 holds, then again in the way of the engine room aft. Both tanks were opened; the oil flushed into the sea and the engine room was flooded. Fortunately there were no casualties, but in a few minutes it was obvious that the ship would founder; she was out of control and the crew abandoned ship.

The **Lyman Stewart** however was carried onto the rock by a tidal current, just outside the Golden Gate. For several days, watched by thousands of people lining the promenade near by, tugs tried to pull the tanker free, but she settled yet harder on to the rocks. The wreck remained there for nearly a decade, when in 1931 during the series of unusually tempestuous gales, the **Lyman Stewart** was torn from the rocks and slipped into nearly 10 fathoms of water and the remains could be seen just below the surface.

Six years later (and 15 years after the **Lyman Stewart** sank) another vessel her sister ship, **Frank H Buck** was approaching the Golden Gate with a full cargo of refined products. The master had had a brief glimpse of the new Golden Gate Bridge with its 135 ft clearance overhead, when the ubiquitous fog appeared and speed was reduced to dead slow.

At the same time the **President Coolidge** was leaving her berth with a complement of almost 700 passengers for Honolulu - her regular run. She passed Alcatraz Island, a couple of miles from the Golden Gate at 12.42 and, seeing the fog under the bridge, reduced speed. A few minutes later and just after passing under the Bridge, the **Frank H Buck** appeared on the port bow of the passenger ship and obviously on a collision course. The **President Coolidge**, although with engines going full speed astern, sliced almost through the foredeck of the tanker.

Each ship sounded emergency signals and sent out distress messages over the radio: there was no doubt that the smaller vessel was about to founder. The crew left without any panic and were taken from the lifeboats on to the **President Coolidge**.

It was now two hours after High Water and the current carried the **Frank H Buck** six miles out to sea with two thirds of her submerged. Coast Guard vessels and tugs got lines aboard and towed her towards the Golden Gate, but half a mile from the shore the bow caught a sandbank and no amount of effort by the assisting vessels could drag her clear. She remained in that position with her propeller twenty feet clear of the water for over two weeks.

The gales again took a hand in the matter, and in a high swell the tanker was lifted clear of the sandbank and driven on to the rocks, close to the shore. The wreck remained there for couple of days. When quite suddenly she slipped beneath the surface to finish with her stern no more than 5 ft away from her sister ship.

At low water the shapes of the hulls that began careers 40 ft apart 90 years ago can be discerned by visitors to the Cliff House Point Restaurant some one hundred feet away on the cliffs near by. But the attention of the visitors is usually directed towards the seals playing or lazing on the rocky islets nearby.

Award for Mike Stammers

Extract from December Edition of Navy News

The UK's top maritime media prize has this year gone to Michael Stammers, lately Keeper of Merseyside Maritime Museum for almost 20 years.

He received the Desmond Wettern Maritime Media Award, an engraved ship's decanter and a cheque for £1,000 - from Countess Mountbatten of Burma, President of the Maritime Foundation, at a dinner held on board the Thames cruiser, **Silver Sturgeon.**

The award was made in recognition of his outstanding writing broadcasting and curatorial skills, culminating this year in his contribution to the Battle of the Atlantic 60th Anniversary commemoration.

Said Michael: "I am thrilled to receive this prestigious award and it is a great pat on the back for all the Merseyside team. At long last it appears that the messages about the importance of our maritime industries are now registering with government and the public at large."

A second award, the Mountbatten Maritime Prize, was made to author Peter Padfield for his book, "Maritime Power and the Struggle for Freedom. Naval Campaigns that Shaped the Modern World 1788-1851", which relates Britain's sea power to her position as a trading nation. Receiving an engraved silver Armada Plate, Peter said: "It is a great honour to be awarded the Mountbatten Prize and I hope that this distinction may reinforce the message in my book that freedom and western values have not arrived by chance, but are rewards for our maritime past."

The dinner was attended by senior members of the Royal Navy, the maritime industries and the media. Guest speaker was Commodore Ian Gibb. Elder Brother of Trinity House.

The Awards are made in the memory of Desmond Wettern, writer on maritime affairs for over 30 years, and commemorate his dedication to the belief that the United Kingdom's economic well-being and security are inextricably bound up with the sea.

SS Great Britain

Part 2

Summary of the presentation given to the Society at the February meeting by LNRS Vice Chairman Gordon Bodey

Great Britain sailed from Liverpool on her second voyage to New York at 4p.m. on 27th September 1845 carrying 102 passengers and a large cargo.

Immediately on clearing the River Mersey very heavy weather was encountered which was to last for ten days. Besides running under engine power, a reduced spread of sails was also being carried. During a particularly heavy squall from the N.E. on the sixth day out, Friday 3rd October, and being then a thousand miles out at 50 22'N, 27 57'W, the foremast went over the side carrying its sail and rigging with it; the cowhouse and its cow also went overboard. It took four hours for sails and spars which were trailing along the side to be retrieved from the water, although the engines were stopped for only half an hour during this time.

On 11th October (and with the bad weather now abated) **Great Britain** was approximately 50 miles SE of Halifax, N.S. when it was realised that the propeller was malfunctioning. The ship was stopped and the propeller examined; two blades were missing and one damaged (all on the same side), which may have been due to the lost mast and rigging having tangled with it. In view of later events, it must be said that the passage as far as the above position had been most accurately logged: 2,483 miles run compared to the accepted distance from Liverpool to Halifax of 2,509 miles.

Whilst damage to the propeller did not threaten imminent disaster, it probably had a bearing on her subsequent difficulty, which could well have turned into a major disaster. The following account has been compiled from various reports of the incident.

From the position SE of Halifax, a course was steered to take the ship south of Nantucket Island. However, at noon on Sunday 12th October it was found that currents had set her 36 miles northward of her steered course and she was then at 43 36'N, 67 32'W, about 125 nautical miles almost due east of Portland, Maine, and 175 miles NE by N of Nantucket Island. Early on 13th October **Great Britain** was found to be among the shoals to the east of Nantucket Island; it seems that she had been set another 30 miles northward by then. These shoals are so numerous and extensive and, in places, so close to the surface that it is difficult to believe that a ship sailing through them blind could survive the passage.

At first light on the 13th, breakers were seen directly ahead and were due to a barely submerged ledge. By the time the **Great Britain** was brought to, she had somehow passed through a gap in the ledge and into deeper water. When the morning mist cleared, the main island was found to be about half a mile ahead of them and a small islet lay astern beyond the breakers. Captain Hosken had a gun fired and a signal flag hoisted asking for a pilot. A few minutes later a boat emerged from a small bay and pulled over to the ship.

The boat contained a motley-looking crew whose leader was a farmer/fisherman who offered pilotage services. Whilst discussion was proceeding another boat pulled alongside and on being thrown a rope a most singular character clambered up it. This man, whose clothes were made of different sewn-together patches of material, and whose skin was like tanned leather, came to the point without ado saying to the captain: "Waal, stranger, I guess you're a Britisher. If you aren't in a considerable fix here, there's no snakes in Kentucky!" Captain Hosken confirmed that this observation was pretty near the mark and asked him if he could help him out of it, to which he replied, "Waal, I guess I can! But if I can't, then there's ne'er a coo[t] in Martha's Vineyard as can, I calculate"

Terms having been agreed with 'Mr. Patchy', as he was dubbed by the crew, to get her out of the shoals and to Sandy Hook, he now took entire command of the **Great Britain** and ordered the bosun to put two men in the fore chains with lead-lines. He then slung a battered telescope and a speaking trumpet over his shoulder and clambered rapidly up to the main topsail yard, which on **Great Britain** was ahead of, and level with the top of the funnel. This he sat astride shouting orders to the helmsman, the men in the chains, and to a call-boy he had stationed at the engine hatch to relay his orders to the propeller engineer.

With the engines going half ahead. Patchy set a course back toward the ledge the **Great Britain** had passed through, causing Captain Hosken not a little concern. As the ship approached the breakers, Mr. Patchy rapidly slid down a backstay and ran to the stern to assist the helmsman. Having got the ship on the correct line he shouted "Full speed ahead with yer engines." As the ship ploughed through the gap Mr. Patchy, leaving the wheel to the helmsman, said "Waal, skipper, I guess she's through the gut, and we'll now make tracks for the Hook"

It was later learned that the pilot was a thoroughbred whaling man; Nantucket having been the centre of the north-east whaling trade until not long before this date, and he told the passengers that he, "guessed it was about forty years ago since another Britisher had made the Shoals in the early morning, but had left her bones where she struck.'"

The bunkers were very low at this stage and Captain Hosken was not prepared to use sail only in these waters should he run out of coal, so the ship was steamed the 35 miles or so north-about to Holmes Hole near Vineyard Haven, Martha's Vineyard, where coal was available. She dropped anchor at 4pm and sailed again at 2.30am on the 14th, reportedly arriving off Sandy Hook at 11pm that night.

After her near-fatal encounter with Nantucket, **Great Britain** had to be examined for any bottom damage, and also to assess the extent of the damage to her propeller. However, with no graving dock then available at New York, a novel and ingenious method was used to lift ships out of the water; the ship would be put onto what was called the Section Dock. This consisted of two narrow parallel jetties stretching out from the quayside, each composed of a double line of open large-section piles driven into the seabed. Longitudinal beams were bolted to the pile heads and ran the length of the jetties. A space something over 60ft wide separated the jetties.

Stout timbers longer than the width of the structure were located transversely in the water between the piles, the length of the jetties. These were held together by longitudinally placed chains - the whole resembling a railway track. On the middle of each 'sleeper' was fixed a keel block, and on set 'sleepers' at the sides were mounted adjustable, securable shores.

Running along the top of the jetties over guide rollers were heavy chains of varying lengths. At intervals, pairs of these chains passed over sheaves located in the space between each double row of piles and were attached to the 'sleeper' below. At the shore end of the jetties the chains were attached to the crossheads of two hydraulic rams lying horizontally, one to each jetty.

When a vessel had to be put on the dock the 'sleepers' were first weighted down to sink them to the correct level. Having manoeuvred the vessel over the blocks the rams would be worked to make the chains just taut. The shores were then adjusted to the hull and locked in place, and the rams again set working until the vessel was sufficiently high out of the water. The water was locked in the hydraulic cylinders by closing the cocks, and the chains were then secured with pawls. Release was effected by removing the pawls, then opening the cylinder cocks, whereupon the ship settled back into the water under her own weight.

The examination revealed that the hull was intact but that two blades of the propeller had sheared off at the boss; the palm-shaped extension of another blade had also sheared off. It was decided to relocate one of the blades to give the propeller a reasonably balanced arrangement, tighten or renew rivets as necessary, then take her back to Liverpool for a complete overhaul.

Great Britain came off the dock on Tuesday 28th October having been on it for ten days, and started for Liverpool at 2pm the same day. She made good way until 11pm on the 30th when a thumping was heard coming from the sternpost, whereupon the engines were stopped. Rightly assuming that one of the blades had partly sheared, the engines were reversed getting rid of the debris. She then proceeded ahead using sail in conjunction with the limited drive from the remains of the propeller, and made good progress until 3pm on November 1st when another blade broke off. Engine movement was continued with only 1 1/2 blades. At about 5.15pm on 6th November, the remaining complete blade sheared off but, incomprehensibly, the engines were kept running until 1.20pm on the 8th when they were stopped with the remaining half blade vertical at the top.

A full spread of sail was now set and she bowled along at up to eleven knots in variable winds and sea states, and at 8pm on 17th November she took on a pilot and steam tugs at the North-West Lightvessel and reached the Mersey without further mishap.

After discharging her cargo (and only four months after going into service) **Great Britain** was put into dry dock for a major refit: not only did she need a new propeller, but the air pumps, valves and boiler fire flues were also deemed inadequate and changed to give better steaming performance and reduced coal consumption; the innovative iron wire rigging was replaced with hemp rope; the third mast (immediately abaft the funnel) was removed; and the other masts were much altered, including doing away with their hinged deck mountings and stepping all the masts onto the keel. The main and mizzenmasts were now square-rigged.

The new propeller, the same size and pitch as the original one, was of cast-iron but four-bladed with each blade being a complete entity, and much heavier at some seven tons (the former one being 3.75 tons) – and more solid overall.

Repaired and refurbished she underwent a successful trial cruise in the last week of April 1846. On 9th May **Great Britain** sailed from Liverpool for New York carrying only 28 passengers. When only four days out, and up to then averaging nearly twelve knots, part of the after air pump fractured necessitating the engines to be shut down. She then sailed for six days whilst repairs were carried out, but then took a further ten days to reach New York after the engines were restarted. The twenty-day passage time has been attributed to her steering a less than true course,

The air pump having been repaired properly at New York, **Great Britain** sailed for home on June 8th and arrived back in the Mersey 13 1/2 days later. During the passage home, to noon on 13th June 1846, she made the longest twenty-four hour run under engine power alone recorded to that date - 330 nautical miles (an average speed of 13 3/4 knots).

On 7th July 1846, **Great Britain** sailed from Liverpool on what was to be her fourth, and final, round voyage to New York. Although a successful voyage in terms of passengers carried (110 outward), and a two-crossing passage time of $26^{3}/_{4}$ days for an average speed of almost 10 knots, it was not without incident - including one that could have again spelled disaster: Outward-bound off Newfoundland, during thick fog, she again strayed off course and the starboard bilge scraped along the Cape Broyle reef, about 40 miles south of St. John's. However, no great harm was done as was ascertained when she was dry-docked on arrival back in Liverpool; but this was to prove to be only a short reprieve from the disaster that had several times threatened to overtake her in her brief career.

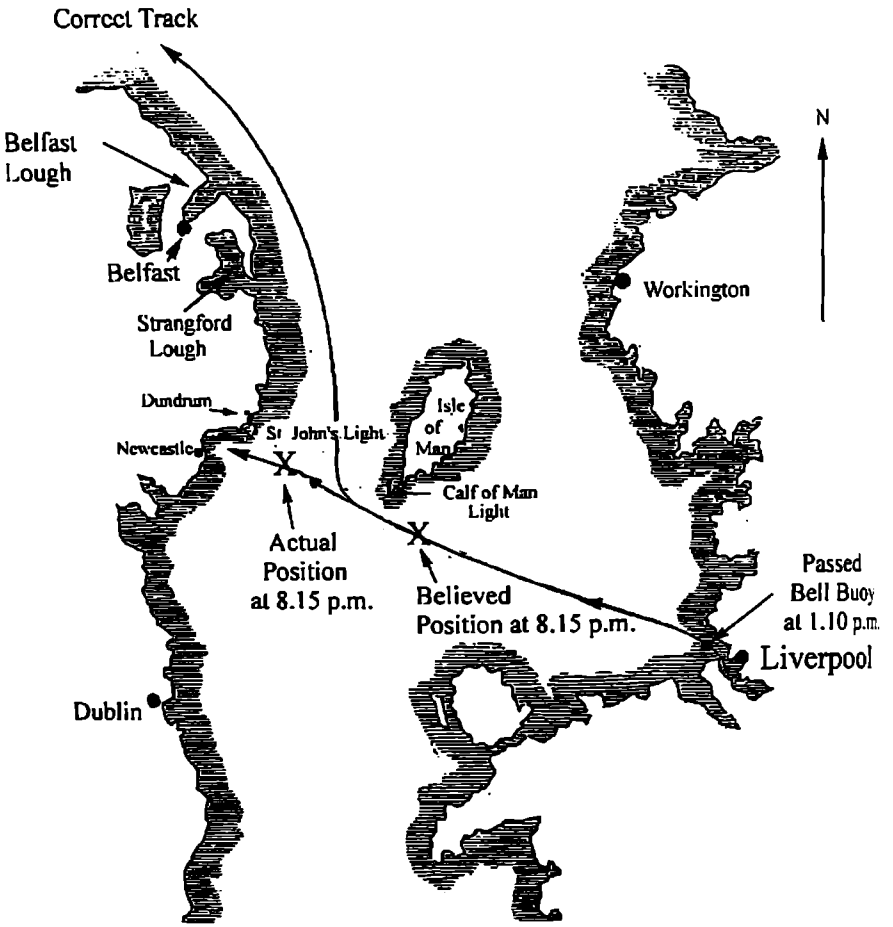
With her credibility now apparently established. **Great Britain** sailed from Liverpool for New York at 11am on 22nd September 1846, under sail and steam, carrying 180 passengers and an almost full load of cargo. At 9.15pm that evening she was found to be in shoal water, and 5 minutes later had driven hard ashore on the beach at Dundrum Bay near the small town of Newcastle, N. Ireland. The circumstances of the grounding were not put into a written report by Captain Hosken until 13th October when he wrote to the directors of the Great Western Steam Ship Co. (the delay, he claimed, being due to the time and effort he had been expending in trying to extricate the ship). The main points of his report are as follows: -

After the pilot left the ship a little inside the Bell Buoy, which was passed at 1.10pm, all plain sail was set with a fine SE to SSE breeze blowing. Captain Hosken decided to take the north-about route because, he said, in thick weather he expected to see only one vessel on that route compared to twenty on the southerly route [around Ireland]; the tides were less adverse; the land would be cleared in much less time; and a day could be saved taking that route.

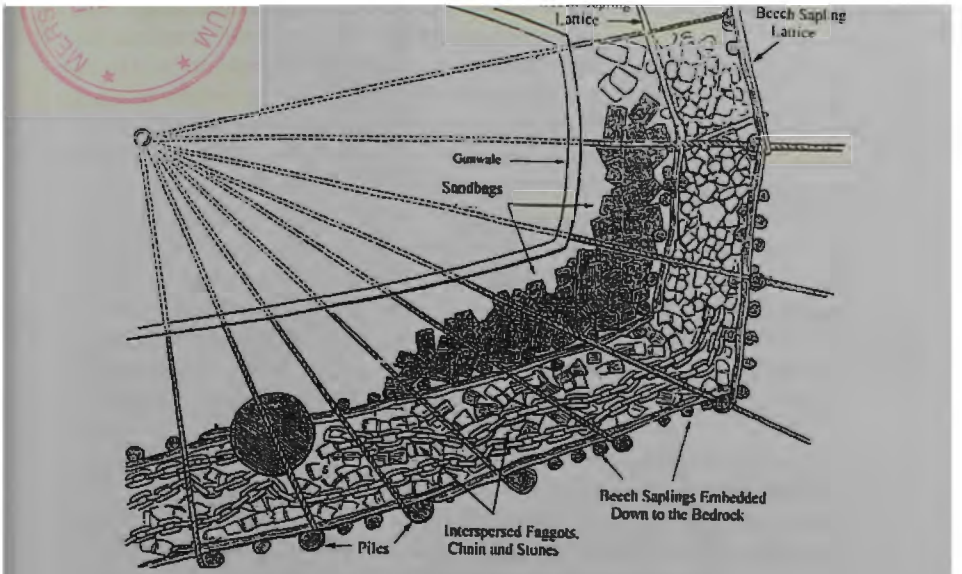
The log was hove regularly and he was regularly assured by Mr. Hedger, the first officer, that line and glass were correct. The speed was shown to be a steady $10^{3}/_{4}$ to 11 knots and, he said, "11 knots, with the ship deep, [was] as much as could be fairly expected." He went on to say that at about 5.30pm he caught a glimpse of the Isle of Man, but could not say which part or how far off it was as it was coming on dark and the weather becoming very thick (sunset was at about 6.15pm that day).

At 7pm he was with the first and second officers on the forecastle and remarked to them that, "We must be well up with the Calf (the 400ft-high separate island off the extreme S.W. of the main island), and that I might safely allow $10^{1}/_{2}$ knots since the Bell Buoy." He then told the first officer to shorten sail at 8pm at which time he would alter course to N by E and "go easy all night..."

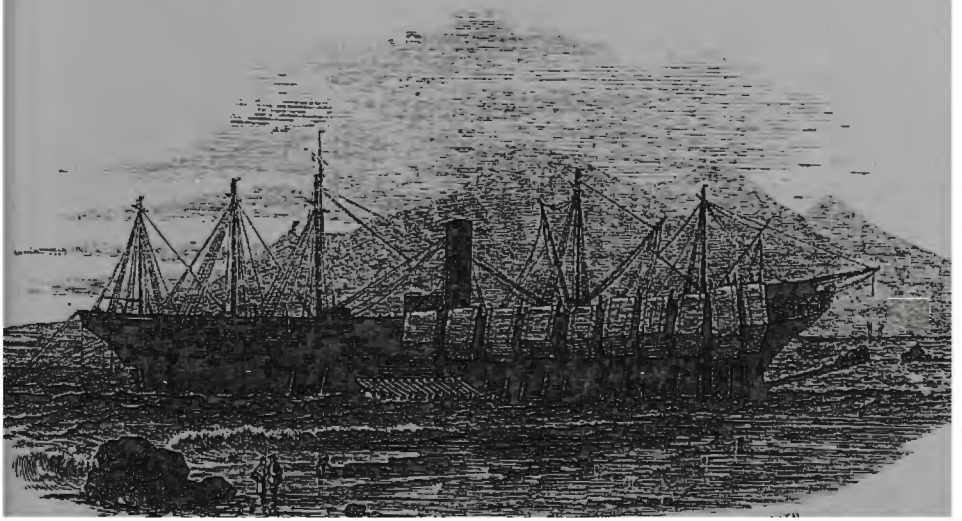
Captain Hosken was standing at the wheel aft at 8.15pm watching the steerage while reefing when the officer on the forecastle reported a light on the port bow. The captain immediately said that it must be another vessel's light, but soon afterwards it was seen to revolve. He immediately put the ship onto



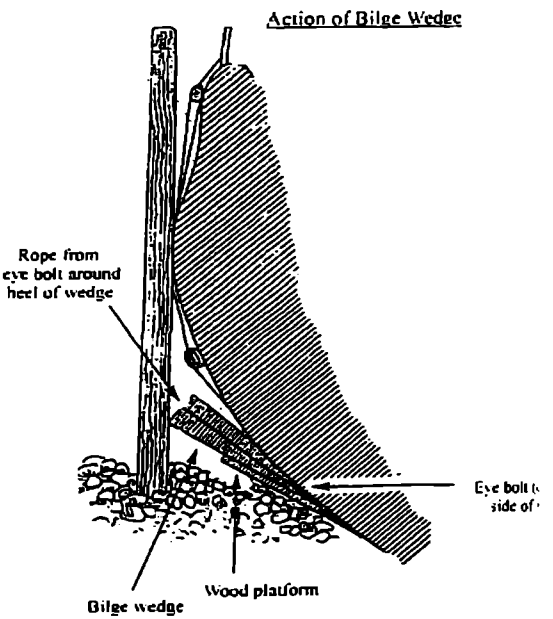
Passage of the SS ***Great Britain****, 22nd September 1846*

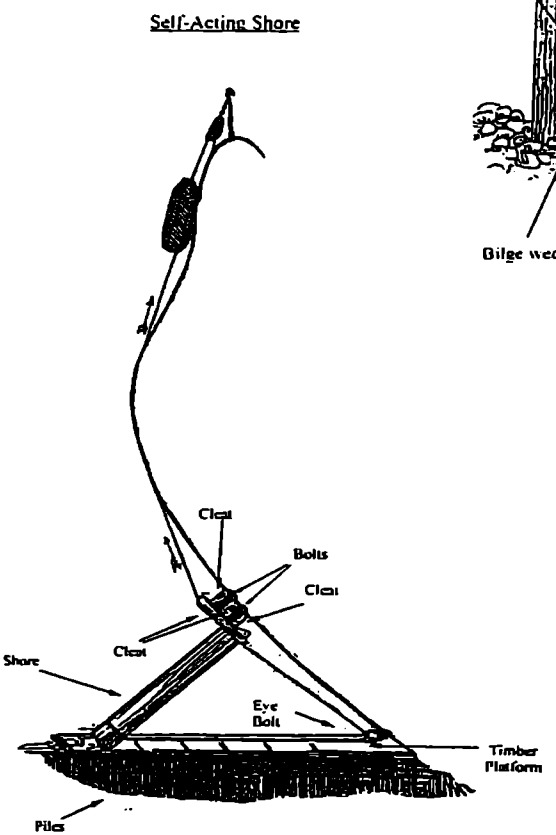


Plan view of structure and infill of breakwater



*SS **Great Britain** with midship levers, bow lever and sand boxes awaiting the tide to lift her from her trench*


Action of Bilge Wedge
Rope from eye bolt around heel of wedge
Bilge wedge
Wood platform


Self-Acting Shore
Cleat
Bolts
Cleat
Cleat
Shore
Eye Bolt
Timber Platform
Piles

a NW by W course saying "How is it possible that she has not run her distance; what can have held her back?" His assumption was that the light was one of the pair of Calf of Man lights *[1]* even though the other could not be located despite the aid of a telescope. He did not at any time consider that the light, being on the port bow, could have been on the Irish coast, which was some 35 miles westward of his supposed position but was, in fact, only 14 miles or so from his actual position. He also claimed that he did not know of any other revolving light in the running direction from the Bell Buoy and that his new chart, dated 1846, did not show a light on St. John's Point - the eastern horn of Dundrum Bay. However, Mr. Bate, agent for the Admiralty charts, subsequently said: 'The fact is, that the St. John's Light has been laid down in Admiralty charts since its erection, as may be seen by reference to those charts. It is also fully described in the List of British Lighthouses, published 8th May, 1846." It was also a fact that Captain Hosken had taken this route before the light was installed in January 1844, and had done so since.

Still convinced that he was off the Calf of Man, Hosken stood on until, as he thought, on a bearing for rounding the Hen and Chicken rocks off the Calf of Man. He then hauled the ship to north, then to N $^1/_2$ E. By now it was 9.15pm and he ran to have another look at the chart in the deckhouse abaft the funnel, and then ran back to the helm. Almost immediately, a loud hail from the forecastle warned him of the looming danger and he ordered the helm to be put hard a-port and for the ship to be stopped. The ship did stop, almost immediately, but not because of the captain's order; nor could the engine be moved. **Great Britain** was fast on the sands of Dundrum Bay.

It was now patently obvious to Captain Hosken that the ship's running had been inaccurately recorded using the traditional logline, and he admitted to the ship having run some 120 sea miles from Coburg Dock gate, Liverpool, in $9^1/_2$ hours. In fact, she had run some 110 miles from the Bell Buoy to her present resting place in 8 hours 10 minutes - an average speed of $13^1/_2$ knots as opposed to his reckoning of $10^1/_2$ knots. That Captain Hosken had relied on the traditional logline on this passage is shown by his regular enquiries of the mate as to the 'line and glass being correct i.e. the sand glass for timing the run of the logline. The **Great Britain** also carried a Massey's *[2]* patent electric log, but it does not appear to have been used. (Two such logs, having been tested for accuracy, had been used by Brunel in the original screw experiments with the **Archimedes**).

At the meeting of the Institute of Civil Engineers in August 1845 (during the discussion after Guppy had presented his paper on the **Great Britain**) Captain Hosken had been over-dogmatic in his defence of the accuracy of the logline. Notwithstanding the method's obvious sources of inaccuracy, he asserted that the speed of a vessel travelling at 10 knots could be determined to

within 1/8th of a knot - despite arguments to the contrary from Admiralty hydrographical surveyors present who had been with Belcher on HMS **Sulphur**'s six-year survey of the Pacific (1836-1842).

> *"[The traditional method of computing a ship's speed was by heaving a triangular board-float, whose lower edge was semi- circular and weighted, over the side and to which was attached, at three points, a rope line. The float was assumed to stay put where it hit the water while the ship sped past it. Knots of leather were tied at set intervals along the line (at either 23.6ft or 47.2ft apart). The number of knots passing through the heaver's hands in a set time gave the ship's speed in knots. The running time used was 14 seconds if the knots were tied 23.6ft apart and 28 seconds if 47.2ft apart. The time was taken using a sand glass. Masters usually used the 14-second glass (as did Captain Hosken) if the vessel was making over 5 knots per hour as this time interval meant that a shorter amount of line was needed to be paid out: e.g. using this time interval a 283-foot length of line would be paid out from a vessel moving at 12 knots. Of course, in this case, a new and significant source of error (and one not apparently taken account of) was the behaviour of the float and line as it passed through the turbulence created by a large and very powerful propeller.]*

It can be stated unequivocally that Captain Hosken was wholly responsible for the mischief that occurred to the **Great Britain** on 22nd September 1846.

However, even in this dire situation **Great Britain**'s good luck had not entirely deserted her: she had somehow contrived to plough her furrow in the sand between two very large ridges of rock extending out into the sea from the shoreline, and about a thousand yards apart. She had also steered between two large outcrops of rock at the edge of the beach, as well as others offshore, and lay upright on the low water mark, in a north-south direction with her stern facing the sea. She did not appear to be making much water at this time.

At the time of her grounding the weather was moderately rough but had abated by daybreak allowing all the passengers, and those crew no longer needed, to be got ashore without any injuries or loss of life. The immediate priority now was to attempt to re-float the vessel.

Captain Claxton arrived at the scene on 28th September to superintend the salvage operation, but shortly afterwards a south to south east gale sprang up which lasted some days and was so fierce that waves were breaking over the ship. Claxton saw that the chances of a quick retrieval were receding and resolved to drive the ship further up the beach out of reach of the main onslaught of the sea. To this end he had the sails set and succeeded in moving her some 400ft., but in doing so she slewed through almost 70° to port to point her bow W.N.W.

In a letter to *The Times* on 4th November, Mr W Billington, C.E., who had been sent to carry out a detailed survey of the site, the state of the vessel, and all other details relevant to her condition noted (among those things mentioned above), that the beach was flat with an incline of 1 in 750, and that the overall tidal rise and fall was 15ft. The ship's plates on the starboard side had bulged and numerous rivets had sprung allowing a considerable ingress of water; the rudder had been lost and a plate broken off at the top of the stern post. Holes had been drilled in the bottom to allow uniform flooding to prevent her lifting or beating.

At this time, James Bremner and his son, Alexander, civil engineers, constructed and put in place under the stern, a breakwater composed of timber piles 13in to 17in square, driven into the sand and designed to protect the ship from the ravages of the winter gales. However, almost immediately after its completion, a gale on November 9th swept the whole structure away like matchwood.

Brunel, who had not been able to visit the site to this time, arrived at Dundrum on 8th December and examined the ship thoroughly. His satisfaction with her general condition was tempered by his concern that not enough was being done to protect her from further harm. He and Claxton quickly devised a flexible breakwater, which was ordered to be put in hand immediately, pending Brunel's report to the directors.

The breakwater comprised an inner and an outer lattice. Each was made of vertical beech saplings secured in the sands 4ft apart, interwoven horizontally and diagonally with similar saplings and lashed together at all intersecting points. They reached as high as the gunwale. The outer lattice sloped away to the beach and was strengthened by regularly spaced vertical piles. The lattices formed a double cage around the stern and extended forward about 80ft on either side. The space between the inner lattice and the hull was built up as high as possible with sand bags; that between the inner and outer lattice was filled with interspersed rocks, chain, and faggots (bound bundles of long thin tree branches) pinned down with pointed iron rods, and weighted down with chains and any other heavy materials that were available.

Claxton put the plan into operation with alacrity, and by the end of February Brunel was able to report that the breakwater had withstood several severe storms between times; it was to continue to do so.

Some 7,000 faggots, 10ft long by 2ft diameter, costing one shilling (5p) each were used. All the timber materials needed for the salvage operation were, fortunately, to hand on the estate of Lord Roden, which bordered Dundrum Bay.

Brunel had also noted that several pieces of rock beneath the base of the sand bed had worked up through the hull, lifting and damaging parts of the

machinery, and he made recommendations as to what should be done to minimise further harm.

Acting upon Brunel's instructions, Claxton had everything that could be removed taken off the ship over the winter, resulting in her being only half her grounding weight by May 1847. In May, with the weather now being settled removal of the breakwater (preparatory to a salvage attempt) began, but this itself proved to be extremely difficult owing to the care that had gone into its construction.

Amid growing concern that the actual salvage was not showing signs of progress, Brunel suggested that the Bremners be called back in to effect the salvage. He had already concluded that it would be necessary to lift as much of the ship as possible high enough above the trench bottom to allow working space underneath, place some form of supports under her and repair as much of the hull damage as possible. Meanwhile, a trench would be dug astern of her, ready for her to be towed off when sufficient water offered. On 22nd May the Bremners arrived to effect these requirements; their scheme was ingenious in its simplicity.

Firstly: They were to place ten pairs of large-section upright piles down to the bedrock on each side of the ship, and which extended above the gunwale These started from just forward of the break of the forecastle and extended back to the engine-room. The top of each of the piles was fashioned to accommodate a sheave. On the outside at the top of each pair of piles was placed a large wooden box (the sides of which extended beyond its supporting timbers), which could hold some 35 tons of sand. Each box was held in place by two chains, one end of each being bolted to the rear of the piles below the sheaves. Each chain then ran downward through a tackle behind the pile, then up to and over the sheave in the top of the pile, diagonally down through the sand box, out of a hole in the front of the box, and then around the box's base to be fastened to the rear edge on each side. The tackle blocks, to the rear of the piles, holding the chains were attached to slings which ran down through the portholes and were attached to the deck beams. Double purchase tackles were placed at the engine and boiler-room sections. The boxes were hoisted into place empty and filled from the deck: eight of them were in place by June 26th and the remainder by July 10th. The boxes sliding down the timber piles under gravity would exert a combined lifting force of over 700 tons.

Secondly: A section of piles were driven down to the bedrock amidships on either side of the ship. These were to act as the fulcrums for fifteen large-section oak levers on each side acting under the bilges; those on the seaward side were to be loaded with anchors and any engine-room materials that would offer little resistance to the sea; those on the

landward side were weighted with a 30ft long iron ship's boat filled with sand. Also, a large lever was set fore and aft on a pile at the bow to act under the forefoot. It too was loaded with anchors and chain.

Thirdly: On either side of the bow lever, a large screw jack, whose base sat on a large-section wood pile, was set against each hawse hole.

In all, between boxes, levers and jacks, a lifting force stated as being over 1,800 tons was to be applied. In addition, Captain Claxton had previously had the lower cargo decks, those decks above, and the bunker spaces, made as watertight as possible to provide maximum buoyancy. He had also had extra bracing inserted in the 'tween-deck spaces to prevent forcing by the pressure of water from below. Of course, such measures could not be effected in the engine and boiler-room spaces.

A spring tide was due three days after completion of the above on July13th However, adequate preparations had not been made to fully secure the ship in a risen position, and when she rose by more than expected, water had to be let in though the sea cocks to control her, and as she settled back much damage was done to the boxes and timbers.

Notwithstanding this setback, she was finally secured in the required risen position by July 29th 1847. This had been effected by a number of simple but effective devices:

(i) Transverse trenches were dug down to the bedrock at intervals aft of the forefoot and packed with rocks. On top of each rock bed, and in contact with the keel plate, was placed a baulk of hardwood. Each acted as a platform for two giant wedges placed one on either side of the ship, and fore and aft of each other with their toes pointing inward. By means of a tackle attached to the toe of each wedge, and to the base of the opposite foremost pile, a rope around a capstan on deck hauled the wedges under the keel plate as the ship rose.

(ii) Under the curve of the bilge toward the midships section, similar foundations were prepared and large wedges laid on them. On either side of the toe of each wedge an eyebolt was secured to the hull. A rope from a tackle (secured to the deck above) passed down through one eyebolt, around the heel of the wedge, up through the eyebolt on the other side, and up to another tackle, also secured above. As the ship rose the ropes were hauled on and the wedges were pulled under her.

(iii) A number of self-acting shores were set on timber platforms, which were secured on the heads of piles set on the bedrock. The platforms probably had transverse grooves cut in them to secure the heel of the shore. The top of the shore operated against the underside of a cleat bolted to the hull. A rope was secured around the heel of the shore and passed

horizontally through an eyebolt attached to the hull. The rope in turn passed to a tackle above, which was secured to the deck. As the ship moved upward the base of the shore moved inward, providing constant support to the hull.

(iv) Wherever possible at the midships section, rubble stones were rammed into shallow trenches via a chute using a heavy iron-shod rammer, operated from the deck. These rubble ramps acted as a form of cradle, relieving the extra pressure exerted by that part of the ship. With sufficient clear space beneath the hull, work now got underway to apply patches to the tears and holes in the hull that could be reached. Monday 23rd August saw the arrival of the iron paddle steam-frigate HMS **Birkenhead** (1,400 tons and 600hp), Commander Ingram, to assist with the actual towing off. She brought with her Mr. Bellamy, Second-Master Superintendent of Portsmouth Dockyard, and a team of riggers from Portsmouth and Plymouth. On Tuesday, the steam bomb ship HMS **Scourge** (400 hp), Commander Caffin, arrived; both had been despatched by the Admiralty at the instigation of Lord Roden.

The first attempt to move the stranded ship was made on Wednesday 25th August when Captain Claxton, having had anchors laid out to seaward the night before, set about warping her down the beach using her own windlass and capstans. She moved but 20ft.

On Thursday, **Birkenhead**, with her stern to the shore, put out her bower anchors, then sent two hawsers over to the **Great Britain** to be attached around her screw frame. Additional devices were also set in place to facilitate movement, but all of these were to collapse or fall out of place under the strain which was subsequently applied. However, due to offshore breezes, the tide did not rise to within a foot of that expected and no amount of effort at the capstans that day achieved the least movement.

Overnight, the wind veered to the south, and although bringing the threat of further harm to the ship, also brought an extra foot or so of water by early morning. Under the renewed effort of **Birkenhead**'s paddles this resulted in **Great Britain** starting a smooth, steady progress seaward. However, as she arrived at the low-water mark she came to a grinding halt; Captain Claxton had had the foresight to anticipate that, in addition to any unrepaired damage, fresh damage may have occurred to the bottom of the hull in moving over the bedrock and he had ordered anchors to be cast to stop her before she entered deep water.

His fears were well founded and the rest of Friday was spent patching, plugging, and caulking, although not all the leaks could be stopped, and constant pumping using numerous pumps would be required over the ensuing days to prevent her being lost. To this end, Mr. Bellamy and his men, many members of

the **Birkenhead**'s crew, and many local labourers were employed on board the **Great Britain**.

At high tide at about 4am on Saturday, 28th August, the **Birkenhead** again took up the strain and the **Great Britain** moved so easily into deep water that she almost fouled the **Birkenhead**. The tow proper was now taken up with the intention of setting off directly for Liverpool, but on passing St. John's Point at about 5am it was soon apparent that this would be a risk too many, and a course was set for Strangford Lough, 11 miles away. Constant pumping was necessary as she was making up to a foot of water an hour.

Despite having a jury rudder of stout planking rigged, she yawed continually and on reaching the Lough turned broadside on in the strong current at the narrow entrance. As this occurred a dense fog came down and **Birkenhead**'s commander immediately turned about and headed for the safer waters of Belfast Lough, some 40 miles northward. Off the Copelands (a group of tiny islands off the southern side of the entrance to Belfast Lough), she broke both her towing hawsers but new ones were immediately got aboard. Soon afterwards, the **Scourge** towed her into shallow water where she was beached on the mud; the mud effectively staunching the inflow of water, enabling her to be pumped reasonably dry overnight.

On Sunday, **Great Britain**, with a fresh team of labourers on board to man the pumps, was again taken in tow by **Birkenhead**, and they set off for Liverpool. Steady progress was made overnight despite the continued yawing. Having got to within ten miles of the Mersey Bar on Monday morning, fresh disaster seemed about to overtake the salvage: the sea got up with the rising of a very fresh wind; both hawsers parted in quick succession; and the jury rudder shattered and fell overboard.

The Navy, however, was not going to lose her at this stage and fresh hawsers were quickly secured. A pilot was embarked and the pilot boat was moored astern of **Great Britain** and proved to be a very good rudder. Now confident of success, lines of bunting were run up and so, some eleven months after last setting sail, she arrived off the Pier Head, Liverpool, at 1.30pm on Monday 30th August 1847.

Great Britain was immediately taken into Princes Dock and put on the gridiron where a survey was later carried out by Fawcett, Preston & Co. They found that the hull above the bottom was sound and the frames neither bent nor strained, which they attributed to the quality of the materials used in her construction. There were tears in the bottom up to 5¾ft by 1¼ ft, but whereas such damage in a wooden vessel may have condemned it to the scrap yard, in this ship all was repairable. However, the cost to do so was estimated at £16,000, with a further £6,000 needing to be spent on the machinery.

Strangely, she had been insured for less than £20,000 and with the salvage to be paid for, the Great Western SS Co. had been obliged to sell the Great **Western** in April 1847 for £25,000 to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. In turn, the **Great Britain** (now lying in Coburg Dock, watertight but un-repaired) was put up for auction on 13th April 1848 with a reserve of £40,000, but the highest bid was only £20,000. She was to languish in a state of limbo until December 1850.

What of James Hosken, the ship's erstwhile and, judged by posterity, incompetent master? (Although to be fair, he had commanded the Great **Western** well, but was apparently out of his depth with the **Great Britain**). He did not command another merchant ship but, whilst he might have been expected to disappear ignominiously, he was to prosper greatly. In 1848/9 (now aged 50, and apparently back in Royal Navy service) he was harbourmaster, postmaster, and chief magistrate of Labuan, North Borneo recently ceded to Britain. In February 1851 he took command of the despatch vessel **Banshee** in the Mediterranean and later in the Channel. September 1853 saw him promoted to commander and he was to serve in the Baltic Campaign of 1854/5, in which he had command of the hospital ship **Belle-Isle**, (subsequently used to ferry troops back from the Crimea), from March 1854.

In June 1857 he was promoted captain, and placed on the retired list in 1868. Further promotion ensued: to rear admiral in 1875, and to vice-admiral in 1879; a not too ignominious sequel. He died at Ilfracombe on 2nd January 1885, aged 87.

Footnotes:

[1] At that time, the details of the lights in question were recorded as: 'St.John's Light, at Dundrum, is intermitting, and shows at each revolution of one minute, a bright, light for 45 sec., succeeded by an eclipse of 15 sec.; the light is 62 feet above high-water mark. The Calf of Man Light, Isle of Man, has two revolving lights, making the revolution every two minutes', it is 396 feet above high-water mark.'

[2] Edward Massey had patented such log in June 1836 (N° 7113), and an improved version in November 1844 (N° 10210).

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Of Soldiers and Sailors and Ships

By B Carter

Prologue

The departure for war of a troopship is an emotional experience; bands are playing, crowds are cheering then the great siren sounds and the lines are cast off. So it was on a mild November night in 1951 when the **Georgic** headed out into the Mersey. For those of us on board the euphoria soon faded and we began to settle in. As one of those being carried I was struck by two features of the ship: the standard of luxury was one; it is rare that troops are carried to war in cabin class accommodation; the other was her warped and twisted steelwork. Later in the voyage I asked a crewman about this damage. "She was bombed and burnt out in Suez during the war." he said. Then as an afterthought he added. "She was carrying a captured German tank; some soldiers got medals for saving it. That was all he could tell me but that piece of information passed to the back of my mind and stayed there a long time - 41 years in fact.

It was recalled at my sixtieth birthday. A friend gave me a copy of The Times published on the day I was born, Saturday, 11th June 1932, which included a picture of the **Georgic**. The caption read:

*"NEW MOTOR LINER, The White Star motor liner **Georgic** leaving Belfast on her trials. She will then proceed to Liverpool for her maiden voyage to New York. The **Georgic** has been built by Harland and Wolff Limited, and is about 27,000 tons gross."* So the **Georgic** and I had arrived in the world at more or less the same time. The years passed giving me a vague desire to learn more about the ship and in particular the tank incident. More time passed and the desire prompted to me to action.

Finding the Liverpool Nautical Research Society on the Internet gave me a great deal of information about the **Georgic** but there was no mention of the tank incident. The soldiers I guessed would have been Royal Engineers. A letter to the Royal Engineers Museum brought confirmation, but the curator could find no details other than the names of the soldiers awarded the George Medal and cited in the London Gazette. The London Gazette said little more except stating the soldiers-numbers and ranks and stating the names of their hometowns. By now the inquiry had become something of a quest. Starting with Lytham St Annes, I wrote to the information centre. I received advice but no hard facts. Next was Derby, the same result. The last chance was a slim one: a soldier whose address was given simply as London SE 16. This did not seem much but a helpful Librarian at Lytham St. Annes suggested Rotherhithe and gave an address of the library there. There was no information there either, but like other librarians there was the suggestion, "Ask the local newspaper for help." It seemed a forlorn hope. Up to now all such newspaper inquiries had failed but I wrote. A few weeks later, arriving home from a holiday, I was told of a phone call from a person in Essex, Mr Williams. That was David Williams, son of Corporal Williams, one of the soldiers. I lost no time in going to Essex. Sadly Christopher Williams had died in 1990 but I was privileged to see his George Medal and to receive copies of press cuttings.

Mr Williams had achieved much. A Thames lighterman in civilian life he had performed other feats of watermanship at the Normandy landings by taking small craft into river estuaries searching for mines. He left the army with the rank of Warrant Officer. Later in life he gave himself up to social work for the men who worked on the Thames. The press cuttings, as well as giving the dates of the events, gave the names of more soldiers. One them, a captain in the Royal Tank Regiment, Captain David Evans, played a key role and initiated the rescue of the tank. I now had the full story; it was a story of gallantry and determination of soldiers and sailors. It was not least the story of a great ship. This story follows but first acknowledgements are due to those librarians, curators and newspaper editors who gave so much advice and encouragement:

Rebecca Cheney, Curator, The Royal Engineers' Museum
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John Shepherd, Liverpool Nautical Research Society
Christopher Harman, Assistant Librarian, St Anne's Library
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Lisa Bates, Local Studies Librarian, Derbyshire C.C.
The Editor, The Southwark News
Mr. S. Donoghue, Local Studies Librarian, The London Borough of Havering
Mrs. D. Scriven, Librarian, Local Studies, City of Wakefield
Lindsay Rawl, Wakefield Express.

In particular, David Williams of Canvey Island for information about his father, Christopher Williams GM, and for the press cuttings including extracts from: 'The Port', June 1984, a journal of the Port of London Authority; Merchantmen at War, HMSO, 1944; one other article not positively identified but believed to be from 'The Soldier' the magazine of the British Army and dated shortly after April, 1955.

The Story

The **Georgic** was launched at Belfast for the White Star Line on 12th November 1931 and undertook her maiden voyage in June 1932. Her original accommodation was for a total of 1,636 passengers - 479 cabin class, 557 tourist class and 600 third class. At 27,465 tons and 711 feet long she was, in her day, one of the 20 biggest merchant ships afloat.

In 1939 the **Georgic** worked the Liverpool - New York service and made five round trans-Atlantic voyages on commercial service with cargo and passengers, although she was hampered by the fact that Americans had been ordered not to travel in her, as she was a belligerent ship. While she was homeward bound on 11th March 1940, the Cunard-White Star Company was informed that she would be taken off commercial service. After discharging a large cargo at Liverpool, the **Georgic** was ordered to the Clyde on 19th April, where she was converted into a troopship for 3,000 men.

At the end of May 1940 the **Georgic** assisted in the evacuation of British troops from Andesfjord and Narvik, and as soon as she had landed these men at Greenock she sailed to assist in the withdrawal from Brest and St. Nazaire. She was under repeated air attack but was fortunate in not being hit; her crew were highly commended by the soldiers she rescued. Between July and September 1940 she made a trooping voyage to Iceland, and another to Halifax, N.S., collecting Canadian troops after landing the evacuees she had carried on the westbound voyage. From September 1940 until January 1941 the **Georgic** was employed on trooping voyages from Liverpool and Glasgow to the Middle East via the Cape, and afterwards trooped from Liverpool to New York and Halifax, and back to the Clyde.

On 22nd May 1941 the **Georgic** left the Clyde under the command of Captain A C Greig, OBE, RNR, with the 50th Northumberland Division, for Port Tewfik, Gulf of Suez. She was part of the convoy that had to be left almost unprotected during the hunt for the **Bismarck**. She arrived safely on 7th July 1941 after the long trip round the Cape of Good Hope but a week later, on 14th July she was bombed by German aircraft while at anchor off Port Tewfik; she had 800 Italian internees on board. At her moorings she had no chance of evasion; one bomb glanced off her side and exploded under water damaging the hull, another penetrated the deck and burst in a hold, setting her on fire. A dozen gunners were killed and others injured. Within 20 minutes the fire was beyond control and the Master ordered the passengers into the lifeboats. Three boatloads got away safely but others, owing to the spread of fire, had to be lowered by ropes from the forecastle. Captain Greig then hauled up the anchor in an attempt to save his ship. He steamed her slowly towards shallow water, but her steering was damaged and she went aground on a reef. Less than an hour after the bombing the **Georgic**'s crew were forced to abandon her, a blazing wreck.

One man who watched the scene with particular dismay was Captain David Evans, Royal Tank Regiment. He knew that on board was a captured German tank bound for England. The tank had special armour plating and other advanced features and the War Office set great store on submitting it to expert examination. Well aware of the danger, he went on board the ship, now blazing from stem to stem and listing heavily, found the tank and tried unsuccessfully to remove the telescopic sights.

Back on shore, the port authorities said the list made salvage of the tank impossible, Undeterred, Captain Evans found 12 officers and men of the Royal Engineers who, when they were told how important the tank was, volunteered to go aboard with him.

Next morning The Engineers, from 1003 Stevedores Battalion, taking a small floating crane and lashing it between two tugs, went out to the **Georgic**.

Flames were shooting everywhere and it was impossible to get on deck, so going to the windward side. Corporal Chris Williams, a Thames lighterman in civilian life, climbed up the crane's jib and got the crane driver to lower it until it was just above the tank; then with flames shooting all round, singeing their hair and eyebrows and the deck scorching their feet, the party managed to get a couple of wire slings under the tank and lift it to safety. Because the fate of the **Georgic** had to be concealed from the enemy, this gallantry went unpublicised at the time. The only announcement was that the George Medal had been awarded to Captain Evans of Wakefield, and also to Major G. Rigby of Lytham St. Anne's, Major C. R. Clark of Hornchurch, Company Sergeant-Major John Bradshaw of Derby, Sergeant J. E. Scrivener of Singleton, Lancashire and Corporal C. F. Williams of London S.E.16.

The **Georgic**'s story did not end there. Even though her decks were so corrugated and twisted and the interior damage was so great, turning her into little more than a hulk, that a high military authority suggested using her as a pier at Ataka; experts were flown from England and they decided that she could be towed to India. After considerable patching up, the voyage began, first to Port Sudan. She was towed at six knots by two merchant ships, the **Clan Campbell** and the **City of Sydney**. It was a trying journey. After three days, heavy weather sprang up and the aft wire connecting the **Georgic** with the **City of Sydney** parted. The **Clan Campbell** hung on, but the **Georgic** developed a list of 15 degrees. As soon as the weather abated. Captain Greig with Captain Manley, marine superintendent, and some engineers, went aboard and succeeded in starting up an emergency dynamo enabling pumps to be worked. The list was reduced to five degrees and the **City of Sydney** reconnected. But then the **Georgic**'s rudder was found to be jammed hard a-port. While work went on to free it, pumping continued till the list was down to three degrees. It was 12 days after leaving Suez that she gained harbour at Port Sudan. There she remained for a few weeks, the cement box, used in repair, was reinforced and the rudder bar freed. Two other vessels now took charge of her, the merchantman **Recorder** and the tug **St. Sampson**. Good progress was made for three days when, once more, the weather deteriorated and the tug **St. Sampson** was swamped, broke adrift and was lost, though the hospital ship **Dorsetshire** rescued her crew. Further help was signalled for and two days later the merchant ship **Haresfield** and the tug **Pauline Moller** arrived. The voyage was resumed and Karachi was reached within a month. Speed had averaged four knots. Crews were not aboard the **Georgic** all the time; they boarded her when needful, taking their meals with them.

In Karachi nine months' repair work was done under the **Georgic**'s chief engineer Mr D Horsburgh who had with him 28 other engineers sent out from

England and 400 men, skilled and unskilled, engaged in Karachi. Early in 1943 she sailed from Bombay for Liverpool with 5,000 tons of pig iron for ballast. She voyaged independently and arrived safely having seen nothing of the enemy. She had been away from England nearly two years.

It took only a fortnight to decide she was to be rebuilt for trooping and at the beginning of 1945 the Ministry of Transport proudly announced her as the newest and most perfectly equipped troopship. She was very different in appearance from the pre-war Cunard-White Star Liner. Her twin stocky funnels and two masts had disappeared; now she had only a single funnel and one short foremast.

In the following years the **Georgic** carried thousands of troops home to demobilisation centres. Then in 1948 her standee bunks were ripped out and replaced with cabins She became an immigrant ship, plying to Canada and Australia. In the summers she was sometimes used as a tourist class ship on the North Atlantic run and in 1951 operated between New York and Southampton carrying visitors to the Festival of Britain. In the winters, she became a trooper again, travelling mostly to the Far East including Korea.

On her civilian trips, when all passengers were in the same class, she could accommodate 2000; but as a trooper, owing to the segregation of ranks and families, she carried 150 fewer.

In the winter of 1954/55 the **Georgic** resumed assisted passage voyages to Australia, and on 16th April 1955 she arrived at Liverpool with troops from Japan. She was then offered for sale but the Australian Government chartered her for the summer. The **Georgic**'s final voyage was from Hong Kong to Liverpool with 800 troops; she arrived on 19th November 1955. On 11th December she was laid up at Kames Bay, Isle of Bute pending disposal. In January 1956, her life, no doubt, shortened by her wartime experiences, she was sold for scrapping, and on 1st February she was delivered to the breaker's yard.

The shifting sands of Dee

In the last edition of the *Bulletin* there was encouraging news about the return of shipping to the River Dee. The **Afon Dyfrdwy** has been delivered, but the regulatory authorities have now threatened not to approve the necessary dredging. This apparently unforeseen problem has yet to be resolved at the time this *Bulletin* is going to press, but the Deputy Prime Minister has said the approval will be forthcoming.

Respectable Reefers

by LNRS Member Alan McClelland

A paper presented to the Liverpool Nautical Research Society on 18th March 2004

"April 10, 1663: My much honoured friend Argent gave me a plant he received from the Bermudas. This stalk with fruit thereon I hanged up in my shop where it became ripe about the beginning of May, and lasted until June: the pulp or meat was very soft and tender, and it did eat somewhat like a Muske-Melon. Some have judged it the forbidden fruit: other the Grapes brought to Moses out of the Holy-land."

In fact the mysterious fruit that Thomas Johnston hung in his shop in Snow Hill, London were bananas. His were thought to be the first brought into Britain until 1999 when a 500 year old banana skin was found in excavations near the Thames!

There has always been something of the exotic, even romantic, about tropical and sub-tropical fruit. The concern of this paper is to consider the transport of such produce to markets in the Northern Hemisphere by steam and diesel propelled ships, which in their designs often, but not always, exhibited elegance and indeed beauty.

It was in the 1840's that entrepreneurs turned their attention to the possibilities of shipping fruit and other delicate produce from the Mediterranean by screw propelled steamers. Liverpool-based merchants were in the forefront of this development, and John Cook deals with it in some detail in "Early steamship voyages between Liverpool and the Mediterranean" ("Sixty Years of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society: 1938-1998"). This paper considers some examples of vessels employed in the fruit trades between 1890 and 1960. The adoption of triple expansion steam engines for cargo ships and the successful incorporation of refrigerated and specially ventilated cargo spaces in the 1880's were to lead to the evolution of increasingly specialized perishable food carriers.

Strictly speaking the term "reefers" refers to these ships and in particular to those carrying fruit. However note must also be taken of tonnage making use of enhanced natural ventilation and forced draught cooling systems.

The **Oxus** was an early example of the specialized fruit carrier. Completed in 1890 by the Strand Slipway Company of Sunderland for John White & Company of London, she was a handsome little steamer with a sunken or half-height forecastle and three masts. With her boilers and machinery located towards her stern the **Oxus** was reported to be capable of 12 knots and even 14 in favourable conditions when a tide had to be caught. She was fitted with numerous ventilators for her holds and with some passenger accommodation. Regrettably in 1908 she became one of the subjects of a major marine insurance scandal, together with a number of ships registered in Cardiff. Some owners were over-insuring their vessels, which sank in dubious circumstances. The **Oxus** whilst on passage from Cadiz to Iceland with a cargo of salt foundered 22 miles south of Cape Finisterre on a fine sunny morning, in a flat calm. Ultimately the circumstances of her loss, and those of others, led the President of the Board of Trade, Winston Churchill, to introduce the Marine Insurance (Gambling) Policies Bill in 1909.

1894 and 1895 saw the launch at Middlesborough of two steamers which were forerunners of the American "Great White Fleet" of banana carriers. Completed under special supervision by R. Craggs & Sons for their own account these yacht-like ships passed through several hands before ending up in the ownership of one of the companies controlled by Owen Philipps later to be made Lord Kylsant. The **Barnstable** and **Brookline** spent their entire careers on long term charters carrying bananas from the West Indies to ports on the eastern seaboard of the U.S.A. and in particular Boston. Captain Lorenzo Baker of Wellfleet, Massachusetts had pioneered this trade, first of all with schooners. In spite of ridicule from neighbours about dealing in "monkey food", which could go rotten in transit, Baker persevered and went on to help found the Boston Fruit Company which became United Fruit, the largest tropical farm and shipping concern in the world. The **Barnstable** and **Brookline**, chartered by the Boston Fruit Company were for many years held to be the premier steamers in the banana trade, remaining in service until 1913 when they returned to Britain to be scrapped. They discharged much, if not all, of their cargoes through side ports so far as the writer has been able to ascertain. Capable of 13 knots and naturally ventilated they could each carry 35,000 stems of bananas and 24 passengers. Some of the latter commented on occasion that the sisters had a propensity to roll heavily! By

1903 the United Fruit Company had set about building its own fleet of refrigerated ships.

The next examples of banana ships to be considered are those built in the decade after the end of the First World War. A large group of refrigerated vessels was commissioned by Elders & Fyffes. One of them, the **Tilapa**, completed by Cammell Laird in 1928, was one of a class of 19 steamers. She was a graceful vessel, a frequent visitor to Garston and highly successful in operation. At the conclusion of the Second World War she was the first Elders & Fyffes ship to be completely reconditioned for commercial service. In December 1945 she berthed in Avonmouth, in the midst of much ceremony, with the first complete cargo of bananas to reach the United Kingdom for five years. Five years before the launch of the **Tilapa** Cammell Laird completed the first really noteworthy ocean-going diesel electric ship of any type. She was the **La Playa** owned by one of the many subsidiaries of the United Fruit Company. She was powered by four 4-cylinder Cammell Laird Fullagar engines arranged athwart-ships, amidships, each coupled to a generator supplying current at 220v for propulsion purposes. With her compact engine-room and her electric motor room situated towards the stern, the **La Playa** had 26 per cent more carrying capacity than the **Tilapa** and her sister ships. After a successful delivery voyage from the Port of Liverpool to Boston early in 1924 the **La Playa** unfortunately suffered problems with her diesel engines. These had to be replaced first of all with Fiat and later General Motors units. Fullagar engines, after some further early difficulties, were successfully employed on land.

Until some time after the First World War the term fruit ship was applied only to banana carriers and some vessels in the Mediterranean trades. However, by the late 1920's - early 1930's cargoes of citrus and other fruit came to be carried in increasing volumes in specialized refrigerated ships and some with forced draught ventilation. Of great significance in this development was the activity of Norwegian shipowners who commissioned numbers of what might best be described as high speed fruit tramps. The most outstanding of these were employed on the runs between the Pacific coast of North America and Northern Europe. It is interesting to note that attention was drawn to these examples of Scandinavian shipping practice, as it was evolving in the reviews of the state of British tramp shipping undertaken in the 1930's, but for several

reasons no attempts were made to follow suit. Three notable Norwegian motor vessels of this period were the twin-screwed **Washington Express**, **Oregon Express** and **California Express** of 1933-34, each with 180,000 cu ft. of insulated space divided into compartments which could be maintained at different temperatures. They were capable of a sustained 15½ knots. Amongst the particular features of Norwegian and other Scandinavian reefers were the extended forecastles given to many of them, presumably with the aim of increasing cubic capacity in the fine lined foreparts of their hulls. Most of them were of a graceful, unified appearance - though some examples were said to look stiff.

Immediately after the First World War steam power was predominant in fruit carrying tonnage, but within a very few years the diesel came into its own in a variety of forms. Amongst the British pioneers of oil engine propulsion were MacAndrews. Their earliest motor ships for the Spanish trade were the **Pinzon** and **Pizarro** of 1922 and 1923 with some mechanical ventilation and engines aft. Their service speed was 10 knots and all their auxiliary machinery was powered by electricity. They were followed in 1927 by a group of five motor vessels, the **Pinto**, **Ponzano**, **Paycheco**, **Palacio** and **Pelayo** with their engines slightly aft of amidships and designed for 12 knots. Completed by Harland & Wolff these ships proved very reliable in service, though given their shallow loaded draughts it would be interesting to learn how they behaved on passage across the Bay of Biscay in stormy weather. By 1938 MacAndrews were looking for yet faster vessels, and ordered the **Pozarica** and **Palomares** from William Doxford & Sons Ltd. With their raked stems and cruiser sterns these good looking motor ships could be run at 15 knots.

In common with the operators of other types of specialized tonnage, fruit shipowners tried a variety of expedients in seeking employment on back haul passages, and also between fruit seasons to try avoid laying u expensive ships. One of the most unusual solutions attempted in 1955 w that of the French Societé Navale Caennaise in their **Boree**. Designed as a multi-purpose vessel, she was given S.E.M.T. Pielstick high speed diesel engines and exceeded 18 knots when on trials. Built by Ateliers et Chantiers de Bretagne the **Boree** and her sister ship **Hebe** were fitted with bipod masts forward and aft, and hinged tweendecks, including coamingless hatch covers, which could be folded back to the sides of the holds. Placed in service between North Western France and North Africa,

the vessels catered for the fast transport of fruit and vegetables between November and June, carrying coal outwards and other general or bulk cargoes out of season. They were also given three wine tanks and in addition to mechanical ventilation of the main holds there was some refrigerated cargo space. Unfortunately the writer has not come across records of their performances in service.

Reefers have exhibited some marked contrasts in design and propulsion as has been indicated. The latter has featured quite daring innovations on occasion. Amongst those with relatively local connections were the power plants of the banana carriers **Geestar** and **Geestland** of 1960. Built by Dr. Groot & Vliet and Schps.Fa.C.Amels & Zn for Waling Van Geest & Zn., these were the first ships completed in the Netherlands to be fitted with free piston/gas turbine machinery. Unfortunately problems were experienced and in 1964 they had to be re-engined to ensure maintenance of the desired service speed of 17 knots. There were also some reports of difficulties with their refrigeration arrangements.

Food carriers, their special features and operations, represent a very important element in merchant shipping history. Within that element fruit ships warrant particular attention. Work remains to be done on the technical developments which lay behind the success of so many in service and the failings of a few.

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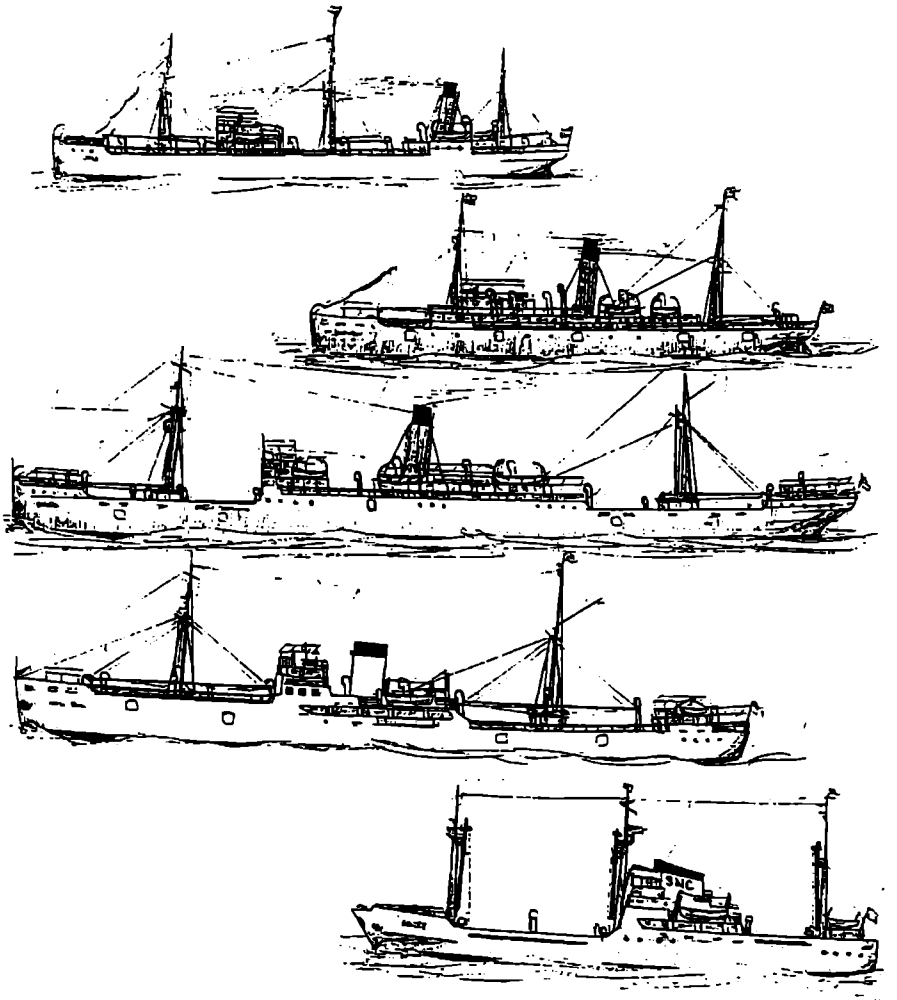
Acknowledgements
John Hill and Peter Kenyon (personal communications)

Reefers – A few faint wreaths of smoke & a whiff of diesel .....



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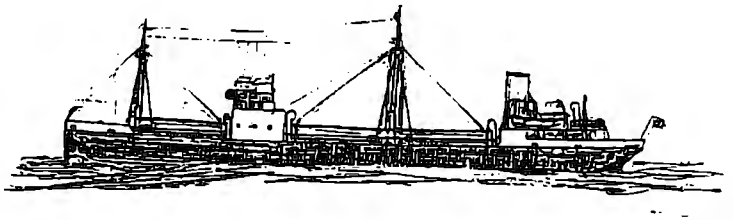
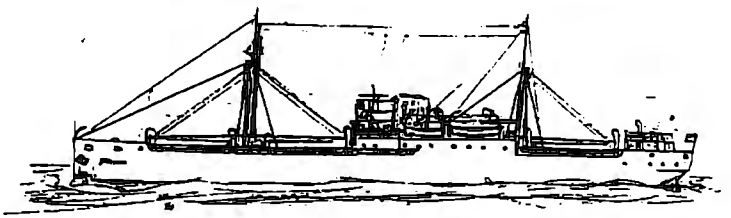




..... the carriage of fruit by sea - before the containerships

Page 43 ***Oxus, Barnstable/Brookline, Tilapa*** *& sisters, a Scandinavian type &* ***the Boree***
*Page 44****Pinzon*** *&* ***Pazarro*** *and the* ***Pinto*** *& sisters*

A publicity photograph of either the ***North Star*** *or* ***Northern Lights****, Scandinavian reefer tramps built in 1948 and on charter to the Jamaica Banana Producers Co in the 1960s*

THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY
THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
1st May 2003 -30th April 2004

I start by thanking the Officers, Council and Members of the Society for their support during the past year, also the Merseyside Maritime Museum for their co-operation, especially Dawn and her staff at the Maritime Archives and Library for the Monday facility, which is greatly appreciated by members.

Each season the Society is able to present seven lectures, a Christmas Social and the AGM. Thanks to Ron Dennis, we have again had a varied and interesting program of speakers, with an average of 38 members attending at each lecture. At the Christmas Social this year, books donated by members raised £47 for Society funds. A week earlier there were thirty-three who enjoyed Christmas lunch at the Hollins Hey Hotel, New Brighton, which had been arranged by Harry Hignett.

Because Captain Mike Jones was unable to attend our February meeting this year, the LNRS Award was presented at the meeting on January 15th . There were four submissions for the Award, all from John Moores University. The standard was very high, but the three judges - Alan McClelland, Mike Jones and myself - agreed the winner to be Miss Sarah Kennedy for her entry "RO-RO TUG MASTER ECONOMICS". This annual Award of £200 to encourage an interest by the younger
generation in maritime history, is financed by anonymous donation.

The Society is proud of the achievement of our Vice President, Captain Graeme Cubbin, for his book *"Harrisons Of Liverpool"*. This 400 page book published jointly by the World Ship Society and Ships in Focus Publications, is a great tribute to a famous Liverpool shipping company, and the ships and men who served it.

Since the last AGM we have had a slight increase in membership which now stands at 210. Sadly we have lost five of our members who have passed on. They are;- GERRY MURRAY, GEORGE HIRST, PETER KENYON, SANDY WILLIAMSON and BILL O'BRIAN. They are sadly missed and are remembered with respect.

I wish to express my thanks for the excellent work done by Tony Barratt as Editor of the BULLETIN over the past twelve months, also to Gordon Bodey who has now taken over responsibility for its distribution. I am very happy to report that John Shepherd is now healthy again, and will resume his position as editor of the BULLETIN after the September issue.

Earlier this season the Council agreed to produce a Society Publication to celebrate it's 70th Anniversary in 2008. This is now at the planning stage, and I am pleased to report that Tony Barratt has agreed to be the editor. It will consist of a number of articles written by members of the Society, and the

Council will shortly be calling on members to send papers to be considered for inclusion.

Due to response from members, the Council has agreed to produce a Society Tie that will be available for purchase this summer.

Before I end this report I wish to record my thanks to John Stokoe the Secretary, for the excellent manner he holds the office, John Coates the Treasurer for his efficient book-keeping, Mike Jones for managing the LNRS Award, Ron Dennis for the difficult job of arranging the Speakers, and Gordon Wright for the catering at our meetings.

With the annual Society Subscription Rate now raised to £12 per individual member and £15 per couple, I conclude this report by stating the Society is on a steady course., and the outlook ahead is clear.

THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE MERSEYSIDE MARITIME MUSEUM, ON 20th MAY 2004

Present; The Chairman and 26 Members are recorded in the Attendance Register

The Society's Chairman David Eccles formerly opened the Meeting and welcomed all members present.

1. The Hon. Secretary read the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 15th. May 2003 from which there were no matters arising

2. The Chairman presented his own report for the year full details of which will be issued to all Members with the September 'Bulletin' A brief summary of his comments now follow:-

He began by acknowledging with thanks the support given by the Society Council, Officers and Members together with the many Museum Archive staff who had assisted the Society's endeavours throughout me year. Whilst membership of the Society now stood at 210 persons, demonstrating a small increase, the series of monthly lectures had attracted an average audience marginally less than the previous year Special reference was also made to the successful Christmas Social and Lunch events.

There were pleasing comments relating to the standard of entries for the second Society Award and a specific mention of the recent tremendous achievement by the Society's Vice-President Capt. Graeme Cubbin.

Tony Barratt's constructive editorship of the "Bulletin" would be continuing until the Autumn, when John.Shepherd would be resuming this role.

Much attention is now being given by Council to the 70th. Anniversary Publication scheduled for January 2008 which will coincide with Liverpool's Year of Culture.

It has become necessary to apply a small increase to the subscription rate though Chairman indicated that initiatives are now in hand including for example the order of a limited number of Society ties which will shortly be available for sale.

3. The Accounts for 2003-04 were made available to all present and Treasurer John Coates confirmed that income had exceeded expenditure by in excess of £1200 and that in addition to this credit balance the Society's reserves currently stand in excess of £5500. Thanks were extended to auditors Olive Williamson and Norman West and John Lingwood's proposal that the accounts be accepted was seconded and approved.

4. Editor Tony Barratt shared details of some of the changes which he had applied to the "Bulletin" over the past year with a view to enhancing interest and effectiveness. Members had been active in submitting articles for publication though once again he requested continued commitment by our membership along these lines. Whilst having to step down from editing the quarterly publication, news that he would take forward the 70th. Anniversary Commemorative Publication was warmly received.

5. Meetings Secretary Ron Dennis offered an outline of the line-up of lectures which he had been busy organising for next season. Membership Cards providing this information will be included with the September "Bulletin".

6. Chairman David Eccles indicated that all Council members and Officers were happy to continue in post and Capt. Graeme Cubbin proposed their re-election en bloc and this was unanimously approved by the Meeting.

7. In richly deserved recognition of the publication of the book "*Harrisons of Liverpool*" Captain Michael Jones had much pleasure in presenting author and Society Vice-President Captain Graeme Cubbin with a specially inscribed glass tankard.

Member John Cook briefly addressed the Meeting and said that an opportunity currently exists for Member energy and enthusiasm to be harnessed to common purpose. A collection of subsidiary registers, volumes of unique national importance, now available within the Museum Archives could be considered for transcription on to disc if the Society could acquire a laptop computer for communal use by Members. The Chairman acknowledged John's initiative and indicated that this suggestion would be carefully considered by Council.

There being no further business the Chairman dosed the Meeting

Liverpool Nautical Research Society

Hon. Treasurer, J. S. Coates
Income and Expenditure 2003 - 2004

Income

Subscriptions	£2102.00
Corporate	£100.00
Donations	£1008.71
Book Sale	£47.00
LRNS Ties	£38.50
Xmas Lunch	£478.50
Carried forward	£201.90
Total	£3976.61

Expenditure

G. Wright	£19.92
Printers	£933.40
Editor	£56.79
Secretary	£75.55
NMGM	£658.00
Postage	£275.19
Xmas Lunch	£478.30
Scholarship	£200.00
Total	£2697.15

Income exceeds Expenditure £3976.61 - £2697.15
Equals £1279.46

Bank Balance as of May 10th 2004 £1279.46

Deposit Account as of May 10th 2004 £5591.28

Both accounts are held with the Alliance Business Bank (ex Girobank)

Accounts examined by N West

E.O Williams

Compiled by J. S. Coates
Hon. Treasurer
May 10th 2004

INDEX TO VOLUME 47 June 2003 - March 2004

LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY
FORTHCOMING MEETINGS - 2004

The Society's Monthly Meetings will resume on Thursday16th September commencing at 12.30pm in the Education Suite at the Maritime Museum, when the postponed talk by Mrs B Jones, Senior Information Officer and Archivist, on Lloyds Registers will be given.

Full details of the rest of the autumn programme will be given in the September ***Bulletin***

A report of the Society's AGM, to be held on Thursday 20th May will also be included with the September ***Bulletin***

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)

JULY	5th	12th	19th	26th
AUGUST	2nd	9th	16th	23rd
SEPTEMBER	6th	13th	20th	27th

MERSEYSIDE MARITIME MUSEUM LECTURE

Details of the Museum's autumn lecture programme will be given in the September ***Bulletin.***

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

THE BULLETIN

Volume 48, Number 2 September 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 (This edition)

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 Tony Barratt or sent by post to the above address. He will ensure that they are forwarded promptly to his successor - John Shepherd

Front cover
HMS Lion one of Admiral Fisher's battlecruisers. Built 1912 at Devonport, served at both Dogger Bank and Jutland. Broken up 1922-24 - See article on page 34

Letter *from* the Editor

This is my fifth Bulletin and unfortunately, due to changed family circumstances, it will be my last, as I now feel unable to guarantee meeting the quarterly production deadlines. However as announced at the AGM John Shepherd will be resuming the role of Editor with effect from the December Edition. I hope both John, and the members in general, think that the Society's standards have been upheld.

I would like to thank the Society's Council for their support and particularly the four proof checkers, Graeme Cubbin, David Eccles, John Stokoe and Alan McCelland, who have endeavoured to keep me on the straight and narrow.

During my tenure as Editor I have made some minor changes - which I hope members approve of, including having different coloured covers to help identify the year and an annual index - (The society does have a full index of articles since 1938 and it is well worth trawling through). I have also tried to encourage readers to respond and add information, via the "Feedback" section.

It can be quite daunting at the start of the quarter looking at 48 blank sheets so please keep the articles coming. They can be of any length, on local, national and some overseas marine subjects. Likewise on related industry topics - the docks, insurance, agency, shipbuilding and repair - your experiences and knowledge, will be of interest to others.

If you have any items in the next few months you can still send them to me, until John gets settled in, and I will forward them to him, promptly.

Whilst there is quite a bit of work attached to the job of Editor the upside is the contact with so many generous and knowledgeable people. It was always a pleasure opening an Email or letter and finding out what was inside. So a big thank you to you all.

The success of the Bulletin, and the Society, does depend on input from the members. So please keep your comments and articles coming.

As for me I have been asked to assist in the production of the Society's 70th Anniversary Publication, due for issue in 2008 (fewer deadlines!) More details will be announced shortly

A TRAGEDY WAITING TO HAPPEN------?
The loss of the Ballina in 1882
The loss of the Ellan Vannin in 1909

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

In Vol. 43 No. 4 December 1999 of the LNRS Bulletin, my article on the loss of the **Ellan Vannin** offered some possible reasons for her loss. These mainly referred to the modifications, which could have resulted in changes to the stability of the vessel, and in the inability of the vessel to resist being overwhelmed by mountainous waves or a large influx of water.

The question, however, "what caused the vessel to sink?" has still not been satisfactorily answered with regard to the stability of the vessel in the conditions met with on that fateful night of the 3rd December 1909.

I write again about this disaster as a result of a similar disaster which befell the iron screw steamer **Ballina** of Liverpool on or about the 6th January 1882, only 22 months before the **Ellan Vannin** was converted from the paddle steamer **Mona's Isle** to a twin screw iron steamer.

The similarity of the **Ballina** and the **Ellan Vannin** are remarkable both as regards their profile, design and specification but also with regard to the weather conditions at the times of their loss. Some of the factors appertaining to the loss of the **Ballina** may help to throw more light on the loss of the **Ellan Vannin**.

A description of the loss of the **Ballina** is included in "Shipwrecks of the Isle of Man" by Adrian Corkill and with the agreement of the author extracts are included, as follows:-

Description of Ballina.

"At the beginning of 1878, the iron steamship **Ballina**, of Liverpool, (official number 78780), was launched by the Barrow Shipbuilding Co. of Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria in accordance with plans submitted by the owner Mr George Pollexfen .

Before work commenced however, Mr Humphries, the manager of the Barrow Shipbuilding Co., wrote to George Pollexfen stating that the ship, in his opinion, was not stable enough to enable her to carry cattle on her main deck. He suggested that she should be strengthened by a number of modifications, including increasing the beam.

An interview followed when George Pollexfen stated his determination to adhere to his original plans. The **Ballina** was duly

completed to the original specification and delivered to Mr Pollexfen's ownership on the 5th January1878.

For reasons not made clear in contemporary accounts George Pollexfen suddenly had a change of heart and before the **Ballina** was put into service she was taken to Liverpool. She was lengthened to the extent of an extra 25ft. amidships and a double bottomed ballast tank with a capacity of 40 tons fitted.

Her gross tonnage was increased to 341 tons and her net tonnage to 210 tons. She was 170.5ft. in length, had a beam of 23.2ft. and a draught of 11.5ft. The **Ballina** was equipped with a compound steam engine built by the Barrow Shipbuilding Co., developing 121hp. From contemporary accounts she appears to have had a well deck, between the bridge and the forecastle head a flying bridge or catwalk, and another shorter one abaft the main mast.

A Board of Trade official then surveyed her and a certificate was issued permitting the **Ballina** to carry 242 third class passengers, fifteen passengers in the after cabin, 41 on deck and sixteen in the saloon. Oddly, George Pollexfen marked his own Plimsoll mark leaving only twelve inches of freeboard.

The final cost of the **Ballina** was £10,000."

Last voyage of the Ballina.

"On the 5th January 1882, the **Ballina** loaded a cargo of 370 sacks of wheat, 295 tons of coal and general cargo, 37 tons of chemicals as deck cargo and 10 tons of stone ballast at the Clarence Half Tide Dock in Liverpool. As additional deck cargo she had greenheart piles for a new jetty which was being built at the time at Larne, County Antrim and she was due to call in at Larne en route to Ballina.

When the **Ballina** began to leave the dock the official on duty noticed that she was deeply laden and said to her master, Captain Charles Lynn, "You are deep this time". The Captain replied simply "Yes". The **Ballina** then remained in the dock and for the next four hours the crew tinkered down below in the cargo hold before the dock official saw her leave the dock and sailed down the Mersey.

A short time after leaving the entrance of the Mersey, the **Ballina** encountered a severe westerly gale; nobody knows what happened to her, but within a few hours she had foundered with the loss of all fifteen of her crew.

Between the 10th January and 13th January some bodies were washed ashore and a quantity of wreckage was picked up from the east

coast of the Isle of Man. This evidence suggested that the **Ballina** had foundered off the east coast of the Isle of Man. The **Ballina** was posted as missing by Lloyds on the 1st February 1882.

The reason for her loss can only be pure speculation as none of her crew survived and there were no eye-witnesses to her loss, but it seems that there was a fault in her design that made her unstable when fully loaded. On the day of her loss she was carrying 375 tons of cargo and ballast and had a freeboard of only 1ft 7ins. It is easy to see that in a violent storm she could have taken a large wave on the main deck, the weight of which would have caused her to capsize with a terrible suddenness. Mr Pollexfen, her owner, had stated that she had made over 400 trips including 50 with cargoes of wheat to Iceland and on some of these trips had been heavily loaded with no mishaps, but even he had confessed to her instability on occasions. Alternatively, she may have experienced problems with her deck cargo becoming insecure causing her to list and then eventually capsize.

Why she ended up off the main shipping route, in close to the east of the Isle of Man, is also something of a mystery. It seems likely that she was following a course that would have taken her south of the Isle of Man, past the Chicken Rock, when she was caught by the full force of the gale. It was common for ships to run up the east coast of the Isle of Man to gain shelter in Ramsey Bay from westerly winds. Before she reached the safety of Ramsey Bay, however, she capsized off Laxey and sank, taking all fifteen hands with her. The Wreck Commissioner found there was no evidence to show how the **Ballina** was lost, but she was not sufficiently stable and was overladen on her last voyage leaving Liverpool. He therefore fined Mr Pollexfen £150"

Conclusion

The flooding of the aft deck of the **Ellan Vannin** to the top of the solid bulwarks could have added 100 to 200 tons of water to her dead-weight, which the freeing ports could not have removed. Even with a list of only 20 degrees the freeing ports on one side would have been under water whilst the other side would have been above water, with no effect.

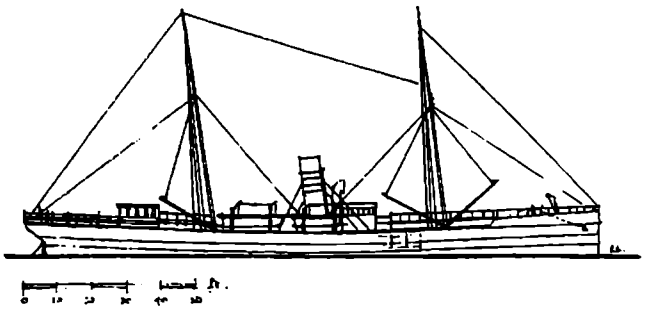
On the **Ballina** however, with open rails, water would not have been contained and would have quickly run off her decks. However the deck cargo of greenheart piles of equivalent weight could have had a similar effect especially if they had broken adrift and had been contained only by the open rails. It is no coincidence that the weight of greenheart is the same as that of salt water, i.e.1042kgs / metres cube and

therefore the same volume of salt water would have had the same weight as the greenheart piles.

The comparison between the loss of these two vessels, adds weight to the conclusion of the Court of Enquiry that the **Ellan Vannin** was lost due to the vessel being swept by heavy seas which washed away the after deck house, filling the after part of the vessel, causing her to capsize and sink.

Comparative Particulars of the Ballina and Ellan Vannin

PARTICULARS	*BALLINA*	*ELLAN VANNIN*
Official Number	*78780*	*27260*
Built	*5.01.1878*	*10.04.1860 as paddle steamer Mona's Isle (2). Converted to twin screw steamship16.11.1883*
Builders	*Barrow Shipbuilders Co. Ltd. Barrow-in-Furness*	*Westray, Copeland & Co. Barrow-in-Furness*
Owners	*George T. Pollexfen*	*Isle of Man Steam Packet Co.*
Hull	*Iron cargo steamer*	*Iron paddle steamer*
Tonnage	*341 tons gross, 210 tons net.*	*380 tons gross, 128 tons net.*
Dimensions	*170.5 x 23.2 x 11.4 feet*	*198.6 x 22.2 x 10.7 feet*
Draught	*11.5 feet*	*Mean draught 8ft.9ins.*
Freeboard	*1ft.7ins when lost*	*2ft.9ins when lost (1ft.10ins. Board of Trade)*
Beam to Length ratio	*1:7.35*	*1:8.95*
Beam to Draught ratio	*1:2.00*	*1:2.535*
Bulwarks	*Open rails to aft deck.*	*Solid bulwarks 4ft.6ins high.*
Engines	*Compound 2 cyls. 121 hp.*	*Compound 4 cyls. 500 hp.*
Passengers (Total)	*242 (none when lost)*	*299 (14 when lost)*
Crew	*15 when lost*	*14 (21 when lost)*
Cargo Capacity (Total)	*375 tons cargo when lost*	*281.7 tons (60 tons when lost)*
Ballast Tanks	*40 tons water ballast*	*44 tons water ballast*
Cost	*£10,000*	*£10,673 (as built) £9,000 (on conversion)*
Lost	*6th January 1882*	*3rd December 1909*

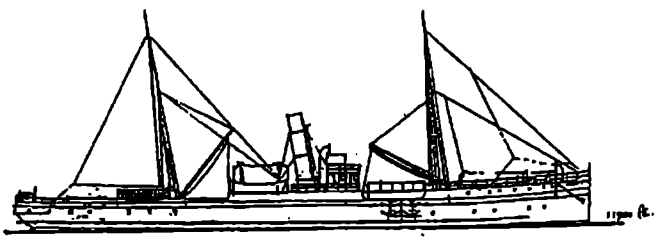


From Lloyd's Register

BALLINA 1878-1882 Iron

O.N. 78780 341g 210n 170.5 x 23.2 x 11.4 feet
C. 2-cyl. 121hp. by the Barrow Shipbuilding Co. Ltd., Barrow-in-Furness.

21.5.1878: Completed by the Barrow Shipbuilding Co. Ltd., Barrow-in-Furness for George T. Pollexfen and Charles W. Pollexfen, Liverpool as **BALLINA**.
5.1.1882: Left Liverpool for Ballina, Ireland, with general cargo and disappeared with her crew of fifteen.
2.2.1882: Register closed.
In the summer of 1967 a party of scuba divers, from Laxey, Isle of Man, discovered her bell with other wreckage, at a depth of 30m, approximately seven miles south-east of Laxey Head.



From Lloyd's register

ELLAN VANNIN 1883-1909 Iron

O.N. 27260 380g 128n 198.6 x 22.2 x10.7 feet
C.4-cyl. converted from paddle steamer **MONA'S ISLE** (2) to twin screw steamer by Messrs. Westray, Copeland & Company, of Barrow-in-Furness.

16.11.1883: Conversion completed and renamed **ELLAN VANNIN** for the Isle of Man Steam Packet Co.
3.12.1909: Left Ramsey for Liverpool with 14 passengers and a crew of 21, mail and 60 tons of cargo. A severe north-westerly gale reaching force 12 blew up as she was approaching the Mersey. She passed the Bar Light Vessel before 7a.m. Foundered shortly afterwards with the loss of all on board.

JOHN HENRY - the 'life' of a brig

By LNRS member Leslie A Leigh

Among miscellaneous items in a dealer's book sale of 'end of the road' stock (50p hardback, 20p soft!) lay a dark green semi-stiff back exercise book lined for single entry cash records. Closer examination of the, sometimes untidy, entries revealed that this was the Disbursement Accounts Book (DAB) for the brig **John Henry,** 0fficial Number. 47800, built in 1864 and which became a total loss ten years later. This chance 'find' set in motion interesting, sometimes challenging, but most rewarding research into the short 'life' of this vessel and something of those who sailed in her.

This promised more than many disbursement records in that it gave details and value of each cargo and the calculation of the Master's 'cut'. However, it then became evident that the first $2^1/_2$ years of service were missing - a number of pages from the front had been neatly cut out. Entries commenced in April 1867 and ceased April 1874. At intervals the book had obviously been submitted to the owners for scrutiny (and probably fair copy into their records) and bore endorsements such as 'Settled March 21st 1868 p,pro.. James Fisher' and signed 'Joseph Fisher'. This added to the excitement as the operations of James Fisher & Son of Barrow-in-Furness were within the geographical interest of our Society and the company is still alive and well a century and a half after its foundation.

To have seven years of **John Henry** 's life in such detail demanded answers to her origin, the missing two and a half years and what happened to her afterwards. First recourse was to Lloyd's Registers and what was to prove a salutary lesson for placing too much reliance on part of this source. **John Henry** first appeared in the 1865 Lloyd's Register: -

> brig 116.0 x 24.2 x 14.7 253T New (312T old) Official No.47800 - - - built (under special survey) 1864 by [John] Duncan, 8 mo. at Garmouth Al (8 years) pt.I.B.
>
> - Master: G.Evans & owner confirmed as J Fisher of Barrow.
>
> - Her port of survey was given as Banff and destined voyage Banff/Baltic - an entry repeated for the next $2^1/_2$ years.

'Destined Voyage' entries had many times served past research well, so to find in this case repeated Banff/Baltic entries misleading was disappointing. Lloyds also may have recognised this weakness as this

column was discontinued after 1874. **John Henry** had been nowhere near the Baltic - but was it an omen that the Skagerrak approach was to be the scene of her ultimate fate? There was no entry in the 1875 Lloyd's Register and no explanation.

Cumbria Record Office at Barrow, Fishers (including their company history 'Millennium' by Nigel Watson) and others gave ready advice, in particular that she had been lost in 1874. A date for the casualty could locate a BoT. report and perhaps some comment in Lloyd's Lists. Guildhall Library advised that Southampton City Library had a full run of reports (in House of Commons Parliamentary Papers) which included that for **John Henry**'s stranding on Jutland on 5th September 1874

Now that the end of her short ten years was known, some detail of the first 2 $^1/_2$ years of service still needed discovery. Research at the National Archives of Scotland produced little Customs evidence for shipping activities at Banff and certainly no Port Books. Laborious trawling of Lloyd's Lists at Caernarfon (Gwynedd Archives) - original hard copy - gave no evidence of **John Henry** at Banff. The only way now was the costly path of Crew Agreements, British Consulate endorsements and the (forlorn) hope that the more informative Official Log Books may have survived among our wilfully scattered maritime history inheritance. St.John's and (with some difficulty) Kew obliged, but neither could produce logbooks.

Our own archives at Albert Dock provided the Lloyd's Registers, Lists and Captains' Registers material. The latter did not include G.Evans, her first Master for $2^1/_2$ years, but the Crew Agreements for this period give George Evans, born Appledore in 1834, of Commercial Road, Newport. Master's Certificate No.15938.

George Evans stood by the completion and launching of **John Henry** (he is named on the Lloyd' s Survey Report) at Garmouth at the yard of John Duncan. Some five hundred vessels were built in various yards at Garmouth and Kingston between 1784 and the early 1900s, of which the Duncan family were responsible for over one hundred from 1853. They built **John Henry** in 1864 followed by two more brigs, one barque and four schooners through 1865/6, all for James Fisher & Son. In the early years the abundant supply of superb quality Scots Pine or Fir from Glenmore, Abernethy and other important forests were, after felling and rough sawing, rafted down the Spey to feed a fast developing and hungry industry. Even more was exported and clearly

regeneration (over 200 years for some of the very best quality) could never keep pace with this increasing consumption

By 1864 very little local timber was being used for shipbuilding as witnessed by **John Henry**'s initial Lloyd's survey of 3rd September 1864. It reveals that 'Timbering' (framing) was about equally shared between British and Baltic oak with some from America; Outside Planking mostly pine and larch from the Baltic and from America; Inside Planking substantially oak and pine from the Baltic and America. Little can be clearly attributed to local supply. She was well equipped with a windlass fitted with a patent purchase, and a double winch 'and all other necessary fittings for her destined voyage' - again stated here as "Baltic"!

John Henry was registered at Lancaster and her maiden voyage from Garmouth (probably in ballast) was to Cardiff where her first working voyage commenced in December 1864 towards Gibraltar, arriving 2nd January 1865. She called again at Gibraltar 2nd February, leaving on the 13th for U.K. She next sailed from Newport in May 1865 arriving Gibraltar on 13th June and leaving for the U.K. 12th July. Successive Crew Agreements and Consulate endorsements establish that 'wherever freight may offer' in the Mediterranean (NOT the BALTIC!) was her business until 15th August 1866 when she sailed from South Shields to Madeira, thence to Huelva and Cadiz and on to Liverpool arriving 23rd March 1867.

Here the Disbursement Account Book record starts, signalling the departure of George Evans and the arrival of William Williams of Cardigan who was to command the brig until immediately before her final voyage. Williams was born in 1822 in London and obtained his Master's Certificate No.13129 at Liverpool in 1855, a seasoned and experienced officer.

The sketchy evidence of **John Henry**'s first $2^1/_2$ years at sea from the Crew Agreements show typically, with the odd exception, complete changes of personnel with each voyage. Her crews on average comprised a Mate, Bo'sun. Cook/steward and 6 ABs (occasionally an OS in lieu) making, with the Master, a total of ten.

John Henry with her new Master, William Williams, and crew taken on at Liverpool sailed up to Barrow to load 449 tons of iron ore, almost certainly from James Fisher's mining interests nearby. She left for Cardiff, arriving there 22 May 1867. The accounts show freight (at 5/6d per ton) charge of £123:9s:6d from which is deducted dues at Barrow and costs at Cardiff for towage, dock dues, discharging etc. totalling

£30:4s:5d, leaving £93:5s:1d. The Captain's 5% of this came to £4:13s:3d (a poor start for his first two months) and after deduction of crew wages and victuals for April and May, only £2:15s:1d remained for the owners - not a good return on capital and probably insufficient for two month's insurance Fortunately most, usually longer, voyages did considerably better, but this illustrates that for much of the time margins were tight and the Captain's remuneration on results a challenging incentive.

The breakdown throughout the DAB gives a good insight to the expenses of this workhorse - water, handling ballast, loading & discharging freight (mostly bulk), shipbrokers' fees, consular fees, 'gratuities' and much more. Towage and pilotage sometimes gives further detail of the port concerned, such as delivery of sand from Antwerp to Gloucester in 1871 which details the cost of canal pilotage from Sharpness to Gloucester at 16/- each way plus the canal company's account for £6:16s:5d. Overall this trip was something of a financial disaster, William's cut amounting to only 2/7d for a month's operation!

Over the seven years recorded in this DAB she made 28 voyage 'legs' carrying mostly bulk cargoes averaging 450 tons of iron ore (Barrow to Cardiff); coal (Cardiff to Palermo and to Oran; Liverpool to Palermo; Swansea to Marseilles; Troon to Naples & Glasgow to Genoa); sulphur (Girgenti, Sicily to Glasgow); pig iron (Ardrossan to Marseilles); zinc ore (Carloforte, Sardinia to Antwerp several times, and later to Liverpool, and twice to Glasgow); railway iron (Antwerp to Messina, and Middlesbrough to Alicante); pitch (Liverpool to Cette, now Sete); glass sand and coal & coke (S. Shields to Naples); manganese (Huelva to Liverpool).

Her penultimate voyage was a great adventure. She sailed from Bowling on 15th July 1873 with 413 1/2 tons of coal (freight 19/- per ton) for Genoa. Her crew initially comprised the Mate, James Mathias; a cook, 3 ABs and 2 OSs, but over the coming eight months desertions and sickness extended the list of recorded names to 15. One of these was Thomas Wi11iams.

In the List of Crew and Report of Character in the Official Log Book for this voyage Thomas Williams is entered as "B. Swain" with VG/VG Character. In the Crew Agreement he appears on page 4 under Account of Apprentices age 19, indentured 10.3.1869 at Llanelly. This must be Williams's son. In the book sale that yielded the DAB was (for 50p) an 1870 copy of T. L. Ainsley's Guide to Local Marine Board Examination (6/-) inscribed: -

'Thomas Williams, Catherine Rd, Cardigan [his father's address] - this Book bought at South.Shields when on board the ***John Henry*** *of Barrow bound for Naples. In the year of our Lord & Saviour 1870 Octr.'*

Thus it may be concluded that he was bound to Fishers in the care of his father, and in the fifth year of his apprenticeship he was considered to be worthy of the title Bo'sun, but not it would seem, the pay! The book is in good condition. The early pages detailing the rules for examination are well thumbed, but with the exception of small sections on basic navigation, signals and navigation lights, it is nearly mint. One wonders if Thomas's enthusiasm waned.

John Henry appears to have stayed in Genoa until being chartered to carry a general cargo (including marble) to New York. Some of the intervening period would have been usefully employed cleaning out after her coal cargo. After some crew desertions she sailed on 11th October 1873 for New York, calling at Gibraltar on 28th October. On 24th January 1874 she sailed from New York with a cargo of Indian Corn (maize) and passed Eddystone 2nd March, reaching Plymouth Sound the next day. Several of the crew were complaining of stomach pains and these, with one or two more, were discharged at Plymouth on the 4th (perhaps a better port to pick up another vessel?). With a much depleted crew she sailed round to Leith to discharge this valuable cargo (freight amounted to £758:18s:7d).

On 4th April 1874 William Williams handed command over to John Richards (born 1840 in Pembrokeshire), Master's Certificate 31577 issued at Liverpool in 1873 - a new boy. Williams was immediately sent up to Duncans at Garmouth to stand by the new schooner **James W Fisher** which was launched 13th June 1874 (he sent a telegram reporting this to the owners at Barrow costing 1/-) . He sailed her over Kingston bar on 15th July. At this time he recorded a warning to posterity on the first, unused, page of the DAB which he kept and used for his new charge for a while:

'When you have to sign Bills of Loading mind to see first that the Words Freight and Other Conditions as per Charter will be on the Bill before you sign your name on it and never sign for Weight if you can avoid it, and also mind to have in it Not Accountable for Leakage & Breakage, and also Quantity & Quality unknown and not accountable for rust'. Sound advice!

Listed at the end of the DAB are Wear & Tear accounts attributed to each voyage. Also recorded are three breaks in the vessel's working history.

First her 'Half Time' intermediate survey at Whitehaven in 1869 during which yellow metal sheathing was added; then dry docking from 3rd February 1873 for felt & "YM" sheathing and 'some repairs'; and finally in April 1874 her new Lloyd's survey at Leith (the original 8 years having been stretched to 10!). She went to her grave in Al condition.

With John Richards in command a new DAB would have been started by him, so what can be discovered of her last six months has to be gleaned from official records of her loss.

The schedule to 'Wrecks & Casualties etc. Returns' 1874/5 confirms all **John Henry** details including the April 1874 Lloyd's survey (Al for 5 years) at Leith. It records that she was 'stranded about 7 miles east of Hirshals Point, coast of Jutland, on 5th September 1874. Total [loss]'.

The Inquiry was held at Barrow-in-Furness before two JPs assisted by two Nautical Assessors on 21st and 24th October 1874. The verdict was 'careless navigation by Master. His Certificate suspended for 6 months'. The full report reveals that she was employed on a trading voyage from Leith to the Mediterranean and the Baltic Seas (the first, only and final venture in that latter direction), her crew totalled eight including John Richards. She sailed from Girgenti (SW Sicily) on 8th July 1874 with a cargo of sulphur bound for Cronstadt (Kronstadt, an island in the approaches to St Petersburgh) and sighted the south coast of Norway on 5th September several times between squally showers during the forenoon. There follows damning evidence of 'careless navigation' and, still under single reefed topsails, she ran on to the beach just after 11.30 pm. Richards thought that he had rounded and stood east of the 'Skaw' (Skagen)! The wind-blown sand on the beaches of the west coast of Jutland are notorious and with over 400 tons of sulphur there was no way of getting off.

Lloyd's List of 8th September 1874 reported the casualty and predicted that she 'will become a total wreck', and that of the 11th reported that she is settling down in the sands with the water above her bulwarks - 'the cargo it is feared, will be lost but, should the weather permit, some rigging and materials may be saved'. Lloyd's, concerned only in material things, did not mention that there had been no loss of life - which may have been a factor in allowing John Richards to get away with only six months suspension.

Captain William Williams stayed in his new charge, **James W Fisher** for two years, making a few odd entries in the DAB he had

retained. He then assumed command of Fisher's barque **Kate Bousfield** commencing with a run to Australia.

Finally, the DAB has full accounts for a voyage from Liverpool to Montevideo and back to Havre by **James W Fisher** in 1878 mentioning the name Thomas Williams as Master! The DAB was obviously kept in the Williams family until apparently disposed of in a house contents sale a few years ago. Could this be William's son, 24 by 1874 with a Master's Certificate? The Crew Agreement for this voyage does not concur, so a new challenge now has to be faced!

Sources – In addition to those mentioned in text
Jim Skelton 'SPEYBUILT', Almac Print Ltd:Elgin:1994).

The pilot vessel ***Arnet Robinson****, 892gt, photographed in September 1972. Built in 1953 she was sold and renamed* ***Pensurveyor*** *in 1982, and converted to a hydrographical - seismographic research ship. In 1988 she became the passenger ferry* ***Faith*** *and under that name she arrived at Aliaga, in Turkey on 29th March 2004, having been sold by what are described as "undisclosed Northern Cypriot owners".*

LIVERPOOL PILOT SERVICE.

By Kenneth N Taylor

Mr Taylor was a Liverpool Marine Pilot and the last master of the Pilot Vessel ***Arnet Robinson****. He spoke to the Society some years ago. This is a copy of an article he had published in 1966.*

The hand that Guides to Haven.

"*Your true pilot cares nothing about anything on earth but the river. The pride in his occupation surpasses the pride of Kings*" *Mark Twain.**

Words spoken by the most famous pilot of all time. A pilot on one of the world's most hazardous stretches of navigable water, the Mississippi River.

Our own River Mersey also ranks among the most dangerous stretches of water, frequented by ships of the world in their many varying forms.

This year the Liverpool Pilotage Service celebrates it's 200th Anniversary. In 1766 the first Liverpool Pilotage Act was passed –

"*For the better regulation of pilots for the conducting of vessels into and out of the Port of Liverpool*".

Until 1766 the pilots had offered their services to Masters under a freelance system. Many tides have ebbed and flowed since then. Today, the Liverpool Association of Pilots, has 178 Members holding three classes of Licences, depending on experience and the nett tonnage of the vessel. Service is provided by three pilot cutters each of about 750 tons, two launches for high speed runs to the Bar and one small river launch.

The training of apprentice pilots plays an important part in the efficiency of the Liverpool Pilot Service. Scholastically, four G.C.E. passes are required. Other essential qualifications, apart from the scholastic standard, are physical fitness, eyesight to the standard of the MoT. sight test, a swimming certificate and a high standard of mental alertness.

During his apprenticeship a potential pilot will be required to reach a set standard for his yearly examinations, a M o T. Certificate of competency which includes a Radar Operator's Certificate and a Life Boat Certificate, also a St. John Ambulance Brigade First Aid Certificate. All the examinations conducted by the Pilotage Authority will be oral, before an Examination Committee formed by Senior Pilots and Hydrographical experts of the Port. Whilst serving as an apprentice, he starts on the long road to becoming a much respected figure in the Maritime World and in the next $5^1/_2$ to 7 years, learns all the buoys, beacons,

banks, wrecks, courses and tidal sets, in the area extending from St. Bees Head in Cumberland to Anglesey and from the Isle of Man to Speke Perch in the River Mersey. In addition to this, the elementary and basic rules of ship handling are practiced during his service on the cutters, launches and motor punts. Later when the position of senior apprentice is reached, he will accompany pilots and take part in the navigation of the ships. This system is time proved as one of the best, if not the best, method of training a man to his responsibility in handling an unaccountable total of tonnage and lives.

Perhaps if you, the reader will join me on a "job", I can give you a better insight into pilotage in Liverpool.

The ringing telephone calls me to duty. I am required to join No.3 Pilot Cutter at Princes Landing Stage to sail for the Point Lynas Station which is off the north coast of Anglesey near Amlwch. Here I will wait for the arrival of the ship I am to pilot. Life on a modern cutter is very comfortable with sleeping accommodation for 24 Pilots, dining saloon, television lounge and sun lounge. Time is spent yarning round the table with my colleagues, playing cards, reading, or viewing television. Incidentally a lot can be learned during those yarns. Incidents experienced by older men can be "stored" by the youngsters for future use, if required. All pilots are individuals but during one's life in the service a bond is formed professionally and socially with the rest of the pilots and their families.

Just after supper the Captain of the cutter sends one of the apprentices down in to the Pilots' saloon to inform me contact has been made with my ship. A quick wash, shave and change from "lounging-gear" and I am ready to start work. There will be no sleep for me tonight. On going to the bridge of the cutter, I am told the vessel is called the **Yamanashi Maru** sailing under the flag of Japan, draft 27 feet, 10,000 tons and bound for Birkenhead.

A signal from the bridge and the apprentices lower the motor punt into the water, I jump into the boat and off we go. Fair breeze blowing from the westward but these small punts handled with the skill and care, by an apprentice coxswain, are safe and dry. Alongside the ship there is a slight sea making the punt move quite a lot, not to worry though, a quick leap and I am on the ladder.

After greeting the Captain on the bridge, the ship is started on the last phase of her long voyage. Course given to the helmsman, full speed ahead. My interest is roused by this vessel, as she is one of the very latest in her class, of super fast cargo boats, speed 23.6 knots, motor

engines, with every possible aid to navigation comprising of VHF radio, radar, automatic steering, and echo sounder.

The run up to the Bar Lightship will take about 1 hour 20 minutes allowing for the flood tide pushing her along. During this time I do my best to put the Captain at ease as to the docking of his ship. In general most deep sea captains have a natural apprehension at this stage of the voyage because it is fully realized that this is the most hazardous part of his voyage, with all its attendant risks of localised volume of ships and strong tidal effects. At no major port in the world is there so sharp a rise and fall in the tide. A Spring tide in Liverpool can rise as much as nine feet in one hour. Plus the 40 miles of quays, locks and basins, which have been nicknamed "the Rockery". On approaching the Bar Lightship and the entrance to the main channel speed is reduced from full sea speed to harbour or manoeuvring speed. This allows me to use the engines ahead or astern immediately as required. Direct contact is made on VHF radio with the Dock Master at Alfred Locks, All the relevant information is supplied; the number of ships undocking, my docking turn and the vessel's final berth, which will be in the West Float. By varying the ship's speed I can adjust my time of arrival off New Brighton to rendezvous with the tug which will assist in swinging the ship's head or bow to tide. This sounds simple, but it is a manoeuvre which requires every attention as the tug could easily be capsized or rammed. With the tug made fast forward, we commence to swing the ship just as we are abeam of Seacombe Ferry Stage, so allowing for the effect of the tide pushing the ship upriver. The vessel, with little headway, is started on the swinging of the helm hard over to starboard, a kick ahead on the engines, slowly the bow starts to come round, a signal to the tug to pull, stop engines, mid-ships the wheel, half astern. The combination of ahead and astern movements on the engine are used to swing the vessel in a limited space. In nautical language called "turning short round ".

Tugs play a very important part in the work of ship-handling and I use two methods of signalling my instructions to the tug captains. By pea-whistle to the bow and assisting tugs and with the ship's whistle or siren to the stern or after tug, a code of long and short blasts indicating the direction in which to pull.

Yamanashi Maru with her bow to tide is now in a position to start the final approach to Alfred North Lock. Instructions are passed by telephone to the Chief Mate, in charge of the bow mooring party as to the ropes I will require him to use in the docking operation.

I nurse the ship slowly to the entrance of the lock, on an angled approach. No flood tide here, close to the river wall, so I give the engine an occasional turn astern to nullify the effect of the head tug pulling. Close in now, the head rope goes ashore and all the slack is hove in. Head tug signalled, pull bow to port; stern tug, pull to starboard. Slowly she straightens up with the lock, slow ahead, steady the helm, and she sails down the middle of the lock and into Alfred Basin. Here the ship is moored till the water level in the basin is adjusted to that of the Dock system.

The next stage of the operation presents its own problems. As space in which to manoeuvre a ship some 500 ft. long plus tugs, approximately, 800 ft. in all, is always at a premium, especially going through bridge and gateways. Tidal effect no longer occupies my mind, the direction and force of the wind however, does receive my consideration of its effect on the ship

A long blast on the head tug's whistle indicates the gates are opening and the bridge will be lifted. We can now proceed. All ropes are let go and clear, the ship is carefully manoeuvred through the first of the gateways. Every possible care is exercised to ensure the ship does not touch or, as we say, "land" on the wall. A ship's hull with all that weight behind it is no match for solid granite, also ship repair bills and loss of use effects are not in the same class as a car repair. The bill is in thousands not hundreds. Slowly we move through the Dock systems of the East and West Floats, clear the second gateway and with the tugs and myself ever watchful, **Yamanashi Maru** is manoeuvred to her appointed berth. All fast fore and aft, tugs let-go and the engine room telegraph is rung to "Finished with Engines".

Safe and sound in her berth a change of atmosphere is soon apparent on the bridge. Gone is the tension that has been with us for the last five hours. As a pilot a sense of achievement is felt in a "job" completed.

It is hoped that you have enjoyed the "sail" and the experience of completing one of the 22,144 services carried out by the Pilots of this mighty Port during the last 12 months.

** As stated above Mark Twain (real name Samuel L Clemens 1835- 1910) was a Mississippi pilot. The term "Mark Twain" indicated a depth of two fathoms of clear water – then considered the minimum save depth for river steamers. He adopted the pseudonym when he became a journalist in the 1860s*

POLICY ALL AT SEA?

A report of a speech made by Brian Orell General Secretary of Numast at the Greeenwich Forum held by the Royal Society in March to consider the question

Does the UK need a coherent maritime strategy?

As reported in the April edition of the Numast Telegraph

"We are an island nation and we understand the call of the sea".

So wrote Winston Churchill over half a century ago. Would that we could make the same proud boast today.

Several decades of decline has put this island nation into the unenviable situation in which more of its trade moves by flags of convenience than under the red ensign and in which there are now more Filipino seafarers working in our waters than there are British officers and ratings.

While our Deputy Prime Minister does his best to maintain a Churchillian pride in what remains of British shipping, recently describing the **Queen Mary 2** as the crowning jewel of a revitalised domestic industry it has to be remembered that this is a French built American owned ship with British crew members very much in the minority. It is worth remembering that despite the headline increases in tonnage under the red ensign, the number of British direct owned and registered trading ships today is 316: 56 more than it was three years ago but still a pale shadow of the 1,217 ships of two decades ago.

One could - as this debate does - question whether any of this really matters. Our supermarket shelves are groaning with the weight of imports from around the world, our cars run on petrol shipped by tankers of all flags, and growing numbers of British people are taking trips to sea on cruise liners and ferries with no worry about the flag flying from the stern or the nationality of those at the controls.

The reality, however, is that it does matter. We remain an island nation and our dependence on shipping is as strong as it ever has been, with well over 95% of our imports and exports carried by ships and more than 50 million people taking sea journeys in and out of the country each year.

Our security, our economy and our environment are all at risk if our shipping industry is not sustained.

Shipping is not a sunset industry. World maritime trade more than doubled between 1970 and 2002 and the sea is unchallenged as the most cost-effective and energy-efficient means of moving goods round the world.

For many centuries, Britain's destiny has been built upon a rich tradition of maritime skills and expertise. Yet today, the number of British

seafarers has fallen to the lowest level for 400 years. It takes time to produce shipmasters, chief engineer officers and other skilled and experienced seafarers. Yet the generation gap created by two decades of inadequate recruitment and training will create a catastrophic gulf between supply and demand as the rate of retirements accelerates over the next decade.

Although shipping is too often out of sight and out of mind, the fact remains that Britain boasts the largest maritime sector in Europe. With a turnover of £37bn – twice the size of aerospace or agriculture - and employing more than a quarter of a million people, the sector makes a huge contribution to the economy. We need maritime skills and expertise to maintain our technological advances in offshore oil and gas, the development of ocean resources, and to research maritime ecosystems on which the world's very future depends.

Why put all this at risk for the want of a few proactive policies that would cost little, if anything, to implement?

We have a rapidly closing window of opportunity to change course and develop coherent policies that would maintain and even expand our lead in these areas.

For it's not just in Britain that maritime skills are in danger. The world is facing a growing shortage of skilled seafarers. At a time when disasters such as the **Erika** and the **Prestige** have done much to generate political debate on shipping safety, the need to invest in competence and professionalism has never been greater and the UK has the chance to take the initiative in the regeneration of the global maritime skills base.

My core argument, with which I now conclude, is that shipping today is a sophisticated, technologically advanced, and highly globalised industry. It is one on which the world, and its component countries, remain deeply dependent. It is therefore essential that we have sophisticated and coherent maritime policies in place. Policies that reflect the essential importance of this industry for an island nation. Policies that. reflect the fact that our ships and our seafarers continue to compete on a highly tilted playing field. And policies that reflect the fact that shipping and the maritime sector are complex industries and services, touching our lives in many different ways.

The meeting agreed to support the motion that: -

> ***"The UK should develop a coherent maritime policy, with instruments of government to support it'.***

TRANSATLANTIC STEAM NAVIGATION

Extracts from an "Outline of Transatlantic Steam Navigation", published by the Science Museum, London in 1950 and reproduced here with the permission of the Museum.

In 1950 the Science Museum published an "Outline of Transatlantic Steam Navigation". In this article a start is made on recording the major Atlantic steamships that have some connection with Liverpool.

PS ROYAL WILLIAM (1837)

This paddle steamer, the second of the name, was built of wood in 1837 by Messrs. William and Thomas Wilson, of Liverpool, for the Irish cross-channel service run by the City of Dublin Steam Packet Co. In 1838 she was chartered by the newly formed Transatlantic Steamship Co, and despatched to New York, the smallest vessel that ever steamed the whole distance from Europe to America.

This second **Royal William**, which should not be confused with the Canadian paddle steamer (of the same name) was constructed of oak and elm with pine planking; all her timbers were treated with corrosive sublimate, to retard their decay. The hull is stated to have been fitted with four transverse watertight bulkheads of wrought iron. She carried two masts, and was rigged as a barquentine. Below deck, she had "capacious accommodation" for 80 passengers.

The vessel was propelled by side-lever engines of 270 nhp, constructed by Messrs. Fawcett and Preston, of Liverpool, with two cylinders 48.5 in. diam. by 66 in. stroke, which developed 400 ihp. Steam was supplied at 5lb. per sq.in. pressure. The boilers were fired with compressed peat, in addition to coal. The bunkers carried 75 tons of coal, while 365 tons could be stowed in the hold. The paddle-wheels were 24 ft. diam, with fixed radial floats 7 ft. long and rotated at 16.5 revs. per min. The normal speed of the vessel was about 11 knots, and the fuel consumption 6.25lb. coal per ihp. per hour.

The **Royal William** was the first steamship to cross the Atlantic from Liverpool, where she left on the 5th July 1838, with 32 passengers on board. She arrived at New York on the 24th, in 18 days 23 hrs. at a mean speed of 7.3 knots. In all she made three round trips to New York then in 1839 she returned to her proper service with the City of Dublin Steam Packet Co. She was later converted into a coal-hulk, and was finally broken up in 1888.

Principal dimensions of the PS **Royal William** (1837) were as follows :— Gross register, 617 tons; steamboat measurement, 403 tons;

length over all, about 200 ft; length between perps, 175 ft; breadth of hull, 27 ft; breadth over paddle boxes, about 45 ft; depth of hold, 17.5 ft. ; draught, 11 ft.

PS LIVERPOOL (1837)

Notable as the first two-funnelled steamer on the Atlantic Ferry, the PS **Liverpool** was built of wood by Messrs. Humble and Milcrest, of Liverpool and launched on the 14th October 1837 for Sir John Tobin. Before her completion, however, the vessel was purchased by the newly-formed Transatlantic Steamship Co. for their service between Liverpool and New York.

The **Liverpool** was built of oak and elm, with pine planking, and all the hull timbers were fastened with copper bolts. The frames were trussed with flat iron bar diagonals, placed 8 ft. apart. Two transverse wrought-iron beams were fitted over each boiler-room, and one over the engine-room. The paddle boxes were cross-braced with iron rods 2.25 in. diam. The vessel carried three masts, and all her fixed rigging was made of copper wire rope. The main saloon was 58 ft. long; there was also another of 45 ft. placed forward. The cabins, most of them double, were fitted with 98 berths.

The vessel was propelled by side-lever engines of 468 nhp, constructed by Messrs. G. Forrester and Co., of Liverpool, with two cylinders 75 in. diam. by 7 ft. stroke. Steam at 5lb. per sq. in. pressure was supplied by four rectangular boilers, two placed forward of the engine-room and two abaft. The paddle-wheels were 28.5 ft. diam., with fixed radial floats about 9 ft. long, and made about 15 revs. per min.

The **Liverpool** made her first departure from that port on the 20th October 1838, with about 60 passengers, but was forced back into Cork by a violent gale. She left there on the 6th November, and reached New York safely on the 23rd in 16 days 17 hrs at a mean speed of 7.9 knots ; the coal consumption was 465 tons. In July 1840 the Transatlantic Steamship Co. was wound up and the vessel was sold, with others, to the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Nav. Co. She was increased to 1540 tons, and renamed the **Great Liverpool.** She then plied for some time between Southampton, Falmouth and Alexandria and was wrecked in February 1846 on a reef near Cape Finisterre.

Prinicipal dimensions of the PS. **Liverpool** were as follows :—
Gross register, 1,150 tons; steamboat measurement, 560 tons;
length over all, 240 ft; length between perps. 223 ft; breadth of hull, 30.8 ft; breadth over paddle boxes, 56 ft; depth of hold, 21 ft.

PS UNICORN (1836)

This paddle steamer was the first vessel owned by the Cunard Line. She was built of wood in 1836 by Messrs. Robert Steele and Son, at Greenock, for the service run by Messrs. G. and J. Burns between Glasgow and Liverpool. She was, however, purchased in 1840 by the newly-formed British and North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Co., which afterwards became the Cunard Steamship Co. Ltd., and sent out to Canada to run between Quebec, Pictou and Halifax, in connection with the transatlantic mail service established by the PS **Britannia** and her three sister-ships. The **Unicorn** was carvel-built as a three-masted schooner with standing bowsprit. She had one deck and poop, carried a unicorn head at the bow, and her square stern was decorated with mock quarters. The vessel was propelled by side-lever engines of 260 nhp, constructed by Robert Napier, at Govan. These had two cylinders about 57 in. diam. by 66 in. stroke, which are said to have developed as much as 560 ihp. Steam at a pressure of 5Ib. per sq in. was supplied by iron flue boilers, fed with fresh water. It is probable that the paddle-wheels were about 22 ft. diam., and made about 18 revs. per min. for a speed of 8 knots.

The **Unicorn** left Liverpool on the 16th May 1840, under the command of Captain Douglas, with 27 passengers on board. She reached Halifax on the 30th , after 14 days in tempestuous weather, at a mean speed of about 8 knots. With 24 passengers (which included Mr. Edward Cunard), the vessel then proceeded to Boston, where a vociferous reception awaited her arrival on the 2nd June. She is said to have proved herself a "staunch boat" whose machinery worked well.

The **Unicorn** was used by the Cunard Co. to maintain communication between Quebec, Pictou and Halifax; and while on this service in November 1843, she rescued the survivors of the British sail transport **Premier** (1838), wrecked in the mouth of the St. Lawrence. In 1846 the vessel was sold, and later sent round to California, where she operated in the Panama and San Francisco trade until about 1853. She then crossed the Pacific to Australia, whence she is said to have eventually returned to Great Britain.

Principal dimensions of the PS **Unicorn** were as follows :—

Gross register, 648 tons ; burden, 390 tons ; length over all, about 185 ft.; length between perps. 162.9 ft; breadth of hull, 23.5 ft; breadth over paddle boxes, about 40 ft; depth of hold, 17.3 ft.

PS PRESIDENT (1839)

This ill-fated paddle steamer was built of wood by Messrs. Curling and Young, at Limehouse, and launched on the 7th December 1839 for the service between London and New York of the British and American Steam Navigation Co. She was shorter but rather broader than the PS **British Queen**, launched by the same builders in the previous year.

The **President** was constructed with three decks, the upper of which was flush from stem to stern. Her timbers were of oak with fir planking. The transverse frames were solid to the bilge, and were braced fore and aft with iron diagonals. The paddle boxes rose but little above her deck; and the hull was painted with gun-ports, like a frigate. She was schooner-rigged, with three masts, and is said to have presented a very handsome appearance. The principal saloon was 87 ft. long and 41 ft. wide in one part. The crew consisted of 80 officers and men.

The vessel was propelled by side-lever engines of 540 nhp, constructed by Messrs. Fawcett and Preston, of Liverpool, with two cylinders 80 in. diam. by 7.5 ft. stroke. These were stated to have been of sound workmanship, but totally inadequate in power for a vessel of her size; and to this cause her subsequent misfortunes were mainly attributed. Steam at 5lb. per sq in. pressure was supplied by rectangular flue boilers. The paddle-wheels were 31 ft. diam., with Galloway floats 9.25 ft. long, and made about 15 revs. per min.

The **President** sailed from Liverpool on the 1st August 1840, and arrived at New York on the 17th in 16.5 days at a mean speed of 8.4 knots. For her second return trip she left New York on the 11th March 1841, under the command of Lieut. R. Roberts, RN. and was lost in a severe Atlantic gale with 136 persons on board.

Principal dimensions of the PS **President** were as follows;—

Gross register, 2,360 tons; burden, about 1,350 tons; length over all, 268 ft; length between perps., 243 ft; length of keel,-220 ft; breadth of hull, 41 ft; breadth over paddle boxes, 64 ft; depth from spar-deck, 32.75 ft; draught, 17.8 ft.

PS BRITANNIA (1840)

The paddle steamer **Britannia** was the first vessel built for the British and North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Co., which later became known as the Cunard Steamship Co. Ltd. She was constructed of wood by Messrs. Robert Duncan and Co., at Greenock, and launched on the 5th February 1840. Her three sister-ships, the **Acadia**, the **Caledonia**

and the **Columbia**, were also built on the Clyde about the same time. These four vessels were to establish a monthly transatlantic mail steamship service from Liverpool to Halifax and Boston, subsidised by the British Post Office. The **Britannia** was the first steamer built to carry the mails between Great Britain and America.

She was a three-masted barque, with two decks, a square stern and clipper bow. On the upper deck, provision was made for the officers' quarters. The total crew consisted of 89 officers and men. There was also a shelter for cows, which were carried in order to ensure supplies of fresh milk. The holds provided for 225 tons of cargo. The passenger accommodation consisted of the dining saloon, and cabins for 115 on the main deck below. This accommodation was described as luxurious; but Charles Dickens, who crossed on the **Britannia** in 1842, placed on record in his "American Notes" a rather depressing account: -.

> *"Before descending into the bowels of the ship," he wrote, "we had passed from the deck into a long and narrow apartment, not unlike a gigantic hearse with windows in the sides; having at the upper end a melancholy stove, at which three or four chilly stewards were warming their hands ; while on either side, extending down its whole dreary length, was a long, long table ; over which a rack, fixed to the low roof, and stuck full of drinking-glasses and cruet-stands, hinted dismally at rolling seas and heavy weather."*

The vessel was propelled by side-lever engines of 440 nhp, constructed by Robert Napier, with two cylinders, 72 in. diam. by 82 in. stroke, which indicated 740 total hp. Steam at a pressure of 9 lb. per sq. in. was supplied by four return flue boilers, each with three furnaces. The total heating surface was 2698 sq ft., the grate area 222 sq ft., and the coal consumption between 31 and 38 tons per day. The bunkers carried 640 tons. The paddle-wheels were 28 ft. diam. With 21 fixed radial floats 8.75 ft. long, and made 16 revs. per min. The normal speed of the vessel was about 8.5 knots.

The **Britannia** left Liverpool for her first crossing of the Atlantic on the 4th July 1840. A contemporary newspaper account states that

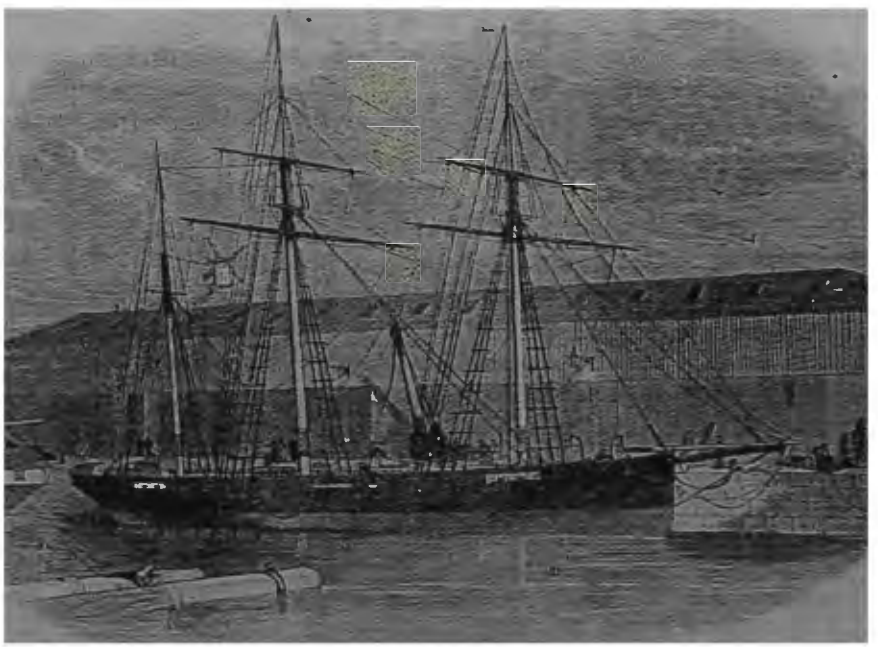
> *" the fine vessel is so large that it was necessary to swing her out into midstream (the Mersey) and place her passengers aboard from a tender owing to her immense size."*

She arrived at Halifax in 11 days 4 hrs, at a mean speed of 10 knots, and completed her run to Boston in 14 days 8 hrs. The return crossing was made in a little over ten days; the best steaming was 280 miles in one day,

In the winter of 1844, when the harbour of Boston was frozen over, the **Britannia** was imprisoned in the ice, and it is recorded that the

citizens at their own expense cut a passage, seven miles long and 100 ft. wide, to enable the vessel to reach clear water. The **Britannia** completed 40 crossings of the Atlantic. In 1849 she was sold to the German Government for the purpose of conversion into a warship. Her engines were later removed, and she existed in Germany for several years as a hulk. It is stated that she was finally broken up at Port Glasgow by the son of her builder.

Principal dimensions of the PS **Britannia** were as follows:—
Gross register, 1,156 tons; net, 619 tons; displacement at mean draught, 2,050 tons; length over all, 238 ft; length between perps, 207 ft; breadth, 34.3 ft; breadth over paddle boxes, 56 ft; depth of hold, 22.1; ft. ; mean draught, 16.8 ft.



The Alexandra

THE AUXILIARY SCHOONER GUNBOAT ALEXANDRA

By LNRS member Charles Dawson

During the American Civil War many ruses were resorted to, to enable British shipyards to be kept busy building gunboats and blockade-runners for use by the Confederacy. The example of the gunboat **Alexandra** is one of the most interesting because much evidence regarding her history is still available, in contrast to the usual situation, when the utmost was done to conceal or expunge the details.

Alexandra, described by THE TIMES as, "a pretty little screw steamer", measured 145' x 20' x 10.6', and was of 124 registered tons, built of teak, with three-masted schooner rig. She was launched on 7th March 1863 by William C.Miller & Sons, Liverpool with a 60 hp. engine by Fawcett, Preston of York Street, Liverpool and towed into Toxteth Dock for fitting out. She was to be a gift to the Confederacy from Fraser, Trenholm & Co, Liverpool, the "front" in England for the Confederacy. It appears that "Fossetts", as the engine builder came to be popularly known, were given the order and they contracted out the building of the hull to Millers. The Federal spies who lurked at every corner of Merseyside had quickly reported her existence to the United States Consul in Liverpool, T. H. Dudley. He complained to the British Government, in six separate sworn depositions, that she was unusually strongly-built with bulwarks much lower and hatches much smaller than those on a normal merchantman and that she had additional pumps. Such evidence added up to a clear indication of a breach of the neutrality laws. Whitehall took the complaint seriously, more seriously even than over the notorious earlier case of the gunboat **Florida**, built by Miller the previous year and dubiously cleared in a Vice-Admiralty Court in Nassau. [1]

At noon on 6th April 1863 a surveyor of Customs boarded **Alexandra** and officially seized her. This action was based on the Solicitor General's ruling that a vessel could be seized if it could be proved that she was being fitted out, armed or equipped as a ship of war and destined for a foreign belligerent. Fawcetts immediately lodged a protest, explaining that the ship was their property, designed and fitted out as a speculation in a manner suitable as a passenger vessel, mailboat or yacht.

Despite their air of outraged virtue, they must have been well aware of the ship's real purpose, since the order had been signed by no less than Charles K Prioleau, President of Fraser Trenholm & Co and the Confederate Government's banker. Rumours were that he had even boasted that he was intending to run the blockade into Charleston with her. He had earlier bought the auxiliary schooner **Ceres** which had been built in 1859 by Tod & McGregor, Glasgow, although this was probably a fairly well-kept secret; she was to be used as a movable base for negotiations and "entertainment". A search for her identity via a painting of her is described by LNRS. President A. Sam Davidson. [2]

Alleging that **Alexandra** was a breach of neutrality was one thing, proving it was another, so Fawcett's protest was eagerly backed up by angry addresses in the House of Commons. Petitions too were sent to the Mayor of Liverpool, copies of which are still to be found in the Fawcett archives. Mr.T.B.Horsfall, the M.P. for Liverpool pointed to the 'hardship and injustice' suffered by Fawcetts, a situation he described as detrimental not only to employers, but also likely to cast adrift hundreds of workmen; Fawcetts must be absolved from, "a charge believed to be utterly unfounded".

Despite this and other protests, the Government pressed the case and in June, Fawcetts were brought before the Court of Exchequer, no doubt to the surprise of many Englishmen. After a three-day trial, the judge, Sir Frederick Pollock, advised the jury that his interpretation was that it was up to those who had made a legally-negotiated purchase to make whatever use they thought fit of it. In this case, therefore, the Foreign Enlistment Act would not have, in any degree, been broken. The jury agreed and Fawcetts were acquitted. The Government appealed to the House of Lords, but the verdict was upheld. Public opinion was of course solidly behind Fawcetts and THE TIMES wondered why so much time and expense had been wasted on "so simple a question".

It took until April 1864, a year after her seizure, before **Alexandra** was released. Fawcetts claimed £6,370 compensation for her deterioration and other expenses incurred during her detention. Their statement showed a break-down as follows:

£1555 for loss in classification,
£ 250 for replenishment of masts, rigging etc.,
£ 190 on copper sheathing and graving dock expenses,
£ 80 to remedy oxidation of boilers,
£ 145 for wages,
£1200 on general depreciation,

£ 55 on dock dues,
£1633 on loss of trade,
£ 955 on lawyers' costs in the Exchequer Court and
£ 307 on lawyers costs in the House of Lords (after deducting grants received from the Crown in both the latter cases).

After much wrangling, they settled for a payment of just over a half, £3,700. [3]

After the legal battle was over, Fawcetts sold **Alexandra** which received the new name of **Mary**. Wise [4] says that she had been "converted to a merchantman" and sailed from Liverpool in July 1864.

She arrived in Halifax in need of repairs and consequently did not reach Nassau for loading until 26 November that year. Here she was detained by revenue officers when they discovered suspect cargo in her after hold; besides cases of shells, there was a 12-pounder rifled gun stamped 'Fawcett, Preston & Co'. This had been shipped in the steamer **Powerful** to Bermuda and transferred to **Mary**, one of the many ruses resorted out to keep within the law. It had been exactly the same tactic as followed in the case of the gunboat **Florida**. However, after all the delays, by the time she left Nassau for England, where she arrived on 30th May 1865, the war was over.

References

[1]. David Hollett, The "Alabama" affair (Wilmslow, 199), page 29.
[2]. A. Sam Davidson "Samuel Walters..",(Coventry, 1992), page 157.
[3]. Horace White. "Fossetts", (Bromborough, 1958), page 51.
[4]. Stephen R.Wise, "Lifeline of the Confederacy" (Columbia, S.C. USA, 1988), page 287.

FEEDBACK

From LNRS Member Charles Dawson

UPDATE ON CAPTAIN WILLIAM WILSON

Further to my article on Captain William Wilson & Blockade Running (BULLETIN December 2000, page 6), I have some further details which may be of interest to Merseysiders.

The Scottish details have been supplied by James McLellan who lives at Kippford, Dalbeattie, Kirkudbrightshire, close to Captain Wilson's home parts. Captain Wilson in 1863 retired to Auchencairn, 7 miles east of Kirkudbright, where he opened a pub, which he called "The Ship" *[1]*. This presumably occurred in the two-year interval between his voyages on the PS **Margaret & Jessie**, and PS **Vulture**, and before he took up the disastrous business affair with a compatriot partner in Liverpool. This put the captain into such financial difficulties that he was obliged to seek new

work, which for him of course meant going back to sea. His subsequent voyage in the ship **Glasgow** turned out to be his last.

The German ex-cook of **Emily St Pierre**, Louis Siebert (not Schelvin as previously reported) also opened a pub in 1863, in Liverpool at the corner of Netherfield Road and Upper Beau Street *[2]* in an area which has since been drastically re-developed. His pub was called "The Emily St. Pierre Vaults" and the name lasted "over a century". The last licensee was one Alfred Edward Chessman, who had been in charge from 1931 to at least 1955; after 1955 the names of the licensees do not appear in the registers. Present information is that it was closed in 1964.

The **Emily St Pierre** was sold and renamed **Windsor Castle** and is reported in many sources as having sunk in the Bay of Biscay. Her actual position when she foundered has been more difficult to establish; Lloyd's List gives the following information:

15 Jan 1869,	Sailed Liverpool for Bassein (Capt. Montgomery)
5 Feb,	Cherbourg 4 Feb: The ship **Windsor Castle** of Liverpool, Montgomery, sank at sea 31st Jan.
9 Feb	Nantes 7 Feb: The **Arabie**, Mignot, hence to Reunion, which put into Cherbourg 3rd Feb: reports that on the 31st Jan in lat 48N long 12W she picked up from some wreckage a man who stated that the vessel to which he belonged, and which had been lost, was the **Windsor Castle**, Captain Montgomery, of and from Liverpool for Bassein, with coals; 8 or 9 others of the crew got into the ship's lifeboat, but the rest were supposed to have gone down with the vessel.

There are no further reports in Lloyd's List, so it must be assumed that those in the lifeboat were also lost. (Private communication from David Asprey of Westcliff-on-Sea). The stated position of the **Arabie** was, 48 Degrees N, 12 Degrees W, when she picked up the sole survivor from **Windsor Castle**, about 300 miles west of Ushant, Finistére.

For **Arabie** to have been at the position she stated, she must either have called in at another port on her way from Nantes to Réunion or have been blown northwards, perhaps in the storm that caught **Windsor Castle** - if that was the reason for her loss.

References:

1. James Milligan, "The History of Auchencairn" (1954).
2. P.S.N.C magazine SEA BREEZES October 1923. Acknowledgements also to Mr.Harry Hignett.

THE EARLIEST IRISH STEAMSHIP SERVICE

Also some further comments to Terry Kavanagh's article "The Earliest Irish Steamship Service" (BULLETIN June 2001 page 27).

PS **Britannia** in fact had some alterations made to her Cook machinery in 1817 at the Neath Abbey Iron Works in South Wales. She then steamed to Bristol arriving on 29 April and was hailed in the local press, with journalistic over-exaggeration, as a "*complete sea-going vessel, the first of her kind to which the powers of steam have been applied*". *[1]* Now commanded by Lieutenant Robert Wall, a reserve officer of the Royal Navy, (as so many of the early steam packet captains were) she made several excursions, including one to Swansea and Tenby, and a Sunday run to the Holms. If her owners or builders had intended to interest the local shipowners in steam propulsion, they failed to make an impression, and she returned to her original station. *[2]* Farr goes on to say that she was eventually wrecked on the coast of Co. Down in 1829, but he was probably erroneously confusing her *[3]* with the more successful PS **Britannia**, 93'4" x 16'5" x 8' 8", 73 tons, built by J Hunter Port Glasgow in 1815. It seems that David Napier was correct in saying that she, along with her sister **Hibernia**, was ultimately laid up in Dublin *[4]*

References:

[1] Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, 3 May 1817, quoted by Graham Farr in his "West Country Passenger Steamers" (Prescot, 1967), page 5.

[2] Graham Farr, ibid.

[3] Lloyds List reported that the 73 ton wooden PS ***Britannia*** *of Glasgow (she was now owned there by the Britannia Steam Boat Company) was making a voyage from Glasgow to Newry when she got into difficulties off the Co. Down coast and sank on 14 October 1829 soon after seeking the safety of Donaghadee Harbour.*

[4] David Bell (Ed.)"David Napier" (Glasgow 191), 18.

MEMBER'S QUERIES

From LNRS Vice President Graeme Cubbin

Can any member suggest a solution to this question?

Date 26th September 1790. Place Liverpool. Ship **Roundahl.**

Cargo; 2 Hogsheads of Tobacco consigned to one Nicolay L Wirke at Sonderburg, Denmark.

Freight Insurance £36:17s:8d

Required - The name of the Brokers who booked and forwarded this consignment. It is possible that their office was in The Goree.

Immediate answers to Graeme on 0151 677 4082

or email:- graemecubb@aol.com

With hopefully a copy to the Editor for publication in a future Bulletin.

IS THIS THE END OF SHIPBUILDING ON THE MERSEY?

The Editor

In May it was reported that MacTay Marine were to terminate the building of ships at Bromborough on the Mersey, due to competition from overseas yards. The Company does intend to continue their marine consultant service.

The announcement, which comes at the end of about 30 years of shipbuilding, has meant redundancy for seventy staff. In all about 130 ships have been built by the Company as well as numerous other vessels being modified and refitted by the Company.

Below are four photographs showing the range of ships built.

One of three Towed Array Vessels built in 1986, for the Royal Navy. The catamaran design was selected to enable them to clip the towed sonar arrays on to nuclear submarines

The mooring vessel ***Moorhen*** *one of two such vessels built for the Royal Maritime Auxiliary Service in 1989*

Supply vessel ***Stirling Elf*** *being fitted out in 1983*

The Rea tug ***Rowangarth****, in West Float Birkenhead in 1981*

Other customers have included the Alexandra Towing Company, Dover Harbour Board, Forth Estuary Towing, Caledonian MacBrayne as well as numerous overseas customers, and the Greek Customs Service.

As can be seen from the photographs, the vessels built by the Company were fitted out usually in the East Float at Birkenhead. Construction to the launching stage was undertaken at a site adjacent to the now filled-in Bromborough Dock. Latterly, as with many Western European shipbuilders, it has been found more "cost effective" to have the hulls of vessels built in Eastern European yards retaining the fitting out operations for the Mersey yard.

The withdrawal of MacTay from shipbuilding means that for the first time in several centuries there is no builder of sea-going ships on the River Mersey.

One of the last vessels to be built by the Company is the **Afon Dyfrdwy** which is the subject of a special report on Page 45.

THE NAVY LEAGUE AND THE LANCASHIRE SEA TRAINING HOME FOR BOYS AT WALLASEY (Part 1)

By LNRS Vice Chairman G. Bodey

The Establishment of the British and German Navy Leagues.

Toward the end of 1894 an association called the Navy League was formed in Britain as a "strictly non-party organisation to urge upon Government and the electorate the paramount importance of an adequate Navy as the best guarantee of peace." The League's first - albeit very briefly - president was the illustrious, Admiral Sir Geoffrey Phipps Hornby.

Initially, the League's constitution had included a clause stating that one of its aims would be "to secure the appointment of a single professional adviser, responsible to the Cabinet, upon the maritime defence of the Empire, who shall hold office for a term of years, ..." To this end the League issued a paper shortly afterwards setting out its view of the role of such an adviser in time of war who would, it was said, be the only one who could foresee the necessary operations and would, therefore, have to be the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, and who should also have overall control of the [war] operations.

After much condemnation by politicians, public and press - particularly 'The Times'- as an interference in administrative, professional, and technical matters, this clause was removed from the League's constitution and programme, and substituted by one which read: 'To call attention from time to time to such measures as may be requisite to secure adequate preparation for the maritime defence of the Empire."

Notwithstanding its initial pronouncements and the controversy they aroused, one of the Navy League's primary aims was to promote interest in the Royal Navy and its purpose on the part of the younger generation, thus stimulating an awareness of the need to maintain a strong fleet and healthy recruitment to man it.

During the nine years from 1895 to 1904, the number of Royal Navy personnel increased steadily from 86,000 to 130,000 before levelling back to about 127,000 from 1905 until 1908. From 1908 the number again rose steadily to reach its maximum peacetime total of 146,000 in 1913. To what extent the Navy League's efforts, amidst

various other stimulating factors, assisted these healthy recruitment figures cannot be known, but it may be assumed that it was not insignificant.

In June 1898, the German Navy League, which acted as an extra-parliamentary pressure group, came into being. Its raisons detre were:

- the active promotion of Germany as a world power
- the promotion of Germany as a major naval power (not least to the Germans themselves who regarded a strong army as the country's major military requirement), and
- to promote the building of a fleet of sufficient strength and power to fulfil the latter role.

The German Navy League did not, of course, arise spontaneously. It was instituted to lobby for, and to further, the cause of the instigator (and recently appointed State Secretary of the Imperial Marine Office) of the above new-found aspirations, Rear-Admiral Alfred Tirpitz.

To justify his case for a powerful German fleet (and to obtain the finance for its building), Tirpitz asserted that Britain (then a friendly power toward Germany) would be the enemy that Germany would have to confront in the not-too-distant future. Through its publications - particularly its newspaper. Die Flotte - the German Navy League orchestrated a campaign of Anglo-phobia (echoing a similar, and often virulent, campaign then taking place in various spheres of German society), and glorified German naval history. In fact there had not been any German warships, let alone German naval history, for over 200 years prior to 1865, and it was not until the summer of 1870 that the Prussian Admiralty was able to assemble a squadron of four ironclads - all acquired abroad [the first German-built ironclad, the **Preussen,** built in the Vulcan shipyard at Stettin (now Polish Szczecin), was not to be launched until 1873] - at the newly constructed naval base of Wilhelmshaven. Even this did not constitute a functional navy; indeed, in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870/71 these ships were to remain port-bound. Thereafter, the fledgling German Navy was held in such contempt by the German High Command that it was commanded by army generals until 1888, acting only as a coast defence force in that period.

Nevertheless, the German organisation's message was not only pervasive but also very persuasive, for its membership quickly grew to 78,000 in its first year, over half a million by 1901, and in excess of one million by 1914. Although the League's efforts must have had a positive influence on recruitment to man the great expansion of the German

Navy that was to occur over the eighteen years succeeding the League's inception, these efforts were not an essential factor.

Lower deck personnel of German naval ships then consisted, typically, of 30% career seamen, (of whom three quarters volunteered as boys between the ages of 15 and 18 years, and the rest as volunteers between 18 and 20 years old - all had to have a maritime related background), and 70% conscripts.

All fit German males had to bear arms from 1st January following their 21st birthday; the first three years being spent on active service (followed by periods in other stages of reserve service). Of the men conscripted into the Navy, some 20% would have a maritime background and the rest would be landsmen. Consequently, manpower shortage was never a problem. By contrast, the Royal Navy was manned throughout by volunteers. The British Navy League's policy was one of support for a strong defensive base (as was the Admiralty's) and maintenance of the status quo as evinced by a statement issued by the Liverpool branch about 1909:

> *"That this meeting of members of the League, in view of the fact that our Fleets are at the present time at the level of the Two Power Standard * with a margin, endorses the action of the Executive Committee of the League in refusing to initiate a public agitation upon matters of controversial detail, but pledges itself, should necessity arise, to take immediate action to secure the maintenance of the above Standard which has been recognised by successive Governments as embodying the minimum requirements of the country for holding Command of the sea..."*

[* The Naval Defence Act 1889 required Britain to maintain a fleet whose combat strength was equal to, plus 10%, of that of the next two largest, navies combined]

However, it must be noted that Admiral Sir John (Jacky) A. Fisher had been First Sea Lord since 21st October 1904. He was so far ahead of the game in actively pursuing the best interests of the Royal Navy that he would not have needed any reminding or prodding from the Navy League regarding the country's naval requirements. On the contrary, it was the Admiral himself who often fed the propaganda bullets to the press and the League to fire on his behalf in order to keep the Government from falling behind in its commitments to the Fleet.

Admiral Fisher had long recognised Germany as the greatest threat to British interests rather than France, the age-old perceived

enemy. With this conviction in mind he had wrought massive, and far-reaching, changes in the Royal Navy:

- outmoded practices with regard to personnel, from the highest to the lowest, were abandoned,
- old and inefficient ships were discarded wholesale and replaced with vessels which (in each class) were larger, faster, better gunned, and technologically in advance of most other foreign naval ships at that time
- new, innovative, vessels - the destroyer, dreadnought, and battlecruiser and a heightened and sustained development and building programme to retain supremacy over Germany's naval expansion was instigated
- drastic redistribution of fleets on foreign stations was ordered;

Allied with ruthlessly demanded efficiency - both ashore and afloat - and improvements in gunnery, control, and tactics, the result was the most formidable ready-to-fight navy afloat; notwithstanding the deficiencies which were to become apparent just a few short years later.

The Liverpool Navy League Branch.

Following the British Navy League's inception it was quickly decided by leading figures in shipping and commerce in Liverpool that a branch (the first outside of London) of the Navy League should be set up in Liverpool. The prime mover in the setting-up of the Liverpool branch was Sir Alfred L. Jones who would become its first Executive Vice-President. He was already the owner of one of the world's largest shipping empires, and exercised great influence in many spheres of business activity at home and abroad.

The first official meeting of the League's Liverpool branch commenced at 12.30 p.m. on 18th August 1896, with Mr. John Gray-Hill (of the law firm of Hill, Dickinson) in the Chair, (who was also to be the first President of the branch). A letter from the Head Office of the Navy League in London was read. A Certificate of Incorporation, books and registers etc. were accepted by the meeting, thereby formally bringing the Liverpool branch into being. The membership was to comprise three categories:

vice-presidents whose annual subscription was £5:5s:0d (£5.25p) -
members (or Subscribers) subscribing £1:1s:0d (£L05p) p.a.
associates subscribing 5/- (25p) p.a.

In addition to their annual subscriptions, every member was encouraged to make regular voluntary donations and, in total, these greatly exceeded subscriptions. Donations were also solicited from non-members.

Membership of the branch increased steadily from its inauguration and by 15th May, 1900 it stood at 741 (22 vice-presidents, 614 members and 105 associates). As might be expected, the members in the vice-president category were all pre-eminent in their own professions or spheres of business or, "people of note".

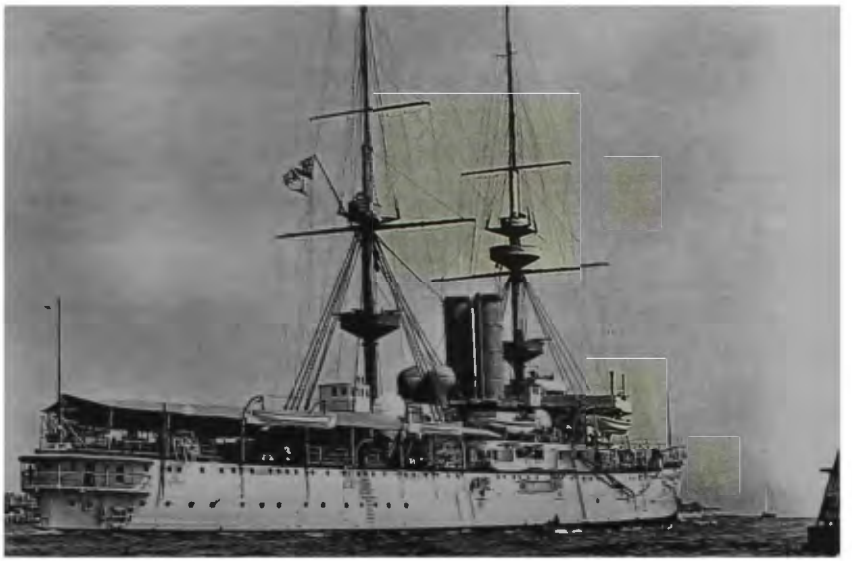
On 4th October 1897, J. Gordon Smith was appointed Honorary Secretary of the branch but after only fourteen months in office he was to die at the tragically early age of 27. As a result, his father, Samuel Smith, cotton broker, was to erect the Gordon Smith Institute for Seamen in Liverpool in memory of his son, at a cost of some £7,000.

In its formative years the branch organised, and took part in, activities calculated to encourage awareness of, and a sense of pride in, the country's naval heritage. Among its first activities was participation in the 1896 Liverpool Trafalgar Day parade, and a presence the same year at the ceremony at Nelson's Column in London when a wreath from the League's Liverpool branch was laid there.

Later, in March 1899, a scheme was proposed to offer prizes to pupils in local schools for essays on naval matters; ensigns and diplomas were to be awarded for the best essays showing the pupils' knowledge of 'The Need of Naval Power' and, 'The British Empire'. By September 1899, sixteen headmasters had agreed to allow Navy League lecturers into their schools to instruct the boys in the writing of such essays, and the number had risen to seventy by October 1900, with forty schools having now entered the competition. A cup, to be given by Sir A.L. Jones in the name of the Liverpool Branch of the Navy League, was offered as a prize for a swimming competition between local schools.

In Germany each Christmas, an illustrated 'Annual Naval Album' was published, which reiterated the themes published in "Die Flotte", and some 600 copies were presented in the Kaiser's name as prizes in schools throughout Germany.

Battleships - Pre Fisher



*HMS **Renown** Built 1895*

Post Fisher

*HMS **Dreadnought** Built 1906*

THE APRIL MEETING

Due to the indisposition of Mrs B Jones, Senior Information Officer and Archivist, who was due to speak on Lloyd's Registers. Members of the Society provided, at extremely short notice, three impromptu presentations. A summary of the presentation given by LNRS Vice President Harry Hignett is set out below:-

The Blundells

The Blundells came from mariners of Formby: there is some reliable information about the family, who were not related to the Blundells of Ince Blundell

Bryan Blundell was christened, married and buried in St. Nicholas' church on the Liverpool waterfront. His father, born in Formby, had married Mary Preeson, the daughter of the wealthiest man in Liverpool and Bryan had entry into the town's shipowners' circle. He went to sea at the age of 12 and arriving home several months later found his father had died. Bryan was soon sailing as mate on ocean-going ships mostly running to the West Indies and Chesapeake Bay. His journal shows that he had a very good education and was well versed in astro-navigation.

He married when he was 21 and was immediately appointed master of a ship owned by his uncle, Mayor of Liverpool William Preeson. His first voyage as master was to tobacco plantations in Chesapeake Bay - owned by Thomas Preeson his cousin.

Three years later Bryan owned his own vessel and continued to increase his already rich inheritance. He lost one vessel as he and his crew were taken prisoner when his ship was captured by the French. He spent four months on parole in France and arrived back in Liverpool just in time to sail another of his ships to Chesapeake Bay where he had another vessel building. Many of his business associates are remembered in the street names of central Liverpool to this day - Clayton Square, Cleveland Square, Basnett Street etc.

In 1714 he left the sea and bought William Clayton's tar-importing business. At the same time he became the Treasurer and Administrator of the Blue Coat School. He was very enthusiastic about the school and even provided more than a quarter of the cost of building it.

He died aged 84 in 1756 and still a wealthy man even after giving his eight children over £4,000.

BOOK REVIEW

The Right Kind of Boy
- A portrait of the British sea apprentice 1830 -1980
By David Thomas Published by Phaiacia 2004 ISBN 0-9541981-1-5

Author David Thomas's lively and rich literary style cleverly interweaves a fascinating commentary drawn from a wealth of bibliography and well endowed with an extensive selection of thumbnail accounts acquired or contributed through papers, diaries, letters and photographs. These were drawn primarily from British India SN Co., New Zealand Shipping Co, Alfred Holt, Shell and the many tramping companies. In addition to picking out the excitement and colour of training and work, living conditions and incidents afloat and ashore this never-before-told story will undoubtedly be savoured by ex-seafarers and the like, and should justifiably attract the favourable attention of many a maritime historian as a highly respected work of reference. This history of the merchant navy apprentice, cadet, or midshipman from 1830 until sea apprenticeships came to an end around 1980 will stand for many years, and will remain the definitive document that ensures the significance of this piece of maritime history is not forgotten.

Despite what is perhaps a rather lengthy introduction in which Thomas shares the many difficulties and dilemmas he faced when shaping his work, the story gathers pace with a well-pitched prologue defining the rise and fall of the mercantile marine. The nineteenth century apprentice faced hardship in relation to cramped and poorly ventilated accommodation and the horror of bad victuals which had to be overcome through wit and cunning. Whilst arrival in port presented an opportunity to freshen up the menu, there was little escape for the apprentice. A run ashore could prove a dangerous venture and many captains ensured the safety of their boys by working them so hard from dawn to dusk that, by the evening, they were too tired to bother.

Some of the jewels of the piece have to be extracts taken from the diary of an Alexander MacKay whose entire apprenticeship at the turn of the century was served aboard the four-masted iron barque **Armadale** during the period of significant competition between sail and steam. With a later chapter devoted to the running of company cadet-ships, we are treated to some amusing anecdotes. What, for instance, happened to the pawnbroker's three golden balls when scheming midshipmen who, having exhausted their voyage allowance, unwisely pawned their sextants and heavy weather gear prior to a winter crossing of the Southern Ocean? The

owners of training ships could be well-served by some characters if the story of old MacGregor, a well-experienced bosun of the old school, is anything to go by. Midshipmen were busy holystoning the decks but were interrupted by a huge sea washing everyone along the deck. The midshipmen, half drowned and clinging for life to the capstans heard MacGregor shout "Hang onto them holystones m'lads!".

Whilst the era under review encompasses both world wars, Thomas is sensible in touching only lightly on this aspect given that it has been amply witnessed and documented in other more specific works. The story that does unfold during the final post war stage is illustrative of the sadly short-lived heyday of the 1950's and 60's. Most of the inclusions for this period and also the concluding stage are likely to carry a ring of familiarity with many a reader. Those privileged to have served an apprenticeship at sea, whether on deck or in the engine room, will quickly discover this book is a powerful influence in prompting personal recollections. A point which is perhaps aptly demonstrated when this reviewer recalls nervously sharing his school leaving examination results with a prospective shipping company. The crew manager with responsibility for the recruitment of apprentices retorted "You're good enough for us!" Clearly, I too had been considered as -"The right kind of boy".
JS

Red Duster Recollections:
A Merchant Seaman's Experiences in World War Two
By Ron Tubb. Publisher Woodfield Publishing, Bognor Regis, West Sussex. ISBN 1-903953-62-6 Price £9.95

This career story of an officer from his pre-sea nautical school training through peace and war offers a personal and intriguing view of a professional mariner's life in the 20th century. In general, the author holds the reader's interest all the way through the book especially those who have encountered and talked with merchant seamen of that era.

There are comments on all aspects of seamanship and cargo work, also details of the ships, ports of call, crews and varied cargoes. The perilous conditions encountered in wartime, such as the Liverpool Blitz, the U-boat menace and aircraft attacks. He witnessed the air attack on the **Georgic** in Suez Bay in 1941, and assisted in saving a member of the crew. The text is punctuated by plenty of amusing anecdotes. An excellent little book
HMH

THE WRECK OF THE PHILOMELA

Set out here is a copy of the Official Report on the loss of the ***Philomela****. The copy has survived many adventures including being in the attic of a blitzed house. It was eventually re discovered by David Ritchie of Southport, grandson of Joseph (Wright) Minshull. Joseph Minshull is also the great-grandfather of LNRS Vice President Harry Hignett, who saw the original report in the Consul's Office, in Amoy, in 1941.*

Further particulars of the loss of the **Philomela**

"The British ship **PHILOMELA**, - Captain Taggart; left Yokohama, Sept. 10th 1867 in ballast bound for Foochow, experienced a succession of strong SW gales until the 22nd, when the wind veered round to the Eastward, commencing light, but gradually increasing on the 23rd, when it had risen to a strong gale with very high sea. The barometer had fallen to 29.40 and every preparation made for a typhoon, which was expected, on the 24th, at noon, Tong-ying island bore West distant 10miles, gale still increasing in violence with terrific squalls from the N.E., and the weather generally bore threatening appearances. 25th, Bar.29.20, falling rapidly. At 4pm,the gale had increased to a perfect hurricane, and a heavy squall accompanied by lightning and heavy rain, threw the vessel over on her broadside, so that the close reefed main top-sail, the only sail set, had to be clewed up and furled. Midnight, Barometer 29, blowing a terrific typhoon from N.E., with tremendous cross sea, which was forcing the ship bodily to the leeward. On the 26th at 2 a.m. the vessel received a violent shock from a heavy sea, which hove her over on her beam ends, sending the ballast to leeward over the shifting boards which were up to the beams. At 6 a.m. took a cast of the lead, and found bottom at 17 fathoms, shortly afterwards found only 12 fathoms. Finding the water shallowing so rapidly, made every effort to wear ship and as she would not payoff, cleared away the anchors for letting go, but while in the act the ship took the ground with a frightful shock, on what proved to be sands off Lokong, on the N.W. coast of Formosa. The lower mast-heads immediately snapped off, the seas breaking over the ship fore and aft. The crew immediately cut away the remainder of the masts and let go both anchors to ease and keep the ship's head to the surf. Finding the ship had now become a complete wreck, and as the gale was moderating, the crew began to clear away the boats, but by this time the water had commenced to leave the vessel, and she was shortly left high and dry. Waited therefore for the turn of the tide, but immediately the sands dried the natives came down by hundreds, and took entire possession of the vessel, driving the crew on shore, robbing them even of the few clothes they had on. The Captain and crew then proceeded to the village in their denuded state, and were fortunate enough to find the house of the Mandarin of the place, who gave them food and shelter, but would not allow them to go outside for five days, making signs that the people would kill them, On the 6th day, October 1st they were all put aboard a junk bound for Takao, having received one dollar each, and a small basket of native bread from the Mandarin by way of provisions, but this however did not last long, and furthermore the junk was very short of water. As she was also leaky, she was run into one of the Pescadore Islands, where they remained for eleven days, eight days having elapsed before any work

was done at the junk and the natives would not allow the Europeans to caulk her. At length she again put to sea, and after eighteen days of great suffering, and semi-starvation, the unfortunate crew landed at Takao on the 18th October, where they were hospitably received and kindly treated by H.B.M. Consul, who fed them all and supplied them with clothing. They remained here three days, when they were all taken on board H.M. gunboat **Banterer**, and landed safely in Amoy on the 23rd when they were again kindly received by H.M. representative there, Mr.R.Swinhoe. A Naval Court of Enquiry was held on the loss of the vessel on the 29th, the result of which is given below".

Decision of the Naval Court held at Amoy to inquire into the loss of the British Ship PHILOMELA.

"The Court is of the opinion that the master took the proper precautions to meet the gale of wind, but the wind increasing to typhoon, the vessel was laid over on her beam ends, and her ballast shifting, she remained in that position. Because unmanageable, was carried into shallow soundings and eventually grounded, The ship had apparently fore-reached more than the master had supposed.

The court considers that the shifting of the ballast, and the force of the typhoon, were the obvious cause of the disaster, and it does not impute any blame to the master or crew, who seem to have done all that was necessary under the circumstances.

For on sounding in 17 fathoms and then in 12, if the anchors had been let go it is doubtful whether the ship would have ridden, or have club-hauled in such a sea".

Signed:- Robert Swinhoe, H.M.'s Consul at Amoy.
J,Elliot Pringle, Lt Commander, H.M. Gunboat **Banterer**
C.H.Middleton, Master Barque **Cleta** Alfred Chase, Master Ship **Banian.**

The following were Officers of the ship:-
Captain - Lancelott T Taggart, Chief Mate - Dixon Irvine
Second Mate - Joseph Minshull Carpenter - Peter Singleton

In H.B.M's Consulate at Amoy this 30th day of September 1867 before me, Robert Swinhoe Esq., H. B.M.Consul. personally, Joseph Minshull, 2nd Mate late of the British Ship **Philomela** and stated on oath as follows:- On leaving the wreck of the **Philomela** wrecked on the coast of Formosa Sept 26th, the natives took from me my 2nd Mates Certificate of Competency given to me Dec 9th 1864. (Signed) Joseph Minshull

(Anote attached states: - "The applicant states that the date of his Cert in the annexed declaration before the consul should be 1865 not 1864").

Sworn before me at the time and place above written Robert Swinhoe,
H.B.M. Consul at Amoy.

And Finally **AFON DYFRDWY – an update**

The specially built shallow draught barge ***Afon Dyfrdwy*** *arriving at Broughton near Chester on the morning tide on 12th June 2004. Just visible in the background is the new RoRo ramp, just above the stern, and the 135 ton wing, awaiting loading can be seen just above the bridge.*

The **Afon Dyfrdwy** entered service, as planned in April and by the time the above picture was taken had completed several voyages between Mostyn and the wing assembly plant at Broughton near Chester. Not all voyages have been without incident. On 6th May the vessel went aground on one of the many River Dee sandbanks and had to await the next tide to resume the voyage. Under normal circumstances the voyage takes about three hours depending on tidal conditions.

Tidal conditions are a major influence on the operation of the vessel. At Broughton, loading of the wing takes place, with the barge aground on a special grid. The vessel then passes under the two fixed bridges at Queensferry against the flood tide, thus gaining the advantage of low water at the bridges and higher water further down the estuary.

At the time of writing a resolution to the dredging problem in the River and the entrance channels to Mostyn had not been resolved.

See also the report on the shipbuilders MacTay on Page 31.

LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY
FORTHCOMING MEETINGS - 2004

Thurs 16th Sept	Lloyds Register	Mrs B Jones *Archivist & Senior Information Officer*
Thurs 21st Oct	Researching & Modelling a Steam Coaster	Don Hayman *LNRS Member*
Thurs 18th Nov	Thomas Williams - Slate Fence	D Roberts *Curator - Welsh Slate Museum*
Thurs 16th Dec	Christmas Social	

All meetings are held in the Education Suite at the Merseyside Maritime Museum, Albert Dock, Liverpool, commencing at 12.30pm

Coffee & 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)

SEPTEMBER	6th	13th	20th	27th	
OCTOBER	4th	11th	18th	25th	
NOVEMBER	1st	8th	15th	22nd	29th
DECEMBER	6th	13th			

MERSEYSIDE MARITIME MUSEUM
LECTURES

Thurs 23rd Sept	Cunard Yanks	Talk by the chaps themselves
Thurs 28th Oct	Tidal Pool	Jean Grant

Talks commence at 7.15pm - Doors open 6.30 pm
Coffee available to purchase - Talks free

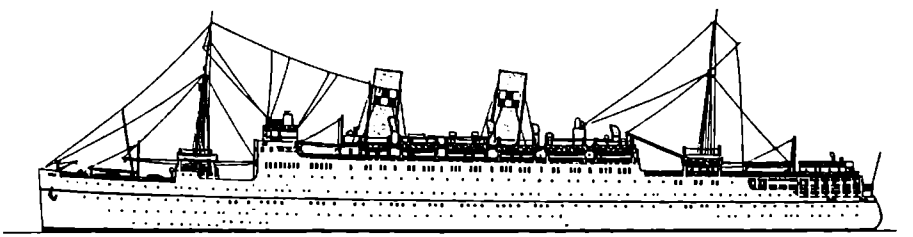
The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

THE BULLETIN

Volume 48, Number 3, December 2004

Editor : John Shepherd



The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

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*Front Cover: The **Empress of Canada** of 1928 (see page 17)*

PROOF READING

Whilst browsing through the November issue of *Ships Monthly* in a W.H.Smith store recently, a reference to 'The Peninsula and Orient Steamship Company' caught my eye. After reading a few more lines, I realised that what was intended was 'The Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company Limited'. Such crass errors are now the order of the day in this 'couldn't care less' society we live in.

'The Bulletin' is meticulously proof-read by five LNRS members: Tony Barratt, Graeme Cubbin, David Eccles, Alan McClelland and John Stokoe. My thanks to them all for sorting out my clumsy grammatical constructions and spelling; and for checking the factual accuracy of 'The Bulletin'.

j.s.

FROM THE EDITOR

It's good to be back editing 'The Bulletin' after a break of eighteen months. First of all a big 'thank-you' to Tony Barratt who took over the hot seat whilst I was away and so ably produced 'The Bulletin' in my absence.

Much has happened over the last eighteen months: I've been on my travels, moved house and passed my sixtieth birthday. Which leads me on to my first point. Whilst I enjoy editing 'The Bulletin' and I hope to do so for several years to come, I think the Society needs to be thinking in terms of appointing my successor. Is there any Member, preferably living in the Merseyside area, who would be willing to understudy the Editor's job with a view to taking over at some point in the future? It's not particularly technically demanding - obviously the ability to type accurately is a pre-requisite - but apart from that 'The Bulletin' is produced using a sharp pair of scissors, a stick of 'Pritt' glue and a bottle of red wine!

I've made a lot of friends world-wide over the years I have edited 'The Bulletin'. Generally it's a very rewarding and interesting job, but it does occasionally 'have its moments', such as the occasions when the word processor inexplicably breaks down.

From my new home I have a view of the River Mersey from Egremont towards the Pier Head. I'm delighted that Liverpool's waterfront has now been recognised as a World Heritage Site. How different it might have been if Will Alsop's 'Cloud' building had been erected to the south of the Port of Liverpool Building. I realise that Gilbert and Sullivan do not feature very often in 'The Bulletin', but on this occasion I think it is appropriate:

"The threatened cloud has passed away,
And brightly dawns the shining day"

At the risk of 'rabbiting on', I recently bought a digital radio. The main reason for this was to gain access to two new speech-based stations, BBC7 and 'Oneword' which are only available on digital. However an additional bonus is being able to receive BBC World Service.

How many members fondly recall trying to tune in World Service during their time at sea? The well-known 'signature tune' Lilliburlero *is still played regularly before the news bulletins. I seem to remember that just as one had found an acceptable frequency to listen to a football match commentary on a rare Saturday afternoon off duty, a lady announcer would intervene with "This frequency is now closing, and listeners should re-tune to the 25 metre band" ! Then it was back to the hisses and crackles as one tried to locate the new frequency on the short wavebands.*

As always, articles for possible inclusion in 'The Bulletin' are always welcome and should be sent to me at the address in the inside front cover. Full length articles (a good length is four close-typed A4 sides); short 'fillers', or letters will always be appreciated and in the interests of accuracy I will send a proof copy to the author before the article appears in 'The Bulletin'.

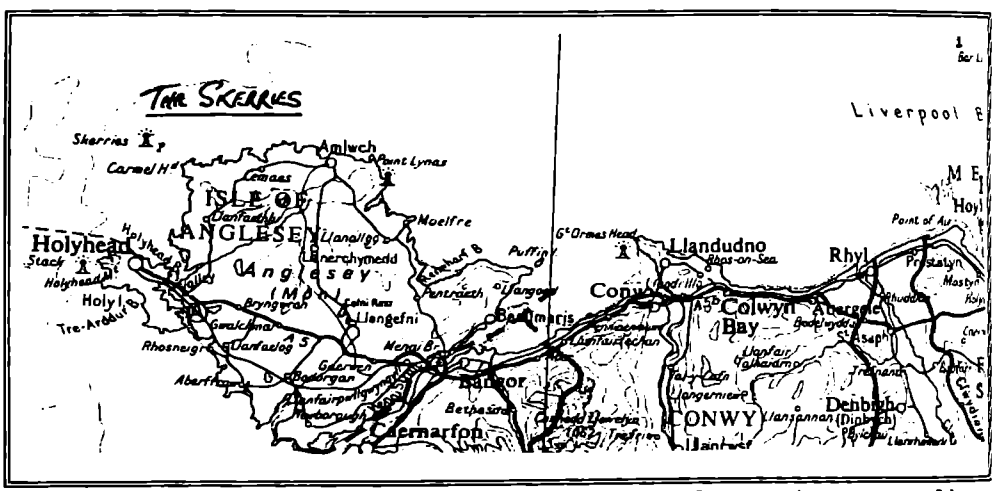
In the meantime, best wishes,

John Shepherd,
December, 2004.

THE SKERRIES LIGHTHOUSE

by Christopher Nicholson

Trinity House was doubtless grateful to Henry Winstanley for erecting his structure on the Eddystone on 1698. It would, however, have been less grateful for the deluge of requests that now followed, in the wake of Winstanley's triumph, for similar beacons to be put up on various equally exposed sites around the coasts of England and Wales. If it could be done on the Eddystone, then surely it was possible anywhere. Demands and petitions from various quarters were renewed and presented to Trinity House, which, under the charter of 1566, had been granted the sole right to supervise the erection of lighthouses and beacons.



Several of the petitions were for the lighting of a notorious group of low-lying, grass-topped rocks some four miles off the northern coast of Anglesey and seven miles north-east of the port of Holyhead. They took their name from the Gaelic word *sgeir* meaning reef or rocky islet, and subsequently became known as the Skerries. As long ago as 1658 there had been rumblings of discontent about the Skerries from merchants trading between Great Britain and Ireland. Chief amongst the protesters was one Henry Hascard, a private speculator, who highlighted the need for some kind of beacon on these rocks, particularly as they were in the direct path of vessels plying between Liverpool and Dublin. He appealed to Oliver Cromwell's Council of State and offered personally to erect a beacon there. Trinity House, jealously guarding its rights, opposed Hascard vehemently and the matter lapsed, even though in April 1662 it agreed in principle that the construction of a beacon on the Skerries was desirable.

In the early 18th century there were renewed attempts to get this cluster of rocks lit. Over 140 merchants signed a petition to this end in 1705. It had been drawn up by one Captain John Davison who duly presented his signatures to the Attorney

General, Sir Edward Northey, in 1709. Two years later the Attorney General invited the views of the Elder Brethren of Trinity House on this matter. Again they repeated the argument that Queen Elizabeth had granted to them the sole right in these matters, and under no circumstances were they prepared to put the undertaking into the hands of private individuals. Also, the Elder Brethren saw no pressing need for a light on this site. However, if those involved were still concerned about the Skerries and were prepared to meet some of the cost, then Trinity House would build a lighthouse there. This was indeed a curious statement to make, particularly as in 1662 they were in agreement with the principle, but the construction, they said, was out of the question owing to the isolated and exposed position of the rocks.

What was probably the most significant decision in the whole history of the Skerries lighthouse was now taken by Northey and his Law Officers. They disagreed with Trinity House about their sole rights and recommended to the Crown that Captain Davison's petition and offer of construction be accepted. For some reason, probably legal difficulties, Davison and his fellow petitioners never availed themselves of this historic decision and their interest waned.

Shortly afterwards, in June 1713, the Skerries was acquired by a wealthy merchant, William Trench, on a 99-year lease on payment of £10 rent for the first year and £20 for subsequent years. On 13th July 1714 Trench added to this lease a patent for the erection of a lighthouse, financed from his own pocket, at an additional annual rent of £5, but with a provision to collect dues from shipping for sixty years after its completion.

There could not have been a more disastrous start to the building of the lighthouse. Later in 1714 William Trench supervised the loading of the first boat with men and materials and watched its departure for the Skerries. In this boat was his son and six workmen. Trench was never to see his son again; before the party reached the Skerries the boat was wrecked with the loss of all seven men. As might be imagined, such events were a hammer blow to his enthusiasm and it was not until 1717 that the lighthouse was completed. It had cost Trench the life of his son and in excess of £3,000, yet it was complete, a structure *"about 150 feet higher than ye sea all about it and on ye 4th November a fire was kindled therein and ever since supported"*. It was a landmark in more ways than one, for apart from the warning it gave of the Skerries it was also the first permanent light along the entire coast of England and Wales.

Rather than relying on candles for illumination, Trench had installed a coal-burning grate in the lantern. His reasoning was not quite as absurd as it might first appear. The northern coast of Anglesey was frequently engulfed by the notorious sea fogs which can form in a matter of minutes and last for several days. A cast iron grate, thirteen feet across and piled high with burning coals would certainly have been an improvement on a handful of tallow candles.

An account of the tower dated 1777 describes a gently tapering structure 36 feet high, with a base diameter of 27 feet which was reduced by 6 feet at the top. A lightkeeper's cottage was also built from local stone with the characteristic Anglesey feature of stepped gable ends. This cottage still stands today. Large amounts of fuel

were required to keep the light in service; 80 tons for an average year and upwards of 100 tons during years with severe winters. The smoke from the smouldering coals became a serious problem, particularly when the air was still with no breeze to shift it. The vapours obscured the glow and it was not long before the Skerries' coal grate earned for itself the reputation of being one of the worst lights in the United Kingdom.

William Trench died in 1729, just twelve years after completing the light. The lease on the Skerries passed to his daughter who sold it for a nominal sum. The Trench family had experienced difficulty with the enforcement of the light dues, particularly in the port of Liverpool where the majority of the traffic passing the Skerries was bound to or from. Losses were estimated at over £100 a year and coupled with the £3,000 spent on the construction meant that for most of the twelve years preceeding his death Trench had been an impoverished and broken man.

Whether it was out of sympathy for his descendants or for some other reason, Trench's family, upon presentation of the accounts for the lighthouse, was fortunate in being granted the lease of the light, together with the right to keep all the dues, in perpetuity by an Act of Parliament. This was an exceptional act of generosity and a precedent the Government was later to regret; one that was to give the Skerries a unique place in lighthouse history.

In 1804 the iron grate was removed from the Skerries lighthouse and the tower was raised by an additional 22 feet. Above this a proper lantern was installed, complete with oil lamps and reflectors which were lit for the first time on 20th February, 1805.

Trade between England and the Americas expanded considerably in the first half of the 19th century and most of this trade was conducted through the thriving port of Liverpool. A rapid increase in the number of vessels passing the Skerries resulted in additional light dues, and in 1834 it was calculated that the profit from the Skerries lighthouse, after expenses and maintenance costs had been deducted, was well over £12,500. In less than a century the coal-burning, smoke-enshrouded light which had bankrupted its builder was transformed into a highly profitable oil-burning lantern, a fact that did not go unnoticed by Parliament.

By 1834 the Skerries light was in possession of one Morgan Jones. He was reluctant to produce accounts for the light as demanded by a Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry of that year, claiming immunity from so doing under the terms of an earlier Act passed in the days of George II. When the figures were finally extracted from Jones, the government was staggered to find that in addition to his annual profit of over £12,000, he was also receiving £1,700 under an agreement made during the earlier history of the light when it was incapable of recovering its own costs. Such an absurd state of affairs would not exist, Parliament stated, if all the lighthouses around the coast were managed and administered by one responsible body, whose job it would be to levy a standard rate of light dues for all lighthouses. This would do away with private lighthouses, such as the Skerries, whose owners were at liberty to charge whatever they thought appropriate. As a result of its findings an Act of 1836 was passed, *"An Act for vesting lighthouses, lights and seamarks in England and Wales in*

the Corporation of Trinity House". This gave Trinity House the authority to purchase any remaining private lights and bring them under its jurisdiction. This legislation was the start of lengthy legal wranglings over the Skerries which were to further guarantee this beacon a special place in the annals of lighthouse history.

Trinity House was naturally keen to acquire the ownership of this lucrative source of income as soon as possible, but Morgan Jones was a resolute man who was equally determined not to part with his property without a fight, particularly as it was by 1837 earning him over £20,000 a year. He rejected offers from Trinity House of first £260,000, then £350,000, and lastly £399,500 for his lease. Jones resisted the pressure of the Elder Brethren for four years and would doubtless have done so for a good deal longer had it not been for his untimely death in 1841.

This seemed to Trinity House the ideal opportunity to take control of the light they had fought over for so long, yet the battle was not over. The executors of Morgan Jones, the same solicitors who had been fighting on his behalf against Trinity House, insisted on the final settlement being decided by a jury. This was a shrewd legal move which was to reap the intended rewards. A jury sitting before the High Sheriff at Beaumaris, Anglesey on 26th July 1841 awarded to Morgan Jones' estate the phenomenal sum of £444,984.

The fate of the Skerries lighthouse was finally sealed. From that day in 1841 the light was maintained by Trinity House. The Skerries was the final private lighthouse to pass into public control and fetched a King's ransom in doing so. How Parliament must have bitterly regretted its generous decision in favour of the Trench family over a century earlier. |||||

This article is a précis of a chapter in Christopher Nicholson's book *"Rock Lighthouses of Britain"*, published by Whittles Publishing, ISBN 1-870325-41-9. Other chapters in the book give detailed histories of the Eddystone, The Smalls, Longships, The Longstone, Bell Rock, Skerryvore, Bishop Rock, Muckle Flugga, Wolf Rock, Dubh Artach, Chicken Rock and the Flannan Isles. For anyone interested in lighthouse history this book is a fascinating read. *j.s.*

From '*The West Coasts of England & Wales Pilot*':

The Skerries are a cluster of dark coloured rugged islets and detached rocks which lie 1½ miles NW of Carmel Head, on the N side of Holyhead Bay.

The Skerries Lighthouse consists of a white round tower with a red band, 23 m in height, situated on the highest islet of the group; a sector light is exhibited below the main light.

West Platters, two drying rocks, lie ½ cable S of The Skerries.

In passing outside The Skerries it is advisable to give them a berth of at least 1 mile on account of the strength of the tidal stream which prevails near them. The passage outside The Skerries is preferable to the passage inside except in strong offshore winds when the latter may be taken by day and in clear weather. |||||

THE THAMES AND NORTH WALES PADDLE STEAMER *"LA MARGUERITE"* OF 1894

by the Editor

There has always been an enormous fascination with foreign travel. Everyone has felt the urge, at some time or another, to visit new and strange lands. A week, a day, or even a few hours, would be wholly delightful. Mr Arnold E. Williams, the enterprising manager of London's Victoria Steamboat Association in the 1890s, had already seen how popular the **Koh-i-Noor** (1892) and the **Royal Sovereign** (1893) had become with the thousands of Londoners who loved the sea and ships, and having put such popular seaside resorts as Clacton, Margate and Ramsgate within their daily reach, he decided to see if it wouldn't be possible to extend such facilities to the French coast.

Certain conditions would have to be observed. A large steamer, able to face cross-Channel weather and to offer generous accommodation would be a necessity. However, a large vessel, and one of high speed, could not make a daily trip from London Bridge to France and back without washing all the barges and small craft ashore on the muddy banks of the Thames - an action not only highly inconvenient to all those concerned, but one strictly forbidden by the Thames Conservancy laws. Tilbury could offer a very suitable point of departure and the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway was quite willing to run special expresses from Fenchurch Street Station to Tilbury Docks, and thus it began to look as though a daily service to France could become a practical proposition.

Accordingly, in 1894, the Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd., of Govan, constructed the largest paddle steamer it had so far built. She was to have a guaranteed speed of 21 knots, four decks, and her accommodation was to be nothing short of luxurious, for it was hoped to attract the best type of patron to the new service. The new ship had a good reserve of power, a hull large and strong enough to carry this power in rough seas, good freeboard and seaworthiness, and she complied with the full cross-Channel ship safety requirements of the day.

The ownership of the new steamer appears complicated, and she was registered at Lloyd's Register with the Fairfield Company as owners until the full instalments were paid. A company called Palace Steamers Ltd. was the 'nominal' operating company, and the Victoria Steamboat Association was the managing company.

The new steamer was named **La Marguerite** after the daughter of Mr A.E. Williams, the manager of the Victoria Steamboat Association. Trials on the Clyde in early June 1894 were highly successful with her engines running at 56 revolutions, producing 8,000 i.h.p. and a speed on 21.25 knots. This was over 2 knots faster than the **Koh-i-Noor** and the **Royal Sovereign**.

The **La Marguerite** had a gross tonnage originally (at any rate until 1904) of

2,205 tons, 1,092 net; but this was later given as 1,554 gross and 644 net. It would seem that the space under her 'shade' deck was later discounted for such a large change to have taken place. The steamer was built of steel and her registered length was 330 feet; 341.6 feet overall, with a beam of 40 feet and 73 feet over the sponsons. Load draft was 8 feet 11 inches. There were four decks: promenade, upper, main and lower, the last one being a little below the waterline but with its ports above it. The bridge was between the funnels, as was usual in two-funnelled paddle steamers. This was mainly for handling the ship when going alongside piers, or rather putting the sponsons alongside, since the bridge extended over the paddle boxes.

*The **La Marguerite** on her trials on the Clyde. Her funnels are red with black tops and two white bands - the colours of the Victoria Steamboat Association.*

Saloon passengers were accommodated aft and second-class passengers forward, but the entire promenade deck was reserved for first class. On the upper deck there were some private cabins, a shop, the purser's office and a large refreshments saloon aft.

On the main deck, provided with large square windows fore and aft, the first-class dining saloon was aft with the second-class saloon forward. Beneath, on the lower deck, was a large smokeroom with the crew accommodation forward.

The **La Marguerite** had a certificate for 3,000 passengers as far as Margate, and for 2,000 across the Channel. For her first year (1894) she was in Victoria Steamboat Association colours; her funnels red with black tops and two narrow white bands. At this time there was no other excursion steamer on the British coasts to approach her for size, speed, luxury and seaworthiness. There was nothing on the Clyde to equal her, nor in MacBrayne's West Highland fleets. The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company's **Empress Queen** of 1897 was a larger and faster paddle steamer, although hardly equalling the good looks of the **La Marguerite**.

The **La Marguerite's** first day excursion to Boulogne took place on 23rd June

1894. She left Tilbury at 10.10 and arrived at Margate at 12.55. After a ten minute stay she was off to Boulogne at 13.05. She met a stiff beam wind in the Channel which caused her to roll a little with the slow period usually associated with liners. The La **Marguerite** entered Boulogne harbour at 15.20 and was accorded an enthusiastic reception; there was much cheering and blowing of whistles, a French band played *'God Save the Queen'*, and the La **Marguerite's** musicians returned the compliment with a rendereing of *'La Marseillaise'*. The new steamer had done well: she had made the crossing from Margate in a little over two hours with the tide against her.

The return sailing left Boulogne at 17.17, arriving at Margate at 19.40. After an eight minute stay she was off up the Thames estuary to Tilbury where she arrived at 23.00. The day had been a total success, albeit a long one. The new steamer settled down into a routine. Passengers left Fenchurch Street Station at 08.30 and joined the **La Marguerite** at Tilbury. She was scheduled to arrive at Boulogne at 14.30, giving her passengers one hour ashore, before sailing again at 15.30. Passengers were due back at Fenchurch Street at 21.35.

In spite of her great popularity the **La Marguerite** failed to pay for herself. The summer season was short and the ship was expensive to maintain and run. As has already been stated the registered owner of the **La Marguerite**, the **Koh-i-Noor** and the **Royal Sovereign** was the Fairfield Shipbuilding & Engineering Company. The operating companies failed to pay off their instalments on the building costs in 1894 and so Fairfields stepped in and created a new company - New Palace Steamers Ltd. - to which all the three paddlers were transferred. The new company's funnels were pale yellow and the three ships were repainted accordingly in time for the 1895 season.

The **La Marguerite** continued on the Thames for another nine years. She had a 'day-off' on Fridays and sailed only to Margate on Sundays. On other days the Boulogne day excursion operated. In 1898 Ostend was substituted for Boulogne on Tuesdays only. It was a tough schedule and little delay was allowed for. The La **Marguerite** proved to be a good sea boat and is said to have behaved exceptionally well in heavy weather. However, one defect in her design appears to have been inevitable. Some of the piers she called at were low, and her sponsons were low also so that the piers should not get below them (with disastrous results). In rough weather the sponsons thudded down on waves on occasion causing the lavatories situated on the sponsons to be suddenly flooded (with more disastrous results!) But the ship gained a tremendous reputation for comfort and timekeeping and became the most popular excursion ship on the South coast.

The **La Marguerite**, despite her popularity, was not making sufficient money for the instalments to the Fairfield Company to be paid off. In 1904 New Palace Steamers sold her to another concern in which her builders had a very considerable interest - the Liverpool and North Wales Steamship Company. On the North Wales coast the operating seasons were longer, wages somewhat lower, coal cheaper and the speeds required could be more moderate, all good reasons for hoping for a more profitable operation. The **La Marguerite**, based at Liverpool, would operate the company's principal daily service from Liverpool to Llandudno and Menai Bridge from late May until late September each summer. Her new owners' funnel colouring was yellow, so there was no great change in the ship's appearance.

On 12th May 1904 the **La Marguerite** left Liverpool on her first sailing to Menai Bridge, calling at Llandudno, Beaumaris and Bangor. The time-table required a 10.45 departure from Liverpool, arriving back at about 19.30. Her season lasted until 12th September when her final sailing was disrupted by bad weather which prevented her calling at Llandudno, Beaumaris and Bangor. In the winter of 1909-10 the **La Marguerite** was given a major overhaul with new boilers and funnels, but with little change to her outward appearance. Marconi Wireless was installed.

*The **La Marguerite** as she appeared on the North Wales service*

With the outbreak of war on 4th August 1914 all pleasure cruises ceased. In 1915 the **La Marguerite** was requisitioned by the Admiralty as a cross-Channel troopship, capable of carrying 1,800 men and their equipment. On 17th March of that year she left Southampton for Le Havre on her first trooping voyage, carrying the First Battalion of the 6th Regiment of the City of London Rifles. For the next four years she sailed mainly from Southampton to French ports with troops, mostly at night and without lights, a hazardous and nerve-racking dash across the Channel. Her only recorded mishap came in 1917 when a boiler explosion resulted in the death of four of her firemen. By the time the **La Marguerite** was released from Admiralty service in April,1919 she had carried 360,000 troops and steamed in excess of 52,000 miles.

After a quick refit the **La Marguerite** was chartered to the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company for the 1919 summer season. The Manx fleet had been sadly depleted as a result of the war. Huge crowds of holidaymakers flocked to the Isle of Man after the war, and the number of steamers available was quite inadequate resulting in thousands of passengers waiting for hours in queues which at times reached a mile in length. With her funnels painted in Steam Packet colours, the **La Marguerite** became the mainstay of the Liverpool and Douglas service from late May to early September 1919. She was little altered from her pre-war days, the most noticeable change being that her bridge had been fitted with wing 'cabs'.

The old ship was back on her regular Liverpool / Llandudno / Menai Bridge route in 1920, the first sailing being on 22nd May. By 1923 the **La Marguerite** began to show signs of her age as she commenced her 30th summer of operation. A rudder chain carried away off the Great Orme at Llandudno that year. The following year there was a breakdown of one of her paddles between Llandudno and Liverpool and the L&NWSSCo's **Snowdon** had to come alongside the disabled **La Marguerite** and take off all her passengers. The **Snowdon** reached Liverpool at about 22.30, but the **La Marguerite** did not arrive until the early hours of the following morning. The repair bills mounted up too heavily and in 1925 the Company reluctantly decided to withdraw her.

Monday 28th September 1925 had been advertised as the closing day of the season. The **La Marguerite** was bravely dressed with flags, but to many of the onlookers they seemed more like a pall as they flapped listlessly in the light airs. And so, on a dull, grey Monday morning, to the accompaniment of fireworks and much waving of handkerchiefs, the **La Marguerite** set out on her last pleasure sailing.

There was a fine farewell demonstration at Menai Bridge where the pier and pontoon were crowded with a cheering throng of people, including the local school-children who had been released early to witness the departure. At Bangor little interest was displayed at the close of the **La Marguerite's** long association with the city. More spirit was displayed at Beaumaris. Llandudno Pier was crowded with thousands of people and Captain Highton spoke a few words of acknowledgement from the bridge before the old ship sailed and turned towards Liverpool for the last time

The **La Marguerite** was sold to Thos. W. Ward Ltd. for £5,000 and she left the Mersey on 22nd October 1925 for Briton Ferry in South Wales for demolition. It was estimated that during a remarkable career spanning 32 summers she had carried some 7½ million passengers and steamed about 300,000 miles. The **La Marguerite** remains to this day the largest passenger steamer ever to have entered the Menai Strait. Whilst the third **St Tudno** of 1926 was larger by 772 tons, she was shorter by 12.6 feet.

The **La Marguerite's** bell was presented in 1927 to the 1st Battalion of the 6th Regiment of the City of London Rifles in memory of them being the first troops she carried across to France.

During her last week of service in 1925 a deckhouse from the after end of **La Marguerite's** promenade deck was put ashore at Llandudno where it served for many years as an office on the pier. During the reconstruction of the berthing head at Llandudno Pier in 1968 this relic of the old steamer disintegrated when attempts were made to move it using a crane.

A fine builder's model of the **La Marguerite** is in the ship models collection at Merseyside Maritime Museum. □ □ □ □ □

From Lloyd's Register:

LA MARGUERITE : Steel Paddle steamer : Official No: 102875 : Call Sign N K H T
Built by the Fairfield Shipbuilding & Engineering Co. Ltd., Govan, 1894
Length: 341.6ft., Breadth: 40ft., Depth: 21.6ft, Gross Tonnage 2,205; from 1904: 1554
Launched: 1894, Trials speed: 21 knots.

NOTES AND QUERIES

Letter from LNRS Member Graham Booth, of Worthing:

I enclose a brief addition to the article 'Transatlantic Steam Navigation' which appeared in the September, 2004 'Bulletin':

The **President**, the **British Queen** and the **Great Western** were all involved in a dispute over the design of their paddle wheels, which it transpired were in a breach of patent held by one Mr W. Galloway, and the paddle wheels had to be modified. In the case of the **British Queen** the work was badly done and during the first six days of her passage from London in Mach 1841 she lost, one by one, all the floats from her port side wheel. The crew had time to change half the floats from the starboard wheel before she met a storm which did considerable damage and she had to put into Halifax,NS for repairs.

The **President**, which was on an eastbound crossing at the time, probably met the same storm. Even by the standards of the time she was top heavy and underpowered. On her first voyage under sail from London to Liverpool to have her engines installed she had to be towed into Plymouth for repairs. She was sighted by the **Orpheus** labouring heavily in high seas, and if she had anything like the same problems with her paddle wheels as did the **British Queen**, then her end was a certainty.

Information requested by LNRS Member Charles Dawson:

The ss **Fire Queen** was built in 1843 at Liverpool by Davenport, Grindrod & Patrick for MacKay & Co. of Calcutta, but she remained on the Liverpool Register until 1847. She was 371 tons, 200HP, 156.2ft x 25.4ft x 17.1ft. Was she built of wood or iron ?

This firm of shipbuilders had built only one other steamer, the **Blanche**, in 1842. Did they build any other vessels and what happened to them ?

A Lieut. H.P.Grindrod, RNR, was the final commander of another **Fire Queen**, *ex* **Candace**, built by Ramage & Ferguson of Leith in 1881 and purchased in 1882 by the Admiralty for use as a special service vessel. She was sold in 1920 and renamed **Firebird**. Was this lieutenant related to the Grindrod of the shipbuilders ?

THE MONDAY FACILITY

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

DECEMBER, 2004	6th and 13th.
JANUARY, 2005	31st.
FEBRUARY, 2005	7th, 14th, 21st and 28th.
MARCH, 2005	7th, 14th and 21st.

THE NAVY LEAGUE AND THE LANCASHIRE SEA TRAINING HOME FOR BOYS AT WALLASEY (Part 2)

by L.N.R.S. Vice-Chairman Gordon Bodey

The National Sea Training Homes

Britain's Navy League acted, as part of its remit, as a sponsoring organisation to establish a number of National Sea Training Homes for boys. This aspect of its work was engendered, in part, by a section of the Merchant Shipping (Mercantile Marine Fund) Act of 1898, which set out a financial incentive to shipping firms to employ boy sailors.

Under the terms of the Act, a shipping firm could, for any financial year (for a maximum of six foreign-going voyages, or ten home-trade voyages) in which such boy sailors were employed on a ship, claim a sum from the Treasury of up to one fifth of the Light Dues payable for the vessel. Examples of the dues as laid down in another section of the Act were: foreign-going sailing ships, 2¼ pence per ton per trading voyage; foreign-going steamships, 2¾ pence per ton per trading voyage. However, in order for the firm to qualify for the payment, the boys had to be between fifteen and nineteen years, to have enrolled in the Royal Naval Reserve and to have signed a commitment to present themselves for service in the Royal Navy when called upon. This section of the Act was to remain in force until 31st March, 1905.

A letter regarding the above section of the Act - the 'boy sailors scheme' - was sent to the League's Liverpool branch by the Navy League's head office, and was considered by the branch executive committee (hereinafter, the 'committee') on 6th February 1899. Subsequent backing for the scheme from the branch membership gave added impetus for a Training Home to be set up locally.

The main aim of the proposed National Sea Training Homes scheme was to provide suitable youths with a basic all-round training for lower-deck service in, principally, the Mercantile Marine.[3] Along the way they would also be taught to be self-disciplined, self-reliant, and imbued with a broader and more balanced outlook on life. The training would also include a sound basic education - then sadly lacking in the majority of the boys the scheme was meant to encompass. Those to be trained were to be chosen from the *'indigenous poor'*, and they had to be judged worthy of help and be those *'Whose self-respect was not lowered by one or more wanderings from honesty and pride'*. It was claimed that the scheme *' .... would remedy the overcrowding in our cities'*, and would make a *'National Asset out of what would otherwise be a public liability'*.

Shipowners in general were keen to gain from a new source of trained British personnel. At this time there were an estimated 40,000 foreign nationals employed on British merchant ships, apparently due to a shortage of British youths prepared to take up a career at sea. The owners, it was said, would have preferred the latter, and it was

[3] *The Home was neither the first nor the only source of such training locally: **Indefatigable** (founded 1864 and anchored in the Mersey) and **Clio** (founded 1876 and anchored in the Menai Strait) training ships pre-dated the Home. By February 1905, 2,013 boys had passed through the **Clio** of whom 1,630 had been sent to sea.*

also thought that in a time of national crisis the former would not be reliable.

The following eighteen months saw a number of discussions taking place on the proposed scheme and particularly for the establishment of a Sea Training Home on Merseyside; not only within the branch committee but also with voluntary organisations, church bodies of all denominations, and with the committee responsible for the running of the training ship **Indefatigable** on the River Mersey. Many notable individuals were also consulted with a view to obtaining sponsorship and expertise for running the scheme if it were to be instituted.

In conjunction with the ongoing discussions, two highly respected churchmen, Canon Major Lester and Monsignor Nugent (both members of the committee and both supporters of the boy sailors scheme) were asked to locate suitable premises with surrounding land which could serve as the proposed training home.

On 23rd July 1900 these gentlemen reported to the committee that they had visited Clifton Hall, sited in six acres of park, the estate of Captain John Herron (former ship owner and late chairman of Wallasey Ferries) at Withens Lane, Wallasey. They thought that, with some alterations, it would be most suitable for the proposed sea training home. The asking price for the entire estate was £6,100. After the vendor (Captain Herron's son, John) had refused lower offers from the committee, it was resolved on 7th January 1901 to pay the asking price and a contract was entered into. Initially the property was to be paid for with a 10% deposit, the difference up to £1,500 paid on completion of the contract, and the balance on mortgage at 4% over 5 years.

Due to a continuing flow of generous donations, regular subscriptions from an unflagging branch membership and monies derived from various fund-raising activities, an extra sum of £1,550 was paid off the mortgage by April 1901. Just fourteen months later the sum of £3,050 was paid to redeem the mortgage in full, and the Clifton Hall estate was placed in the name of the Trustees of the Home. (Out of a total of £11,253/3/6d received between 31st August 1899 and 31st August 1903; £2,720/1/3d was from subscriptions and £8,533/2/3d from donations).

Among the fundraising activities was the sale of calendars. For 1902, some 10,000 had been offered for sale to the public and the profit realised was sufficient for the committee to instruct the secretary (salaried and to become, *de facto*, the Commandant of the Home) , Captain G.C. Thomas, to send out 50,000 for 1903. The following year Captain Thomas was to incur the wrath of the committee when, on his own initiative, he entered into contracts with two suppliers for a total of 125,000 calendars for 1904, at a cost of nearly £500. As a result Captain Thomas was severely censured and warned, under pain of dismissal, against making such a decision in the future without the committee's approval. But, by 16th May 1904, the profit realised amounted to £135/12/1d, and as a result of some of the calendars being sent to the Ilkley Hydropathic Centre, the clientele there made an unsolicited collection (over some months) for the home which realised £106! However, Captain Thomas was to clash with the committee on many more occasions, and in May 1904, in somewhat singular circumstances, he was to set in motion his own downfall.

The single largest fundraiser by far was a three-day bazaar held in St George's Hall, Liverpool, from Wednesday 12th March 1902, which was opened by Princess Louise and her husband, the Duke of Argyll. Each district of Merseyside was

represented by its own stall, and each was set up and run throughout by three or four of the most eminent ladies of that district. This was designed to achieve maximum success and did so admirably with something over £3,000 pouring into the coffers of the Training Home Fund and thus paying off the mortgage.

The Navy League's Liverpool Branch Home in Withens Lane, Wallasey was the first in the country to be established. Its founding is recorded as being by '*Eminent Gentlemen and Leaders of Commerce and Shipping*'. The Board of Governors reputedly comprised: four Bishops, eight Church Ministers of various denominations, a Duke, two Earls, four Baronets, six Knights, two Bank Managers, two Admirals, four RNR Commanders, three Colonels, four Members of Parliament, one national newspaper proprietor, one salt merchant and a colliery owner: a remarkable array of the great and the good.

Transformation of Clifton Hall

At a meeting of the committee on 30th April 1902, Mr A.H. Read (Chairman of J.H. Powell & Co.) said that he had been over Clifton Hall and he considered it most unsuitable for the intended purpose. Also, he thought that conversion and repair would require great expense and would give little satisfaction when finished. He proposed that some small cheap buildings - which could be extended - be erected in the grounds, away from the Hall, and that the Hall be used mainly for staff. Lower rooms of the Hall could be used as a dining room for the staff and classrooms for the boys. This proposal was adopted and plans and estimates were sought for the erection of two such buildings in the grounds to house one hundred boys.

The lowest estimate for the new building work was £2,894/10/-. This was considered too high and the original plan with regard to type and quality of materials was modified, as was the length of the proposed building work - which it was resolved to reduce by 30 feet in length - bringing down the cost to £2,450 (the axed part was to be reinstated before completion at an additional cost of £350). On this basis the project was commenced.

Besides the new buildings, other necessary work to the Hall and estate included:

- Installation of a heating system throughout
- Changing the lighting from gas to electrical
- Installing and equipping a gymnasium
- Building of an outside washing and toilet block
- Fencing around the grounds with iron railings seven feet high. (This was said to be necessary to ensure privacy and 'to prevent Navy League boys from wandering off'.)

The ancillary work noted above was to cost many hundreds of pounds extra, and further sums were required for numerous other miscellaneous fixtures and fittings, including the galley range.

Building work commenced in early July 1902 and in August the Branch President wrote to Rudyard Kipling inviting him to lay the foundation stone, but the invitation was declined. The committee then turned to Lord Strathcona who agreed to perform the ceremony on Saturday 18th October 1902, whereupon Captain Thomas was instructed to order a silver trowel for the occasion, and Mr F.C. Danson prepared a

suitable inscription for it and for the stone. It was also agreed that his Lordship would present Navy League prizes to some 800 schoolboys at Liverpool Town Hall (on the same day) after the stone laying ceremony.

It had also been resolved that a drill shed and rigged ship (similar to one in the Greenwich Naval Hospital grounds) be built in the Clifton Hall's grounds for training purposes. A sum of £250 had been donated by Mrs Clover (widow of Mr G. Clover of the ship repair firm) for this purpose. The start of work on the drill shed (168ft. long and 55ft. wide) was delayed owing to opposition from householders in Penkett Road - and not surprisingly since the home was to have its own brass band, and it was proposed to site the shed just 20 feet from their back boundaries! There was also opposition to the structure's proposed location from the adjacent Wallasey Grammar School and the impasse was to take many months to resolve.

At the end of July 1903 the home, except for the drill shed and the training ship, was all but complete and ready to receive its first entrants. By this time the total outlay on the project, including the purchase of the estate, had reached £9,288/4/2d.

Commencement of Business

When first proposed, the home's initial intake of trainees was to have been twenty-five. Thereafter the premises were to have been altered in five annual stages to increase the accommodation to 250 places. However, in view of the first year's estimated running costs (£804 - exclusive of food and heating), it seems to have been tacitly agreed to enrol suitable trainees as and when they were nominated by a school board: each would bring a grant of £25p.a. from the nominating board.

It was deemed necessary, in order to achieve recognition and produce an allowance from the nominating school boards, *'that the boys selected should not be all of one religion; should be of a particular age; be of good conduct; be free from parental interference; and be under a proper course of instruction. A place at the home was* [to be] *available to any British boy of good character and healthy physique, however poor, and regardless of his religious affiliation.'* On this basis, local authorities throughout Britain would nominate boys for a place at the home at no cost to any of the boys.

The home opened under the name 'Liverpool Branch of the Navy League', and began business with one master, two instructors (ex-RN) and thirteen boys, the first two of whom arrived, unexpectedly, on 3rd August 1903 - Bank Holiday Monday - necessitating the hurried hiring of a cook. By the end of the month 24 boys were in residence, with more expected.

At the opening of the home, the youngest entry age was 13½ years and the oldest 15 years; one year later these were amended to 14 years and 15½ years respectively, with no boy being allowed (officially) to stay on after the age of 16½ years. The training time in the first year was very flexible (being as little as four months) due to the need to take up any employment opportunities when they offered. Later, the Admiralty was to specify a minimum period of 12 months training for boys accepted for its service. Minimum physical criteria had to be met for entry, as well as being fit, having good teeth and perfect eyesight. Each boy also had to sign a form of indenture binding him to the rules and requirements of the training home.

Besides being housed, clothed, fed and trained, the boys were also provided

with sound medical care by two local physicians, Drs. McDonald and Napier of Liscard, Wallasey, who gave their services in an honorary capacity. In addition to general medical care they examined each new entrant as to his fitness for entry, and also checked the certificate with the issuing doctor - as to its genuineness - of those boys who brought a certificate of fitness with them. A dentist, Mr A.E. Harrison of Wallasey Cottage Hospital, also gave his services in an honorary capacity to the home. It was probably on his advice that each boy was provided with a toothbrush - almost certainly a novelty to all of them.

Six weeks after the home's opening, two suspected cases of diptheria among the boys caused the doctors to recommend the building of a three-bed isolation ward with its own facilities in the grounds. As a result Mrs Clover was asked for, and gave, her approval for her £250 donation to be used towards that purpose should it be required.

The initial set diet for the boys for a week was as follows:

Breakfast: Bread and jam and bread and butter on alternate days, with hot milk or cocoa; fat bacon twice per week.

Dinner (midday): Beef or mutton (roast, boiled or in stew) with potatoes and bread; pudding twice per week. [Within months it was found that the boys' health was deteriorating due to a lack of vegetables in their diet and it was ordered that greens be served three times per week].

Tea: Cocoa, milk or tea (on alternate days) with bread and butter. Cake on Sundays. Between meals the boys were to have one hour's total recreation.

As part of their training - and to save money - one of the boys' first tasks was to paint the surrounding railings. Also, the hiring of a gardener at £20p.a. having been deprecated by the committee, Captain Thomas was ordered to give him notice, and on his leaving at the end of the year the boys were detailed to do the work which, in due course, was assisted by Mr Cross (a committee member) sending his gardener round to give them instruction.

Many subjects and skills were taught as part of the training course at the home. Besides the 'three Rs' the boys were instructed in personal hygiene and kit maintenance, gymnastics, basic shipboard practices, nautical terminology, boat pulling, sail use and setting, seamanship, various forms of signalling, drill and weapons training, and the band - if not playing in it (the smaller boys were to be educated as buglers for the Liverpool liners), then marching in strict naval order. By the end of 1904 the home's staff included five qualified ex-naval instructors, one of whom was the visiting bandmaster.

The training programme of the home and its inherent discipline was not to the liking of all the boys who took up residence there, notwithstanding the many benefits the home must otherwise have conferred on them. Towards the end September 1903 with 35 boys now enrolled, four boys had deserted but had been brought back by the police. Two of the boys deserted again on 3rd October and it was resolved *'that they be got back, made to give up their uniforms,* [be] *supplied with* [the] *cheapest suit of clothing obtainable, punished, and drummed out of the school'*.

In addition to the above boys, there were three others who wished to leave. Two were to be allowed to do so with the proviso that their parents should bear the

costs so far incurred on them. The third was to be kept on in the school in the hope that he would become reconciled to it, but it was resolved that none of them should be forcibly detained. It was thought that some of the boys admitted were not really poor [this was, in fact, so] and that a stricter examination of all the applicants' backgrounds should be made in future.

By the end of November, 1903, two deserters, out of the home's then complement of 63 boys, were still at large. Captain Thomas was instructed to authorise a 10 shilling reward for the recovery of any boy absconding thereafter. In the first year of operation some 15 boys were to desert - not all were recovered, or thought worthy of being so.

The proposed plan to build a training ship in the grounds proved to be impossibly costly - the lowest estimate received for its building being £1,150. But in October 1903 the home received a very welcome fillip when Sir Spencer Maryon-Wilson wrote to Captain Thomas to say that a ship model (30ft. long) used for instruction at Greenwich Naval Hospital School, which had originally cost a very large sum, could be had for £75 if removed at once. His offer to pay this sum and present the model to the home was gratefully accepted and Captain Thomas arranged for its removal, although this involved the model having to be cut in two to get it out of the building where it was housed. It was subsequently brought round to Liverpool on one of Mr Read's steamers, *gratis*.

Thanks to the above gift, Mrs Clover's bequest of £250 could now be used, without any misgivings, for the proposed isolation ward. A few weeks later she inspected the home, and having been most impressed by its cleanliness and the smartness of the boys parading in their uniforms, she immediately donated a further £50 to the project.

Destitute boys now began arriving unbidden on the home's doorstep. Three such boys were admitted without a medical examination during November. They had arrived in a ragged, starving condition and, having been fed and cared for, were later allowed to stay when later passed as medically fit. As a result of this new contingency, Captain Thomas requested the committee to have the stables and coach house cleaned out and straw put in one or other for the accommodation of waifs arriving and awaiting medical examination. Hammocks were to be used in the gymnasium to provide accommodation for those accepted after being passed fit. There were, however, some cases of boys being found unfit for a life at sea and these were placed in a Birkenhead workhouse.

One week before Christmas 1903, the home (which now had 75 trainees) was visited by Captain W.V. Anson, RN (Superintendent of the Royal Naval Hospital School[4], Greenwich) and Sir S.P. Maryon-Wilson who were much pleased with what they saw; Captain Anson so much so that he promised to write to the Admiralty with regard to the Royal Navy taking some of the boys.

[4] *In 1905 some one thousand orphaned sons of Royal Navy seamen and marines were being maintained and educated at the Royal Naval Hospital School, Greenwich.*

to be continued .....

JUST FANCY THAT !

The **Stormont** capsized on the Pluckington Bank, off the Albert Dock at Liverpool on 7th November 1946. The **Stormont** was inward bound from Belfast and had 210 head of cattle, 10 horses and general cargo on board. She was in collision with the **Empire Brent** (*ex* **Letitia** [b.1924] of Anchor-Donaldson Ltd.) at 07.00hrs off Seacombe. The **Stormont** was eventually broken up where she lay.

(Thanks to LNRS Chairman David Eccles for this information).

TRACKING OCEAN CURRENTS, 1950s' STYLE:

There has been such an outcry in this country about oil pollution that one might have expected the National Institute of Oceanography to be inundated with the 'drift cards' dropped into the Atlantic by RAF Coastal Command in May, 1954. Cards have been returned from Iceland, Ireland and France - but by the end of July 1954 none from any part of the UK. The Institute say, cautiously, that it is not unreasonable to suppose that some of the cards are by now very close to these shores, or have already been stranded and lie waiting to be found. What is the explanation of the small response to the request to return the cards ? It may be that in spite of all precautions, many of the plastic envelopes containing the cards have sunk without trace. It may be that the seasonal changes in the speed and direction of the ocean currents which it is desired to study are trickier than anticipated. It may even be that the promised half-crown reward to a person returning the drift card as directed was not a sufficiently large bait, although it is not unreasonable to suppose that children, particularly, would be eager to get a little extra pocket money. However, school holidays start soon, and the harvest may yet be fruitful. It will be a pity if an experiment planned with care, and obviously at no small expense, should prove a failure.

The Clan Line, in its staff magazine *The Clansman*, refers to a novel marine advertising scheme which they helped to 'float'.

Guinness Exports Limited of Liverpool asked the Clan Line to carry 19,000 stout bottles out to sea and to heave them overboard at selected points in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Each bottle was empty except for a circular offering a memento to the finder who returned the form with information about the time and place of finding.

The **Stirlingshire**, **Clan Forbes**, **Clan Macintyre** and **Clan Macintosh** were the ships chosen to co-operate in this bright advertising venture, which along with determining the rate and flow of ocean currents, was also designed to test a new type of bottle sealing.

NYLON SHIRTS AND COMPASS DEVIATION

Resulting in investigations and tests made by American marine authorities in 1954, it has been proved that a helmsman wearing a certain type of nylon shirt can cause considerable deviation of a compass. Under some conditions a shirt (or other garment) made of *orlon* will cause a compass 'to oscillate in a peculiar manner'.

" Take their sailing orders down !—Midnight, December 24—and don't forget to wish them a very merry Christmas . . . "

The Chairman and Council of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society wish all Members a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year

THE LOSS OF THE "*EMPRESS OF CANADA*"

The Court of Inquiry, the Salvage Operation and the Disposal of the Hulk

The Findings of the Court of Inquiry:

The Court of Inquiry into the loss by fire of the **Empress of Canada** at Liverpool on 25th January 1953 concluded on 8th January 1954. The findings of the Court were issued in mid-March 1954 in the course of which it was stated that the probable cause of the fire was a cigarette discarded in a cabin.

The Court stated that the Working Party on Fire Prevention and Firefighting in Ships in Ports Report, 1950, was a comprehensive study of the problem of fire risks aboard ships in port. It contained a number of valuable recommendations which although there was no statutory sanction behind them, deserved the closest study by all interests concerned. It was therefore regrettable to have to record that no attempt was made to consider the recommendations in detail or to carry any of them into effect with regard to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's ships sailing into Liverpool.

Had the **Empress of Canada** been in commission there is no reason to suppose that the fire precautions would not have been effective.

It was clear that no liaison had been established between the shipowners and the fire brigade in relation to the ship and there was no direct telephone between the ship and the fire brigade. Fire patrols were below the recommended standard and no personal alarms for each patrol man were supplied. The ship's fire main had not been maintained under pressure and no adequate alternative had been arranged.

This last omission was due to the action of the assistant chief engineer who stated that the pump had not been restarted since the vessel came out of drydock. No attempt had been made to connect up to the shore main.

The treatment of this important matter by the chief officer and the assistant chief engineer appeared to have been casual in the extreme. The chief officer appeared to have accepted the position that there was no water instantly available, while the assistant chief engineer did not make sure that all his juniors were informed of what was to be done in an emergency.

The Court was satisfied with the evidence of a witness, a worker on a grain elevator berthed across the dock from the **Empress of Canada**, in which he stated that he saw smoke issuing from the starboard shell door between 15.25 and 15.30 on 25th January 1953. This man hailed the *Empress* but no notice was taken and no action was taken by the men on the boat deck. Such inaction was tragic in the extreme. The first discovery of the fire was not made inside the ship until 16.10.

The Court was satisfied that at the time of the first arrival of the fire brigade the fire had already obtained such a firm hold and was spreading aft and upwards with such rapidity, that all that could be done was to attempt to box it. This was done with some measure of success but by 20.35 it became necessary to stop pumping any more water in for stability reasons.

The Court of Inquiry considered that clandestine smoking was the most likely cause of the fire. The most probable explanation was that a cigarette end had been discarded in a cabin within the range B39 to B53. It was difficult to explain undetection over a period of time which resulted in a build up of heat and gases sufficient to create such a situation. The Court felt that the patrolling system, particularly on a Sunday afternoon, was less than effective. It was clear from the evidence that smoking was carried on to a considerable extent on board the **Empress of Canada** and the Court appreciated just how difficult a problem this was, especially when driving the practice underground might in itself have increased the fire risk.

The Salvage Operation:

The fire-wrecked liner **Empress of Canada** was uprighted at Gladstone Dock, Liverpool, on Saturday 6th March 1954 in the greatest salvage operation ever tackled in Europe and by a feat of skill rivalled only by the salvage of the **Normandie** at New York and the battleship **Oklahoma** at Pearl Harbour.

The hulk of the *Empress* was uprighted by a combined system of parbuckling and buoyancy. The Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, responsible for the cost of salvage, pledged an expenditure of £380,000 to tackle the problem in the way that its marine surveyor, Captain W.R. Colbeck, had outlined.

The **Empress of Canada**, when the 16 hawsers took the pull, began moving without the slightest protest. Six pontoons, each filled with 104 tons of water pulled down on the exposed starboard side. Eleven other pontoons, filled during the night with compressed air, pushed upwards on the *Empress's* submerged port side. The wreck moved silently and quickly towards her point of balance. It took only 12¾ minutes to come from 88° to 44½°.

Then, however, a snag was encountered, which the experts had allowed for in their plans. The liner had slid 20 feet along the mud of the dock bottom, rather more than they had anticipated, and the blocks on the winch purchases had come together. Adjustments took 20 minutes, and with a final pull of only 70 tons, the **Empress of Canada** righted herself.

When the operation ended, just less than an hour after it had begun, the liner was sitting on the mud at an angle of only 9°.

The deadweight pull which had been needed to upright the *Empress* was 15,000 tons. There now remained the patching of the port side and the actual refloating, an operation that would take about 10 weeks. The **Empress of Canada** was taken into Gladstone Graving Dock on 30th June 1954 to be made seaworthy for her last voyage to the breaker's yard. Four Alexandra Towing Company tugs carried out the delicate manoeuvre. The *Empress* had a displacement of 45,000 tons and was drawing 40ft. 9in., giving her a clearance of only two feet over the entrance sill to the drydock.

Some idea of the size of the salvage operation can be gained from these statistics of the materials used:

- 17 salvage pontoons
- 16 x 10-ton steam winches
- 32 x 100-ton purchase blocks
- 64 x 100-ton shackles
- 1,750 fathoms of 9-inch wire rope
- 360 fathoms of 7-inch wire rope
- 5,000 fathoms of 3½-inch wire rope
- 3,600 tons of concrete
- 700 tons of steel
- 3,000 feet of flexible steam piping
- 4,000 feet of steel steam piping
- 10,000 feet of timber.

The Disposal of the Hulk:

The hulk of the **Empress of Canada**, a mass of blackened and rusty steel, left Liverpool on 1st September 1954 under the tow of the 836-ton ocean-going Dutch tug **Zwarte Zee**, commanded by 61 year old Captain Thomas Vet.

Watching her leave the Mersey was Commandante Enrico Accame, managing director of the Italian shipbreaking firm of Azioni Cantieri di Portovenere, who paid £130,000 for the hulk and was said to have paid another £12,000 for the 2,200 mile tow to La Spezia.

The salvage operation cost the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board £466,000. plus the loss of a deep-sea shipping berth for 18 months. The Board sold the propellers separately for about £8,000.

Commandante Accame stated that he was happy with his purchase. The hulk of the **Empress of Canada** would be completely broken up in between nine and ten months and would be 'fed' to the large Italian steel plants.

Twelve Dutchmen, supplied by the towing Company, sailed on board the *Empress*. Bunks had been built into the wreck, close to where the old luxurious Empress Room had been situated. A coal galley stove, toilet facilities and a motor driven dynamo for lighting had also been installed.

Captain Vet of the **Zwarte Zee** estimated that tow would take between 21 and 40 days, dependent on the state of the weather. He said he would be happy to maintain an average speed of 5 knots. Six-inch wire cables, 600 yards long, and 22-inch manilla ropes, 160 yards in length, comprised the towing gear.

The tow to La Spezia presented some serious difficulties. After rounding the Skerries the **Zwarte Zee** encountered a full gale and off Tuskar Rock the tow rope parted leaving the *Empress* adrift. After reconnecting the tow the hulk was taken to Dublin Bay and it was intended that she would then go to Belfast for repairs to the pumps and the makeshift crew quarters. This proved to be too difficult and so the wreck was diverted to the Clyde for necessary repairs. After these had been completed

the **Zwarte Zee** once again headed south and more gales were encountered. The hulk of the **Empress of Canada** eventually arrived at La Spezia for demolition on 10th October 1954, 40 days after leaving the Mersey. ||||

*The hulk of the **Empress of Canada** leaving Gladstone Dock on 1st September, 1954.*

SCOTTS OF GREENOCK

By L.N.R.S. Member James A. Pottinger

The brief notice in the April 2002 issue of *Marine News* referring to the sale for scrapping of mv **Tamanota** may perhaps have only been of passing interest among the many other disposals listed.

However, this vessel was unique in that she was launched in 1980 as the **Myrmidon**, being the last merchant vessel built by the long established Scotts Shipbuilding & Engineering Co. Ltd. of Greenock, a company that had its roots in the town as far back as 1711, being the oldest family shipbuilding business in the world with an unbroken line of Scotts until its demise.

As an aside, there is not even a plaque on the completely redeveloped site of the world-famous yard to commemorate its passing; only the derelict and flooded remains of the dry dock is evidence of the yard's former location.

It should be noted that there were two Scott companies operating at Greenock in the middle of the 19th century run by members of the same family: John Scott & Sons, and Scott & Company, but the former was dissolved in 1861.

At the time of the construction of the **Myrmidon** in 1980 the company was trading as Scott Lithgow Ltd., the merger with Lithgows Ltd. of Port Glasgow being consummated in 1969; the adjacent Greenock Dockyard Co. Ltd. having been acquired in 1966.

As the last merchant ship to be launched at Greenock, it was perhaps appropriate that the **Myrmidon** was built for Ocean Transport & Trading Ltd. of Liverpool, continuing Scotts' links with Alfred Holt's Blue Funnel Line which started in 1859 with the delivery of the **Plantagenet**. The similar ships **Talisman**, **Askalon** and **Crusader** followed in the years 1860, 61 and 62.

Alfred Holt had travelled to Greenock with a view to obtaining ships for his new company and John Scott (IV) was able to confirm the early delivery of a suitable ship. This meeting was significant in that it led to the development of a close business and personal friendship between John Scott and Alfred Holt, an association that was to last over one hundred years.

In the mid-nineteenth century clipper ships and the larger but slower sailing ships carried most of the cargo as the unreliability of the then current machinery and heavy consumption of coal mitigated against the use of steamships on the long sea routes.

Holt and Scott were both keenly interested in the development of more efficient and reliable machinery. Frustrated with the seemingly conservative attitude of the Admiralty, Scott had built the **Thetis** in 1856 at his own expense, a vessel fitted with water tube boilers operating at 115psi, with compound engines and a surface condenser. At the time this was an unheard of pressure and was way ahead of its time.

One result of the interchange of ideas between Holt and Scott was the construction of three ships which inaugurated the first regular steamship service to the Far East, and marked John Scott's most significant contribution to the development of the ocean-going steamship. These were the **Agamemnon**, **Ajax** and **Achilles** which

were built in the years 1865-66 at a cost of £52,000 each. The ships proceeded non-stop from Liverpool to Mauritius via the Cape of Good Hope, then calling at a number of ports en route to Shanghai, and were in effect instrumental in the demise of the tea clipper.

In the succeeding years Scotts built a succession of notable ships for the Blue Funnel Line, many seeing strenuous service in two world wars. With the exception of casualties, the average period of service amounted to 40 years, a testament to the quality of design and construction. The total number of ships that Scotts built for the Blue Funnel Line was only exceeded by the 101 ships built for John Swire's China Navigation Company. It is doubtful if the total number of ships built for these two companies has been exceeded by any other single shipbuilder.

Given the financial and longstanding association between Scotts and Holts, it is perhaps surprising that there was such a gap in the construction of the **Cyclops** in 1948 and the **Maron** in 1977. Whilst providing a guaranteed workload to Scotts from the reservation of berths by Holts, the profits accruing to the builders from the owners over the years suffered in comparison with other contracts. For example, naval construction formed a predominant part of Scotts' order book.

The following is a list of ships built by Scotts for Ocean Fleets, excluding those built for the associated Elder Dempster Lines:

Ship No:	Name / Delivered:	Ship No:	Name / Delivered:
61	PLANTAGENET, 1859	242	HEBE, 1885
75	TALISMAN, 1860	257	ULYSSES, 1888
82	ASKALON, 1862	265	CALYPSO, 1889
85	CRUSADER, 1862	274	PRIAM, 1890
116	AGAMEMNON, 1865	275	TEUCER, 1890
117	AJAX, 1866	276	MYRMIDON, 1890
118	ACHILLES, 1866	277	POLYPHEMUS, 1890
134	PRIAM, 1870	301	ULYSSES, 1892
163	STENTOR, 1875	302	PYRRHUS, 1892
164	ORESTES, 1875	303	TANTALUS, 1892
165	ANCHISES, 1875	304	IXION, 1892
168	ARGO, 1875	321	ORESTES, 1894
176	ORESTES, 1877	322	DARDANUS, 1894
177	TEUCER, 1877	327	DIOMED, 1895
189	GANYMEDE, 1879	328	MENELAUS, 1895
191	LAERTES, 1879	336	PROMETHEUS, 1896
192	CYCLOPS, 1880	337	GLAUCUS, 1896
193	BELLEROPHON, 1880	355	IDOMENEUS, 1899
208	HECUBA, 1882	357	MACHAON, 1899
240	ARGO, 1885	358	CALCHAS, 1899

Ship No:	Name / Delivered:	Ship No:	Name / Delivered:
359	ALCINOUS, 1900	505	PHILOCTETES, 1922
360	AGAMEMNON, 1900	515	ADRASTUS, 1923
361	AJAX, 1900	518	PATROCLUS, 1923
362	ACHILLES, 1900	520	DOLIUS, 1924
363	DEUCALION, 1900	521	HECTOR, 1924
404	MEMNON, 1906	522	ASPHALION, 1924
405	ASTYANAX, 1906	523	POLYDORUS, 1925
411	STYX (barge), 1906	524	CENTAUR, 1924
412	ACHERON (barge), 1906	525	PROMETHEUS, 1925
424	GORGON, 1908	526	ALCINOUS, 1926
432	ATREUS, 1911	533	EURYBATES, 1927
433	RHESUS, 1911	541	CLYTONEUS, 1930
436	TALTHYBIUS, 1912	542	MYRMIDON, 1930
442	IXION, 1912	548	AJAX, 1931
448	HELENUS, 1913	549	POLYPHEMUS, 1930
450	AGAPENOR, 1914	571	GLENROY, 1938
459	MENTOR, 1914	627	AGAPENOR, 1947
460	TYNDAREUS, 1916	637	ASTYANAX, 1948
468	DIOMED, 1917	639	CYCLOPS, 1948
481	ACHILLES, 1920	749	MARON, 1977
503	TROILUS, 1921	750	MENTOR, 1979
504	PHEMIUS, 1921	751	MYRMIDON, 1980

THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

70th ANNIVERSARY PUBLICATION

The Society was founded in 1938 and has produced special publications for its 50th and 60th Anniversaries. It is proposed to produce a 70th Anniversary publication in 2008 which will be distributed free to Society Members. Members of the Society are therefore invited to submit articles on their research or nautical experiences for consideration for inclusion.

The articles should be of about 3,000 words in length and if possible be supported by pictures or other illustrations suitable for reproduction in black-and-white. Topics can be on any maritime subject, but of particular interest would be articles dealing with aspects of the maritime history of Merseyside, North Wales and Lancashire. The articles should not have previously appeared elsewhere.

To allow the book to be produced in time for publication early in 2008, the articles should be submitted to Antony J. Barratt at 24 Cross Green, Upton-by-Chester, Chester CH2 1QR by September 2006. (e-mail: tony.barratt@btopenworld.com). It would be helpful if you could let Tony know as soon as possible if you are thinking of submitting an article to allow some forward planning to take place and/or to avoid duplicated effort. Please submit articles by e-mail or in 14-point type. *a.j.b.*

LLOYD'S REGISTER

By Mrs B. Jones (Archivist & Senior Information Officer)

(Thursday, 16th September, 2004)

Nautical beginnings:

When Lloyd's Register was founded in 1760, its focus was shipping. A small team of surveyors, many being retired sea captains, was employed to examine vessels and 'classify' them according to their condition, hence the name 'classification society'. Today, Rules for ship construction and maintenance laid down by Lloyd's Register are constantly revised and updated in line with changes and developments in ship building, technology and current research. A ship must conform to the standards required by Lloyd's Register's published Rules and undergo periodical surveys if it is to be classed and its class maintained.

The organisation's origins, however, date from before 1760 .....

The 17th Century: A tale of two Lloyd's:

Both Lloyd's Register and Lloyd's of London, though not connected, owe their name and foundation to a 17th century coffee house owned by Edward Lloyd. This coffee house, then located at Great Tower Street and from 1691 at 16 Lombard Street, was first mentioned in the *London Gazette* for 18th-21st February 1688. Most of the business of the day was done in the sociable atmosphere of the 17th century coffee houses. Lloyd's Coffee House was a favourite haunt of merchants, marine underwriters and others connected with shipping. There they exchanged information and gossip and Lloyd helped them by circulating a printed sheet of all the news he heard.

When Lloyd died on Sunday 15th February 1713,ownership of the coffee house passed to his daughter Handy. She died in 1720 and the coffee house then ceased to be under the ownership of the Lloyd family.

18th Century: Foundation:

In 1760, the customers of the coffee house formed the Register Society, the first authentic ship classification society, which would subsequently become Lloyd's Register. The Register Society was controlled almost exclusively by underwriters and remained an unchallenged source of information for nearly 40 years.

It is believed that the Register of Ships, printed in 1764 and for use in the years 1764-66, was the first to be published by the Society. Its aim was to give both underwriters and merchants an idea of the condition of the vessels they insured and chartered.

The early Register contained details of the vessel's owner, master, tonnage, date of build, where built and number of guns. The condition of the hull and equipment - the 'class' of the vessel - was also included. The condition of the hull was indicated by vowels: A, E, I, O and U. The class of the masts and rigging was indicated by G, M or B, which stood for Good, Middling or Bad. An example of the combined

class is AG or UB. This system lasted for some years, then G, M and B were replaced with the numbers 1, 2 and 3; the Register for 1775-76 was the first to show the now famous 'A1' symbol of classification.

A committee of some eleven members, under the chairmanship of John Julius Angerstein, managed the affairs of the Society. The men they employed to undertake inspections of vessels were not necessarily expert in the art of ship surveying. There were no clearly defined standards or rules. It was left to each surveyor to exercise his own judgement with the inevitable result that there were gross inconsistencies between the classes assigned to similar vessels. In time it became the practice to limit the number of years for which a vessel could hold the highest class, irrespective of how well she had been maintained. The number of years in a particular class also varied according to where a vessel was built. For example, a vessel built on the River Thames could remain in the highest class for longer than a vessel built on the River Clyde. This gradually led to a great deal of rivalry between ship owners and underwriters, culminating in 1799 with the production of a rival Register by the ship owners, known as the 'Red Book'. The underwriters' Register became known as the 'Green Book'. Their common names reflected the colour of their respective registers.

The 19th Century: From rivalry to reconstitution:

The rivalry continued for a number of years and brought both parties to the verge of bankruptcy. In 1834, on the recommendation of a Committee of Inquiry that had met eight years earlier, the two registers joined forces to become Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping. The Society's aim was to survey and class British ships and any foreign vessels calling at British ports. By 1914 the Society was regarded as an international organisation and 'British and Foreign' was dropped.

From 1834 a General Committee was formed specifically to be responsible for the running of the Society and for the Rules regarding ship construction and maintenance, which became standard across the Society. In 1837 two sub-committees were formed: the Classing Committee to discuss ships entering or leaving class and the Sub-Committee for Surveyors to discuss technical matters including rule development.

The 19th century proved to be an exciting time in terms of invention and innovation. Steam power arrived in the early part of the century. The first Lloyd's Register classed steamer was the 1818-built **Savannah**, which appeared in the Supplement to the 1819-20 edition of the Underwriters' Register. She was built at Morristown, New Jersey, USA and was the first steamer to cross the Atlantic. The crossing took 27 days and 11 hours of which her paddle wheels were used on seven occasions for a total of 85 hours.

The use of iron in the construction of ships was arguably one of the greatest technical challenges for shipbuilders in the Victorian era. As early as 1836, Lloyd's Register Committee received a report from Liverpool surveyor Jabez Bayley that the iron built ketch **Goliath** was to be used for steam dredging in the Bay of Tunis. The **Sirius**, built in 1837, was the first iron vessel to be classed by Lloyd's Register and first appears in the 1838 edition of the Register of Ships with the notation 'Built of Iron'.

The first Rules for Iron Ships were published in the 1855 Register. These were revised and the classification symbol updated in 1870. The iron barque **Lizzie**

Leslie was the first iron vessel to be assigned the new notation 100A1.

An international organisation:

Lloyd's Register's first surveyor to be appointed overseas was Captain Thomas Menzies, a shipbuilder from Leith, who was posted to Quebec and the St Lawrence River in 1852. It was Menzies who, in 1853, suggested to the General Committee the use of the Maltese Cross to indicate that a vessel had been built under special survey. This is perceived to be the first use of a quality mark anywhere in the world.

In 1856, Samuel Pretious was sent from Newcastle-upon-Tyne office to become Lloyd's Register's first surveyor for Holland and Belgium, thereby opening the first office in Europe. He was recalled after three years because there was a lack of reasonably profitable work. In 1868 Pieter Hazewinkel was appointed to the Netherlands and Belgium. He was typical of the type of surveyor that Lloyd's Register was appointing at that time. He wrote books on navigation, was a member of the examination board of navigation and, before he was 30 years old, he had passed his examinations to be a ship's master in the foreign trade.

Appointments of surveyors to Austria, Italy, France, Germany, Denmark, Norway and Australia followed. In 1869 Joseph Tucker became Lloyd's Register's first surveyor in Asia when he was sent to Shanghai.

Back in the UK, the number of headquarters and outport staff was increasing. In 1891 the Technical Committee was formed and assumed responsibility for recommending amendments to existing rules and for the adoption of new ones from the Sub-Committee for Surveyors. Tables of Freeboard suitable for every type of vessel were developed by Benjamin Martell, the Chief Ship Surveyor. Lloyd's Register had entered the freeboard debate as early as 1835, when the General Committee proposed the voluntary adoption of a freeboard of three inches per foot depth of hold; this was known as 'Lloyd's Rule' and was used extensively until 1880. Martell's calculations were finally adopted and issued by the Board of Trade in 1886 and the new Merchant Shipping Act of 1890 stipulated that Lloyd's Register's Committee be appointed to assign freeboards to all UK-registered and colonial vessels, except those of less than 80 tons. The loadline is commonly known as the Plimsoll Line, named after Samuel Plimsoll, MP, who campaigned vigorously against 'coffin ships'.

The late 1800s saw the development of a new type of ship, the tanker. In the 1870s, three passenger / oil steamers had been built to Lloyd's Register class. It was quickly considered that the carriage of passengers with oil was too dangerous. The **Bakuin**, built in 1886 and classed 100A1 'Carrying Petroleum in Bulk' was one of the first tankers built with tanks extending completely to the side shell.

The 20th Century: The challenge of war:

Lloyd's Register continued to expand and World War I saw a move into fields other than marine when the organisation was asked by the French Government to inspect steel to be used for non-marine purposes. In the 1920s and 1930s, Lloyd's Register was requested, because of its experience with the shipbuilding industry, to certify the construction of oil storage tanks which were being built by British shipyards and transported to the Middle East and other areas. This aspect of work has grown at an enormous rate since then and is now incorporated within the Energy and

Transportation business stream, which covers all areas of offshore and land-based industry, including the rail sector. Immediately after World War I, Lloyd's Register was approached by the Society of British Aircraft Constructors and asked to take on aircraft inspection. At that time aircraft were built of wood and canvas and the Committee declined. In 1930 the General Committee of Lloyd's Register did appoint an Aviation Committee but shortly afterwards, as the commercial air industry began to grow, it was felt that a governmental authority should handle aircraft inspection and the Civil Aviation Authority was born out of the Air Ministry.

The whole structure of the world economy collapsed in 1931 and what had been recession turned into global depression. This had a devastating effect on all types of industry, especially shipping and shipbuilding. Lloyd's Register was not immune and many surveyors were laid off or put on half pay.

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 brought new challenges for Lloyd's Register surveyors. Theirs was a reserved occupation but the administrative employees were called up into the armed services and replaced by women, something that caused great consternation amongst the men left behind. Lloyd's Register's headquarters were moved to Wokingham to try and avoid the Blitz.

Lloyd's Register's surveyors were involved in all sorts of projects, from secondment to the Admiralty, to supervising the construction of floating docks, to secondment to the Army to advise on how to put refrigeration units in tanks to be used in the North Africa campaign. Surveyors were sent to Canada and America to supervise the construction of standard ships. They also advised the Board of Trade on deeper loading regulations.

Surveyors in occupied countries had the most difficult of times. The British surveyors in Germany were repatriated. The German surveyors were eventually suspended until after the war, though it is surprising to learn that some of Lloyd's Register's German national surveyors were still carrying out surveys on behalf of neutral clients as late as 1943. In other countries the surveyors tried to carry on their business as best they could, stating that Lloyd's Register was an international organisation without prejudice. Denmark is a good example of the determination to carry on. Communications with London had to stop, but the Danish committee, made up of local ship owners, took over the running of the office, including paying the surveyors' salaries.

Loyalty was also found in Yasumatsu Hamada, who had joined the Society in Kobe, Japan, in 1935. Drafted and commissioned into the Imperial Japanese Navy from 1942, he found himself posted to Hong Kong to manage a ship repair yard. On finding the abandoned Lloyd's Register office, he proceeded to secure the records he found until 1945, when he returned them safely to the Society. He was briefly interned by the British forces, despite asserting that they could not arrest him because he was a Lloyd's Register surveyor. British Intelligence released him following the intervention of Indian prisoners of war who had worked under his command during the occupation.

Post 1945 development:

After the war, Lloyd's Register was involved in many of the rebuilding tasks being undertaken. A number of surveyors, for example, followed the Army in on the D-Day landings and surveyors were seconded to the Admiralty to assist with the

management of the clearance of wrecks from harbours, such as Hamburg, in order that food supplies could be re-established as quickly as possible.

The post-1945 period saw rapid development in ship types and the move to the specialist ship. Whereas, before 1939, the majority of ships were passenger, tanker or general dry cargo, the post-war period saw experimentation with new types such as ro-ro cargo, container, liquefied gas carriers and nuclear-powered vessels. Many of the earliest were converted from standard ship types of World War II. This period also saw the rapid increase in the size of ships.

Lloyd's Register was involved in the conversion to roll-on, roll-off of three of the Atlantic Steam Navigation Company's ships in the early 1950s. Colonel Frank Bustard started the first ro-ro services for civilian vehicles, which ran between Preston and Larne and between Tilbury and Antwerp. He used surplus LSTs (Landing Ship Tank) after the war. Named the **Empire Cedric**, **Empire Baltic** and **Empire Celtic**, all three vessels were converted under Lloyd's Register's supervision.

Containerisation revolutionised the carriage of freight both at sea and on land. One of the first Lloyd's Register classed vessels designed specifically for the carriage of containers was the **William Holyman**, built for Australian owners in 1961.

Another major strand in Lloyd's Register's post-1945 history is its entrance into the offshore sector in the late 1950s, almost 100 years after oil had first been discovered in Pennsylvania. Discovery of oil in the Persian Gulf and changes in offshore technology brought a new challenge to Lloyd's Register. Because of the organisation's shipbuilding and industrial experience it was approached by the Abu Dhabi Marine Areas Ltd., (then two-thirds owned by British Petroleum) to inspect the first mobile, self-elevating drilling barge to be built in Europe. The barge, named **Adma Enterprise**, was completed in Germany in 1957, after her design and suitability to be towed to the Persian Gulf were assessed and her hydraulic lifting gear had been inspected by Lloyd's Register. A year later the **Adma Enterprise** found oil near Das Island in the Gulf.

In 1986, in response to calls from the UK Ministry of Defence and agencies elsewhere who were demanding that their suppliers used approved quality systems, Lloyd's Register moved into management systems certification. In that year Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance (LRQA) became the first organisation to be accredited in the UK and has since gone on to gain numerous accreditations worldwide for quality and environmental systems certification.

The year 2001 marked a new era for the Register Book, as a new joint company Lloyd's Register-Fairplay was formed. The world's largest supplier of maritime information services, it now publishes the *Register of Ships*. Some 240 years after the publication of the first *Register of Ships*, the shipping information is now available in CD-Rom format and online via the Internet.

The name 'Lloyd's':

There are many organisations that use 'Lloyd's' in their name, including Lloyd's of London, Germanischer Lloyd, Osterreicher Lloyd, Lloyds Bank, Lloyds Pharmacy and Lloyd's British Testing. The only one to have any connection with Lloyd's Register is Lloyd's British Testing, but this is no longer a part of the organisation.

RESEARCHING AND MODELLING A STEAM COASTER

By L.N.R.S. Member Don Hayman

(Thursday, 21st October, 2004)

There was a very well attended meeting to hear LNRS Member Don Hayman talk about modelling and researching three Irish Sea steam coasters : the **Ophir**, the **Ben Ain** and the **Elmfield**. Don had brought along three superb models he had made of these ships.

'Bulletin' Editor John Shepherd (left) and Don Hayman (right) examine the finer points of Don's model of the ***Ophir.*** *Photo: John Stokoe*

Don Hayman commenced his presentation by saying that the steam coasters never attracted the romance of liners; they were the workhorses of the coastal trade.

However, they greatly contributed to the rise of economic power in the UK. The average steam coaster had a life expectancy of between 30 and 50 years. In 1924 Lloyd's Register listed over 700 vessels employed in the UK coastal trade. Throughout the 1920s sailing vessels were still competitive with steam. Indeed the **Elmfield** was equipped with a full set of sails when she was built.

Don went on to give a resumé of the careers of the three coasters he had made models of.

The **Elmfield** was built in 1925 by the Lytham Shipbuilding & Engineering Co. Ltd. She was owned by the Zillah Shipping Co. Ltd. Her gross tonnage was 450, nett 175, and she had a length of 142.5ft with a beam of 25.9ft. The **Elmfield** continued to ply her trade throughout World War 2 and lasted until February 1955 when she was broken up by T.W. Ward & Co. at Preston.

The **Ophir** was built in 1907 by the Ailsa Shipbuilding Co at its Ayr yard. She too was owned by the Zillah Shipping Company. Her dimensions were very similar to those of the **Elmfield**: gross tonnage 473, nett 173; length 155.1ft and beam 26.2ft. During the Second World War the **Ophir** worked as a cable loop layer from June 1941 until October 1945 and during this time she was renamed HMS **Eldorado**. After a long career spanning 47 years the **Ophir** arrived at Llanelli on 30th July 1954 to be broken up by the Rees Shipbreaking Co.Ltd.

The third of Don Hayman's models, the **Ben Ain**, was laid down by the Manchester Dry Dock Compnay at its Ellesmere Port yard in 1915 but did not enter service until 1924. She sailed as the **Doris Thomas** and the **Dennis Head** before becoming the **Ben Ain** of the Ramsey Steamship Company in 1939. The **Ben Ain** was the smallest of the three steam coasters which Don had modelled, being 266 gross tons, 99 nett; with a length of 120ft and a beam of 22.1ft.

Having described the careers of the three steamers, Don went on to talk about the modelling. As regards determining a scale for his models, Don said that the principal criterion was that the model must be capable of being transported in his car. His model of the **Elmfield** was 4 feet 5¾ inches long.

Having decided which vessel he wished to model, the first job was to obtain copies of the original shipwright's drawings: the general arrangements plan and the pipework layouts. In this respect the Merseyside Maritime Museum had been of great assistance.

The model was built using the plank on frame method with all the decks being individually planked. Don's models are indeed 'working ships': the winches work; the derricks slew and the anchors can be let go and weighed. The accommodation is fully fitted out and has a complete lighting system.

Don estimated that it takes him on average two and a half years to complete a model.

At the end of his presentation Don invited questions from the audience and there was a brisk 'question and answer session' before LNRS Secretary John Stokoe wound up the meeting with a vote of thanks to Don. Many members took the opportunity of inspecting Don's models at close range after the meeting had closed.

j.s.

A VOYAGE UP THE RIVER AMAZON

by Captain Brian Scott

Captain Scott lives in Whangarei, New Zealand, and recently wrote to the Society enclosing a copy of the article which follows. The article originally appeared in the March 1998 Newsletter of The New Zealand Company of Master Mariners. Captain Scott grew up in Port Sunlight.

Recently, while watching Michael Palin's documentary '*Full Circle*', the episode showing the upper reaches of the Amazon and the town of Iquitos in Peru rekindled memories of forty-five years ago, when I sailed those waters in 'Maggie Booth's' *(please refer to Captain Scott's letter at end of article)* mosquito fleet.

It was early March 1958 and I was working by Lamport & Holt's ss. **Murillo** (*ex* **Tacoma Star**) in Liverpool as third mate. On board we had a first mate and two second mates and myself. The Marine Superintendent arrived on board, and after a lengthy meeting with the mate (who was aged 29 years) we were called to the officers' smokeroom where the Super told us that the mate was being promoted to Master and that he wished to keep us all together. The Super went on to say that the Lamport & Holt Line had purchased a small vessel called mv **Montrose** (1,500 tons dwt) from Buries Marks. The **Montrose** had been on charter to Lamports and sub-chartered to the Booth Line for the New York - West Indies - River Amazon trade. The original British crew had been paid off in New York and Lamport & Holt were sending out their own officers - a master, three mates, three engineers and a chief steward. The ratings would be Brazilians, long term employees of the Booth Line. We were assured that the **Montrose**, to be renamed **Vigilante**, would remain under the UK flag and would not be operated under British West Indian or Panamanian flags, as were 'Maggie Booth's' small ships.

The outcome was that the senior of the two second mates was promoted to first mate and we spent a hectic week studying for 'Restricted R/T Operators' certificates as the **Vigilante** did not carry a radio officer due to her small tonnage.

We obtained U.S. Visas and the Blue Star Line passenger manager booked us on the RMS **Queen Elizabeth** in cabin class for passage from Southampton to New York. The **Queen Elizabeth** was only one third full.

After a rough crossing to New York we had, on arrival, a problem with the U.S. Immigration Department as the **Vigilante** was not on their shipping list. However, the runner for the Agents, the Booth American Shipping Corporation, Inc. sorted things out and we were taken to the Cornish Arms Hotel in Manhattan.

Our small ship was in floating drydock in New Jersey: initially in for three days, she stayed there for three weeks while the bottom hull plating was renewed. Eventually we left the drydock for our berth in Brooklyn where we loaded general cargo.

We left New York at the end of March, calling in at Jacksonville, Florida for a deck cargo of sawn timber for San Juan, Puerto Rico. From there, we sailed around

the southern coast of Puerto Rico to a port called Ponce to load deck cargo of palletised building blocks for Antigua, where they were discharged at a re-activated US Navy wharf at High Point. Pan American was the civilian contractor building a 'secret' missile tracking station in the area leased from Britain during World War 2. From there we made our way in fine weather down the Leeward and Windward islands of the West Indies which had just formed themselves into a loose knit Federation. We usually stayed in port for only a few hours, so there was little time for sightseeing.

On arrival at Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, we bunkered and loaded transhipment cargo from Liverpool. The last cargo ship from Liverpool had completed discharge and proceeded to the mouth of the Amazon to load hardwood logs. The **Vigilante** had to sail to the entrance of the Rio Para in order to reach Belem, a large city with a population of about one million people. We picked up a sea/river pilot off Santana and arrived safely. After discharging part of our cargo we signed on five extra sailors and one extra cook for the river passage, and took on two small boats. (We had taken on board two 25 h.p. Johnson outboard motors with fuel supplies in New York).

The port directory had this to say about navigating the River Amazon:

"At Belem there is an Amazon River Pilots Association for which very special conditions apply. Owing to the length of the voyages involved (1,480 km. to Manaus and 3,360 km. to Iquitos in Peru) two pilots must be taken to ensure continuous navigation; the pilots adjusting their own watches for this purpose. Vessels entering the Amazon by the south channel take a sea pilot to Belem. Vessels entering by the north entrance must go into Santana without a pilot and the river pilot boards there.

"Tariff is based on gross registered tonnage reduced to daily terms, payable from the time from which ordered at Belem until return there, plus all necessary travelling expenses. There are 47 pilots in the Association, who cover all river ports, but of these pilots only 8 are qualified through to Iquitos, consequently it is advisable to book these pilots for the round trip, as otherwise a vessel may be seriously delayed up the river. There are also Peruvian pilots available, but with the increased movements to Iquitos they are few in number. Vessels can also take a pilot as far as Manaus and there await an up-river pilot, either Peruvian or Brazilian.

"Charts of the Amazon river are obtainable in Belem, but are always outdated due to the changing river. It is important to follow the pilot's advice as to night anchorage, especially on a falling river (August - October) when vessels on the regular run usually carry a punt with outboard, VHF radio and echo sounder so that one pilot can go ahead and guide the vessel past the shallows. The rise and fall of the river according to season reaches 16 metres at Manaus and 12 metres at Iquitos. *(We had a hand leadline for our small boats).*

"The river runs at 4 to 5 knots so that when proceeding upstream continuous navigation is usual, returning downstream at say 20 knots on a twisting course, with no navigational aids, it is advisable to anchor for most of the night."

So we commenced our transit of the river, calling at ports such as Manaus (on the Rio Negro, near its junction with the Amazon), Leticia in Colombia and finally Iquitos in Peru. Booth Line passenger ships from Liverpool travelled as far as Manaus and attracted quite a few tourists. Our navigation at night was aided by our radar. (At this time Vestey shipping group vessels were not fitted with radar).

Manaus was a port with floating landing stages, an opera house and a declining wild rubber collecting industry. Brazil nuts were a major export. We discharged general cargo and machinery.

Iquitos also had a floating landing stage, with a naval presence. We discharged earthmoving equipment and ammunition along with medical supplies and flour for mission stations.

The Port Authority in Iquitos was 'Terminal Maritimo del Iquitos'. It is 106 metres above sea level and is accessible to ships all the year round with a 4 metre draft, and 7.6 metres draft at high river. During the rainy season (December to May) the river rises 11 to 12 metres. The river current is 4 to 5 knots,. There are two landing stages, one for ships of 7.6 metres draft and one for river boats. The floating stage is 180m x 8.6m and is connected to the shore by a 60m road bridge.

Having navigated so far, I started reading about the Amazon Basin and came across the following figures:

The river is the world's second largest and the chief river of South America, and is 6,437 km long. It carries more water than any other river, more than the combined flows of the Mississippi, Nile and Yangtze rivers. At many points it is too wide to see from bank to bank, and ranges from 2.5 km to 10 km wide for most of its course.

The Amazon widens to about 150 km. at its mouth, and its depth averages about 10 metres, increasing to more than 90 metres in parts. The Amazon River Basin covers 7 million square kilometres and is the world's largest tropical rain forest with an average temperature of 29°C which varies little throughout the year. Rainfall ranges from 130 cm in the low lying areas to 305 cm near the Andes mountains in Peru. The air is very humid.

The course of the River Amazon begins high in the Andes mountains of Peru, as a small stream called the Apurimac River, 5,240 metres above sea level. It flows north west into the Macayali River which is the lower branch of the Amazon in Peru. The Macayali River flows north through the Andes before turning east and joining the Maranon River, the Amazon's upper branch. This junction occurs near Iquitos in Peru and forms the main channel of the Amazon which then flows east across Brazil and on into the Atlantic Ocean on the northern side of Marajo Island. The ocean has brackish water for up to 150 miles offshore.

The Amazon tumbles rapidly through the Andes and falls about 5,000 metres during its first 250 km. It then falls only 240 metres more during the rest of its course, which is fed by more than two hundred tributaries including the Japura, Jurua, Madeira, Tapajos and the Rio Negro.

An unusually high ocean tide occasionally overpowers the river current at the mouth of the Amazon, creating a tidal bore that measures up to 4.5 metres in height and rushes upstream for up to 74 km.

While the **Vigilante** was in Iquitos, the two holds were cleaned out and repainted, large balls of rubber were loaded along with some poisonous plant roots used in the manufacture of D.D.T. After proceeding downriver to Manaus, the **Vigilante** loaded more rubber and Brazil nuts and then carried on to Belem to top off with bagged coffee. As the Brazil nuts required daily surface ventilation, two of the

extra sailors from the river passage were retained as trimmers.

From Belem the **Vigilante** sailed north to Cayenne (Devil's Island) in French Guiana and loaded more coffee, and then it was on to Trinidad to refuel and finally, at the end of June, to New York, docking at a little used berth in Newark for cargo discharge. After that the **Vigilante** shifted to the company's loading berth in Brooklyn. So ended the first voyage of the **Vigilante**.

Details of mv **Vigilante** (Lamport & Holt, 1958-1968)

- Gross Tonnage 915, Deadweight 1,500tons.
- 1955 Built by Schiffsw. A. Pahl, Hamburg as **Montrose** for Buries Markes.
- 1958 Purchased by Lamport & Holt and bareboat chartered to Booth Line, renamed **Vigilante**.
- 1968 Sold to Cunningham Navigation Co. Ltd., Nassau, Bahamas. Renamed **Caribbean Mara**
- 1974 Abandoned on fire in position 26°35'N, 86°42'W, whilst on passage from Mobile to Santo Domingo.

Well, you might ask, what happened to Maggie Booth's mosquito fleet? After a period of quiet stability in the 1960s and 1970s, problems arose in the trade. Booth Line were trading as 'third flag operators' or 'cross traders' from New York to North Brazil, and with the growth of a number of Brazilian shipping companies and the restrictive legislation concerning cross traders serving the United States, the amount of cargo available fell, and as a result, in 1973 the four remaining 'V' class ships **Venimos, Veloz, Viajero** and **Verasa** were withdrawn from service and sold.

This was a different kind of seafaring, but infinitely more interesting and professionally demanding than long ocean passages.

Captain Scott writes: (via e-mail)

'Hello Mr Shepherd, it is nice to make your acquaintance, albeit at a distance. Pleased to see you back in the Editor's chair again. As they say, you cannot keep a keen Purser away from his typewriter for long before he gets withdrawal symptoms!

'From hearsay, Maggie Booth's was so named as a result of charitable / benevolent works performed by a lady of the Booth family amongst the poor people of Liverpool in the 1800s. She was probably connected to the Unitarian Church or the Salvation Army. Apparently the Booth, Lamport and Holt families were connected in both business and religion.

*'I sailed as 3rd Mate in both Lamport & Holt and Booth Lines from September 1956 to December 1958 on board **Sheridan, Lalande, Boswell, Raeburn, Vigilante, Hilary, Roscoe** and **Defoe**. All in all it was a great experience and fondly remembered. I met a number of my old shipmates in subsequent years during my time with the Auckland Harbour Board.*

'I am pleased that my article will be of interest to your readers as I know full well the problems in getting reluctant yarn spinners to put pen to paper!'

Captain Brian J. Scott, Whangarei, New Zealand. 29th October, 2004.

THE MAIDEN VOYAGE OF THE "SAXONIA"

A month ago came the sad news that the ***Carinthia*** *of 1956 has been sold for breaking up. She was the last survivor of Cunard's '****Saxonia****' class of the 1950s. When they were built they were described in the shipping press as "a brilliant quartette". The maiden voyage of the* ***Saxonia*** *took place just over fifty years ago:*

The **Saxonia** of 1954 was the second liner to carry the name in the Cunard fleet. She was launched by Lady Churchill on 17th February 1954. The ship was designed for Cunard's Canadian service with a relatively shallow draft and a mast short enough to enable her to pass under both the Quebec Bridge and the Jacques Cartier Bridge. The new Saxonia was ready to leave Liverpool on her maiden voyage on Thursday 2nd September 1954.

The *Shipbuilding & Shipping Record* for 9th September, 1954 reported:

'The wooing of the tourist classes is continued in the new Cunarder ***Saxonia*** *which set off on her maiden voyage to Canada last Thursday. Not only do tourist-class passengers outnumber first by six to one, but their present importance has been adequately recognised by the appointment, for the first time in a Cunard ship, of a head waiter in the tourist-class restaurant. This appointment is symbolic of the company's attitude throughout to tourist passengers. The head waiter's sole function, as always in the past in first-class dining saloons, is to see that the passenger is contented with his food. Similarly, in other public rooms and cabins the tourist passenger will find that the company has gone out of its way to see that he is well catered for. Indeed, there are even some advantages over first class in travelling tourist on the* ***Saxonia****. As they serve so many more people, the tourist public rooms are much more numerous and spacious, whereas the first-class public apartments, while more extravagantly furnished, are naturally somewhat small by comparison.'*

Although no doubt the Cunard Line would disclaim any intention of setting up records, the fact that the **Saxonia** on the eastbound crossing of her maiden voyage from Montreal to Liverpool completed the passage in the fastest time yet recorded must be gratifying to them. To accomplish the passage from the pilot station at Father Point, Quebec to the Mersey Bar lightship in under five days was an achievement worthy of congratulation to all associated with the ship.

On her record-breaking eastbound passage, the **Saxonia** encountered continuous north-westerly gales. Her Denny-Brown stabilisers reduced the rolling to less than two degrees - a circumstance naturally appreciated by her passengers.

The **Saxonia** had one of the largest end-of-season passenger lists ever known and reached Liverpool at the end of her maiden voyage nearly nine hours ahead of her original schedule.

On the basis of an estimated speed of 19 knots the **Saxonia** was not expected to berth at Liverpool Landing Stage until Tuesday evening 21st September. Her master, Captain Andrew MacKellar, however, found that despite the rough seas and heavy swell encountered, his new ship was capable of almost another two knots. Consequently the **Saxonia** was off the Mersey Bar at 04.30 and alongside the landing stage by 09.00.

Passengers whom the Cunard Company had expected it would have to

accommodate on board overnight to await trains the following day were instead in London in time for tea. The boat train from Riverside Railway Station, with 372 London-bound passengers, was the largest civilian train handled since the war.

The **Saxonia** left Father Point, the St Lawrence pilot station, at 03.06 on 16th September and arrived at the Bar Light at 07.30 on 21st September. The new liner covered the 2,464 nautical miles at an average speed of 20.74 knots in 4 days, 23 hours and 24 minutes. Although the Cunard Line claim this crossing only as a record for its own ships, it is believed that the previous fastest time of any ship was 5 days and 5 hours.

Captain MacKellar was obviously delighted with his new command. *"She is a very fine ship in all ways,"* he said. *"A particular asset for the St Lawrence river passage is her ready response to the helm. All her many mechanical devices worked according to plan, the stabilisers being particularly effective."*

*The new **Saxonia** on her trials on the Arran mile in August, 1954*

SAVING THE "MANXMAN"

by Bill Ogle, Chairman of the Manxman Steamship Company and member of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society

A typical day at Princes Landing Stage in the late 1950s with the Manxman preparing to take the 11.00hrs sailing from Liverpool to Douglas. Built in 1955, the Manxman was the mainstay of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company's winter services until the advent of the car ferries in the early 1960s.

This article will concentrate on the project to save, restore and present the **Manxman** as a static heritage facility rather than telling the story of the ship herself.

The **Manxman** was built by Cammell Laird (Yard number 1259) in 1955 and served the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company until 1982. She is 344ft overall with a riveted steel hull and is powered by two oil-fired Babcock & Wilcox boilers at 350psi and a temperature of 650°F, giving a cruising speed of 20 knots. Her original passenger capacity was 2,383 with a crew of 68. Until 1967 she was operated as a two class ship and many features of her design highlight the dramatic difference between the two.

The **Manxman** has starred in a number of films. In 1980 she represented the rescuing liner **Carpathia** in *'S.O.S. Titanic'*; she appeared as a cross-channel ferry in *'Chariots of Fire'* and in 1981 featured in *'The Missionary'*. The following year she was an emigrant carrier in the Barbra Streisand film *'Yentl'*.

Since 1982 the **Manxman's** career has been chequered. Berthed at Preston Dock, she was firstly a visitor attraction and then a nightclub. In 1990 she was towed to Waterloo Dock at Liverpool but after three years as a nightclub styling itself the 'Manxman Princess', the venture was clearly failing and in 1994 she was towed to Hull. Again unsuccessful as a nightclub she was towed to Sunderland in September 1997 and there she has remained.

The **Manxman** has regularly 'hit the headlines', mainly for the wrong

reasons. Events such as the two fires which have occurred; the need for a section to be cut from her bow whilst at Hull; striking the Monkwearmouth bridge on arrival at Sunderland and of course the sinking at her river berth on the Wear have all helped to create the impression that she is a gutted wreck. This is not so. Clearly, she is sadly neglected; most wheelhouse fittings have been removed and the former first-class lounge and smoking room areas have become one large space. However most of the first-class panelling is still in good order, the sleeping accommodation includes much original furniture, most of the third-class lounge remains as does some original furniture, Amazingly the engine room, boiler room and steering flat are virtually intact.

Given that Liverpool is one of the world's premier ports, should we not be asking why no example of a sea-going ship is displayed in the Merseyside area. Such an exhibit would represent a key part of the local culture (especially as Liverpool's year as Capital of Culture in 2008 approaches), and the Pier Head area and much of the docklands area has now been designated a World Heritage Site. Most of Liverpool's peer ports do have significant maritime exhibits, often still sea going on special occasions.

So why save the **Manxman**? Primarily because she was built on the Mersey and spent her whole working life sailing the river and was often laid up in Birkenhead during winter periods. Her credentials are good because she is the final example of the Irish Sea passenger steamer and her heritage can be traced back to Liverpool's roots as the hub of the sailing packets serving the region and on to the original steam packets which were crucial to the development of the North Atlantic passenger services operating in Liverpool's heyday. Some organisations are seeking the return of larger ships such as RMS **Windsor Castle** but cost effectiveness must be considered: the budget for such an enterprise is quoted as upwards of £40million. The **Manxman** is a 50% scale model of such ships with a budget of just £4million.

The proposal is to restore the **Manxman** to her early 1960s' appearance and to present her as a static heritage centre. Nothing will be done which inhibits the later restoration of her steaming capacity, or possible conversion to diesel electric propulsion (both of which have been specified and costed). Admission to the **Manxman** will be free and income will be earned by the use of her former first-class areas for events such as wedding receptions and civil weddings. There will be provision for on-board displays which will relate to the ship and her trade, such as a history of shipbuilding on the Mersey, the Isle of Man T.T. story, a Merchant Navy careers centre and perhaps a display by the RSPB and similar organisations.

The challenge has been just how to go about the development of such a project. When the enthusiasts first met early in 2002 there was optimism in thinking that all that had to be done was to bring the idea to the attention of a major developer adjacent to the Mersey waterfront and to the local councils. Not so - the approach had to be developed as matters progressed and mistakes had to be learnt from !

Research was completed into the modus operandi of many other heritage centres, by personal visits and by critical examination of their website presentations. For such a U.K. based operation it became clear that the key to raising capital is the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and that this body attaches importance to the conclusions of the National Historic Ships Committee (NHSC), based at the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, with regard to the relative importance of the many ships

seeking financial support. The logical and well trodden path of forming a limited liability company has been followed; applying for and obtaining charitable status and making application for the **Manxman's** recognition by the NHSC. In this regard she was originally classed as 'registered' and subsequently upgraded to 'designated vessel' (the second highest category). A website was created in the very early days which has become an invaluable tool. Following an application to the HLF a planning grant was received which helped to fund five key surveys:

- Hull condition and costs to satisfy MCA towage requirements.
- A Class 3 asbestos survey, with costs for its systematic removal.
- To strip out fittings added since 1982, to upgrade fire and security systems, renew domestic mains electrical circuits, install an automatic bilge pumping system and to install a passenger lift.
- A marketing development survey providing estimates of visitor numbers, income and recommendations for selection of subsidiary displays.
- A valuation survey for insurance purposes.

The positive results of these surveys together with the ongoing development of further marketing opportunities, allowed completion and submission of the full HLF bid for £2.6million, being 75% of the total project costs. This process is ongoing and three separate survey visits have now been made by HLF experts. The bid is scheduled to go before their panels in October 2004 and to the full Trustees' meeting in December 2004. The remaining 25% is being sought from three sources:

- From The Mersey Partnership and Government Office NW where Objective One money is available as part of the tourism development budget. An ERDF Synopsis has been submitted and the full application is being finalised.
- From an organisation which provides work experience programmes for the unemployed 18 to 24 year olds. An agreement has been reached for provision of a supervised team for the two year duration of the restoration project.
- From income earned by the Manxman Steamship Company during the first two years.

We have been fortunate in the support and real guidance provided by our three Patrons: Professor the Lord Alton of Liverpool; His Excellency Air Marshall Ian Macfadyen CB, OBE (Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man); and the Rt.Hon. Frank Field, MP (Birkenhead). We have received much help and support from both Liverpool and Wirral Councils, as well as many organisations and individuals throughout the country. The Friends of the Manxman Association now boasts over 150 members and has organised two extremely successful 'Round the Island' cruises on the **Lady of Mann**. Five editions of the newsletter *'Triple Bell'* have already been published.

The Manxman Steamship Company has exhibited at a wide number of public events including the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum and the Liverpool Mersey River Festival and at such events the level of interest from both young and old is of great encouragement.

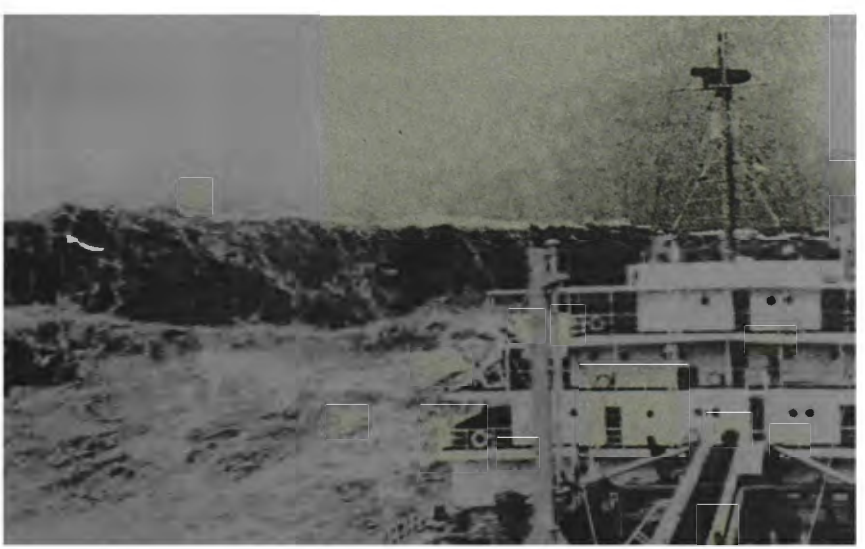
The scope of this project extends well beyond the ship herself. The long term outputs are in the training and educational fields. School visits are an integral part of the business strategy; classroom facilities will be provided and the occasion will be a supported learning experience as well as an exciting day out. Training plans in the technical as well as service areas of the business are already being developed in conjunction with The Laird Foundation, the St Paul's Trust and the Birkenhead YMCA.

In July 2004 the **Manxman** again became a 'film star' when parts of her promenade and shelter deck were cleaned and repainted to represent the **Titanic** for use in a documentary being filmed by Granada television.

The year 2005 could be critical because:

- It will be 'Sea Britain' year which will commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar.
- As part of Liverpool's build up to 'Capital of Culture', the year has been designated "Year of the Sea".
- It is the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company, now the world's longest established shipping company.
- It will be the 50th anniversary of the **Manxman's** launch and entry into service.
- It could be the year in which the **Manxman** returns to Merseyside.

The **Manxman** must be a very lucky ship to have lasted so long. Will that luck hold to help her survival? ▯ ▯ ▯



An unidentified vessel encounters a 'shoaling' freak wave along the 100-fathom line in the Bay of Biscay. These waves apparently originate off the east coast of North America and travel thousands of miles across the North Atlantic as long wavelength swells. As they approach the rapidly rising bottom of the Bay of Biscay they quickly begin to decrease in wavelength but increase dramatically in height.

Mariners' Weather Log

1
Alan Howard

THE *'TEUTONIC'* AND THE *'TURBINIA'*

Many thanks to LNRS Vice-President Harry Hignett for sending in the fine drawing of the ***Teutonic*** *leaving Liverpool on her maiden voyage in August 1889 (see opposite page). The drawing was done by Alan Howard who was born and brought up in Southport. Before the Second World War, Alan took up a post in Toronto and, until his death in the 1980s, retained links with Merseyside and the Society. Alan Howard managed the shipping company which carried passengers (and operated day trips) across Lake Ontario between Toronto and Niagara. Alan took a great deal of interest in local maritime history and after the Lake Ontario steamer service closed, he was the principal founder of the Maritime Museum of Upper Canada based at Toronto.*

The **Teutonic** was built at Belfast by Harland & Wolff in 1889. On 26th June, 1897 she was present at the naval review at Spithead to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. This was the celebrated occasion when Charles Parsons took the **Turbinia** through the lines of ships at an unheard of 32 knots.

The big hit of the review was undoubtedly the **Turbinia**. She arrived at Spithead uninvited and proceeded to pass back and forth through the lines of warships at incredible speeds, sometimes reaching 32 knots. Although Admiralty launches and pinnaces gave chase, they were soon left far behind. The reason for the strange behaviour of the **Turbinia** was simple. The inventor of a new type of turbine engine, the Hon. Charles Parsons, was determined to show off its potential in a way that the Royal Navy could not ignore. The Navy was suitably impressed and Parsons' turbines soon began to find their way into warships, and the mercantile marine was not far behind. After its display of speed and agility the little **Turbinia** tied up alongside the **Teutonic** and Thomas Henry and J. Bruce Ismay were invited aboard, along with a guest, Sir George Baden-Powell, to take a demonstration run.

The **Turbinia** steamed away from the **Teutonic** and was soon lost amongst the assembled might of the Royal Navy. When she reappeared the **Turbinia** was slicing through the water at something like 37 miles per hour, with a good third of her keel clear of the water. Parsons had given the **Turbinia** her head in an effort to impress the Ismays.

The Ismays may well have been impressed by the **Turbinia**, but they were also well aware that high speed was expensive in terms of coal, so they elected to stay with the tried and tested reciprocating engines in their ships. The Allan Line was the first to adopt turbine engines for use on the Atlantic. Cunard was impressed enough to fit turbines into some of its liners within the next decade, and it was these ships that led the White Star Line to build the **Olympic** class.

The **Teutonic** sailed on as a member of the White Star Line's fleet until the outbreak of war in August 1914. On 12th September of that year she was urgently requisitioned as an Armed Merchant Cruiser to replace the **Aquitania**, which had been damaged in a collision with Leyland's **Canadian**. In 1918 she was taken over by the Shipping Controller for use as a troopship. The **Teutonic** was laid up in Cowes Roads in 1921 before being sold for demolition at Emden.

AND FINALLY .....

RADIO FOUR IS WONDERFUL !

Ships in distress have always welcomed the power of prayer but the situation off Britain's North Sea coast took things a bit too far on 26th February, 2004.

Coastguards found themselves tuned inescapably into BBC's Thought for the Day - along with Farming Today, Book of the Week and other soothing material - when a clumsy crewman on a cargo ship jammed the emergency frequency with Radio 4 for five hours.

Nudging a handset button to 'on' without noticing, the freighter Victress served up the whole of the morning's 'Today' programme, as well as features on Sierra Leone and an underground bunker in the north London suburb of Dollis Hill. To make matters worse, the ship's watch - whose desultory chitchat could also be heard on the frequency - were apparently not listening themselves: appeals to them to switch the set off, put out by Radio 4 at the coastguard's request, were ignored.

"This sort of thing has happened occasionally before, but never for this long", said Colin Tomlinson, district operations manager for Great Yarmouth coastguard, who finally had to launch a lifeboat to intervene. The RNLI crew from Wells-next-the-Sea tracked the radio signals to the **Victress**, 10 miles off Norfolk, arriving just as a reading of Gabriel García Márquez's autobiography was getting into its stride.

"The signal was being carried on four of our aerials, effectively blocking any other emergency call," said Mr Tomlinson, whose only slight relief came when the shipping forecast was helpfully broadcast at 5.36am. *"The problem started shortly after 5am and went on until just after 9.50am when the lifeboat found the Victress and alerted the crew." !!!*

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS:

All Meetings are held in the Education Suite at the Merseyside Maritime Museum and commence at 12.30.
Coffee and biscuits are available from 12 Noon.

Thursday 20th January, 2005
"AN ARMCHAIR TRIP DOWN THE CLYDE"
LNRS President Sam Davidson

Thursday 17th February, 2005
"A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF NORTH WESTERN SHIPREPAIRERS"
(Mr L. Roberts, Director of the Company)

Thursday, 17th March, 2005
"SALT, COAL, IRON AND STEAM"
(Roy Fenton)

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

THE BULLETIN

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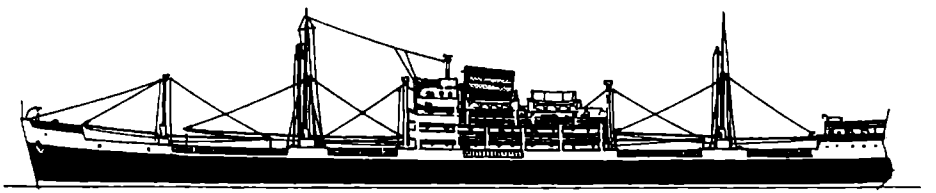

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

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Front Cover: The CLAN MACINNES of 1951. In his article *'Round Voyage'* on page 33, Captain Brian Scott describes one of his early voyages to sea as a Cadet on this vessel. The CLAN MACINNES was built by John Brown & Company of Clydebank and was launched on 19th July 1951. She served the Clan Line until 1978 when she was sold to the Sanil Shipping Company of Hong Kong and renamed **Sanil**. She spent two years on the Australian trade for her new owners before arriving at Bombay on 30th August 1980 to be broken up.

SEVENTY YEARS OF THE IRISH MAIL

by A.C. Yeates

The story of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company which, taking over its mail carriage duties from the British Admiralty in 1850, provided the main link between England and Ireland for 70 years until its dissolution after the First World War.

In the summer of 1822 C.W. Williams, a Dublin business man, went over to Liverpool with the object of obtaining support from merchants there for a line of steamers which he proposed building for services between Liverpool and Dublin. He failed in his mission because Liverpool merchants and traders considered that the existing services, both sail and steam, were adequate to meet the trade requirements between the two countries.

Not deterred by his rebuff in Liverpool, Williams returned to Dublin and there he persevered with his project with such success that he returned to Liverpool in February 1823 to place an order with the shipbuilding firm of Wilson for a steamer, to be named the **City of Dublin**, which became the first vessel of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company, established in 1828.

Twenty years after the formation of the company, on 1st August 1848, the Admiralty vessels which carried the Irish mail were transferred from Liverpool to Holyhead. Four ships had been specially built for this service and they were all commanded by naval officers. They were the **Caradoc**, **Llewellyn**, **St Columba** and **Banshee**. The four sisters were capable of speeds of between 14 to 16 knots and took about 4hrs 30mins on the Holyhead - Kingstown passage.

About a month after the transfer of the service, a select committee on contract packet service concluded in its report that mails were conveyed at less cost by hired packets than by Her Majesty's vessels, and as a result of this finding it was decided to invite tenders for the conveyance of mails between Holyhead and Kingstown.

In response to its advertisement the Admiralty received two offers, one from the Chester and Holyhead Railway Company and another from the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company. The latter expressed its willingness to purchase the four Admiralty vessels then employed on the route.

The City of Dublin company realised the great importance of securing a foothold in the Holyhead to Kingstown service and with this end in view it submitted a tender of £25,000 per annum; £5,000 below that of the Chester and Holyhead Railway Company. The result was that the City of Dublin company obtained the contract and on 6th March 1850 the Admiralty requested the Treasury to sanction the acceptance of the company's offer, and it was formally ratified two days later.

The service under the terms of the contract began on 1st June 1850, but so far as the public was concerned the sea service continued much as before. The **St Columba** and the **Llewellyn** were bought by the company from the Admiralty. The latter, however, was not immediately available on account of a broken shaft and as a result the **Banshee** was substituted for a time.

The City of Dublin company required new tonnage to maintain the service as required by the contract. Accordingly it built the **Prince Arthur** which entered service in June 1851. With these ships the normal passage between Holyhead and Kingstown was 5hrs. 40mins. at an average speed of 12.2 knots.

Though the Government and the Post Office were satisfied with the service, there was a very strong feeling amongst the public that it was too slow and should be accelerated. With this end in view the City of Dublin company prepared a plan, the essence of which was, in the first instance, the construction of larger vessels capable of maintaining a speed of 17.5 knots. Second, special boat-trains should be introduced, and thirdly, there should be a travelling post office on the steamers to enable letters to be sorted on board, and thus ready for delivery on arrival at Dublin. It was further proposed that the railway line should be run on to the Admiralty Pier at Holyhead and on to the Carlisle Pier at Kingstown and passenger facilities provided.

On 3rd January 1859 a contract, embodying the above proposals, was completed between the Post Office, the City of Dublin company and the railway company. The payment for the sea service to the City of Dublin company was to be £85,900 per annum, subject to a deduction of half the passenger receipts earned over and above £3,500 a year. The contract was for a service of eleven hours between London and Kingstown with a penalty of £1-14s (£1.70p) for every minute over the contract time.

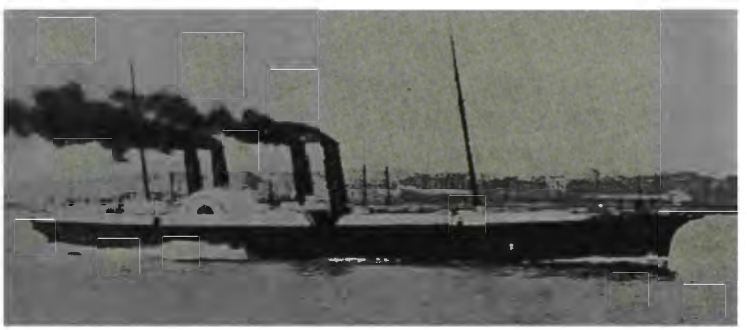
The City of Dublin company then placed an order for four vessels; three with Laird Brothers at Birkenhead and one with Samuda at London. Each vessel was 334ft in length, 35ft beam with a gross tonnage of 1,421. On trials, with a boiler pressure of 20 lbs psi. , a speed of 17.5 knots was attained. According to Denny and Barr in their paper *Developments of Machinery in Cross-Channel Vessels*, it required eighteen men to control the engines, four at each of the four hand wheels, one at the condenser and the chief engineer at the stop valve. All the firemen and greasers presumably lent a hand.

The new ships were named **Ulster**, **Munster**, **Leinster** and **Connaught**. The first three were flush decked when they entered service but it was soon found that it was impossible to drive them into heavy seas. Consequently the foredeck was covered in by a turtle-back deck extending aft as far as the forward boiler room. The **Connaught** was so fitted before she entered service but it is recorded by Edward Watson in *The Royal Mail to Ireland* that the turtle deck on this ship was not as strong as the others and was stove in by a heavy sea on 9th February,1861.

The great increase in size and power of these four vessels brought in its train an increased number of breakdowns. It was found that they were unable to work a 3hr. 45min. passage as required in the contract. The average speed over the period from 1st October 1860 to 31st December 1882, taking into account delays due to fog, storms and the following incidents - three collisions, two groundings, 16 broken shafts or other damage to the engines - was 13.8 knots, giving an average passage of 4hrs. 7mins. During the whole of this period the four vessels carried the mails by day, twice in each direction, without the loss of a single passenger life or of a mail bag.

Under the terms of the contract, the London and North Western Railway Company, as the main contractors, controlled the rate of fares charged by the City of

Dublin company for the sea passage. Early in 1880 the railway company reduced the fares on the express passenger steamers it operated between Holyhead and Dublin, but refused to allow the City of Dublin company to do likewise with the result that passenger traffic by the mail route fell off to an alarming extent. In 1881 the City of Dublin company laid the matter before the Railway Commissioners who investigated the complaint and ordered a reduction of fares on the mail route, and stipulated that the difference between the rates charged by the two companies should never exceed 10 per cent.



*The **Connaught** of 1860 leaving Kingstown (now Dun Laoghaire) in her original form.*

Shortly after this order was made, the City of Dublin company was informed by the Post Office that it wished to terminate the existing contract and invite tenders for an accelerated service between Holyhead and Kingstown. A protracted wrangle then began between the contracting companies and the Government. On 1st August 1883 the tender submitted by the City of Dublin company was accepted for the sea service and ratified on the 20th of that month.

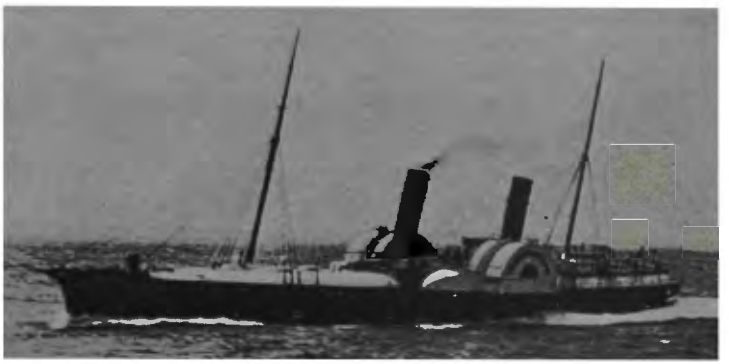
As there was insufficient time to build new vessels capable of meeting the conditions of the new contract, the City of Dublin company decided to re-boiler and modify the main engines of the existing ships in order to obtain the additional speed required. At the same time the passenger accommodation was improved and the marine post office enlarged. This was achieved by adding a long poop from abaft the after boiler room which provided sufficient space for additional cabins and greatly enlarged the second-class accommodation.

The **Leinster** was the first to come into service with all these alterations, making her first crossing in February 1885, and she was capable of the required additional speed without any difficulty. The arrangement of the new boilers had the effect of completely altering the appearance of the vessels because, instead of four funnels, they now had just two, well spaced - a change which greatly improved their appearance.

A new ship, the **Ireland**, entered service with the City of Dublin company in August 1885. With a length of 362ft, and a 38ft beam, she was of 1,952 gross tons and

had a speed of 20.5 knots, making her reputedly the fastest merchant ship of her day.

The accelerated service came into operation on 1st October 1885. In 1887 the average speed for the four older vessels was 16.25 knots as compared with their original average of 14.55 knots - no mean effort for vessels in their 27th year. The new contract was operated with complete regularity with an average passage time of 3hrs 37mins.



*The **Connaught** of 1859 following re-boilering in 1884 when her original four funnels were reduced to two.*

Between 1890 and 1892 a number of improvements were made on the Irish railway system which, at long last, put Kingstown in direct communication with all the Irish railway companies. Rail timings were greatly reduced which precipitated the question of the sea service being further accelerated. The suggestion was put forward that larger and more powerful vessels should be built capable of making the crossing in 2½ hours. The matter was brought up in Parliament in August 1893 and at the beginning of the following year Lord Morley, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, was pressed to invite tenders for an improved mail service.

The Postmaster General received deputations from Dublin, Belfast and Cork on the subject. They urged the need for a two-hour acceleration between London and Dublin which, they said, could be obtained due to the willingness of the existing contractors to provide such a service. On 24th May 1894 Lord Morley wrote to the Lord Mayor of Dublin to the effect that it had been decided to give notice to terminate the existing contracts and invite tenders for new ones. The Government stipulated that:

- There was to be an acceleration of two hours between London and Dublin.
- Ample accommodation for passengers must be provided.
- The rail and sea services were to be operated by separate contractors.

As usual the negotiations took several months but eventually the Postmaster General accepted, with certain modifications, the City of Dublin company's tender for a sea passage shortened by half an hour and for a period of 20 years, subject thereafter

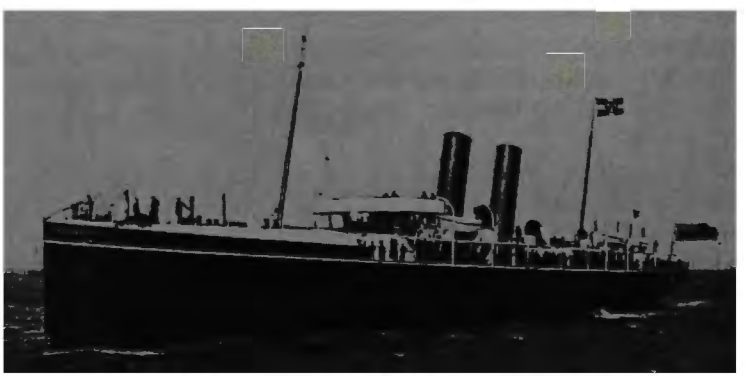
to a year's notice, with payment for this service at the rate of £100,000 per annum for the period; the Post Office to have a rebate of £2,000 a year on account of the passenger traffic. The contract was completed on 1st July 1895.

The City of Dublin company at once placed an order with Laird Brothers at Birkenhead for the construction of four identical twin-screw vessels of a very advanced design. They were to be built of steel with exceptionally fine lines and three decks, having a gross tonnage of 2,641 on dimensions of 372 ft overall length and a beam of 41.5ft. Twin screws would provide a speed of 23.5 knots, sufficient to enable them to fulfil the contract conditions even in heavy weather but, as a class, they were all capable of exceeding 24 knots. These vessels, certified to carry 1,400 passengers in two classes, were given the same names as the previous quartette: **Ulster**, **Munster**, **Leinster** and **Connaught**. The new ships were launched in quick succession: the first was the **Ulster** on 27th June 1896 and finally the **Connaught** on 21st September 1897.

All four vessels created something of a sensation in the field of cross-channel steamers when they entered service as they were far in advance in size, speed and accommodation of anything in that class. Like their predecessors they were equipped with very elaborate postal facilities and sorting offices, with accommodation for a staff of 30 Post Office sorters who could handle up to 250 bags of mail during the crossing.

The four new ships were all in service before the new contract came into operation and proved capable of cutting the crossing time by 45 minutes in moderate weather. From 1st April 1897 to 31st December 1898 the average speed of the four ships was 19.4 knots, giving an average passage of 2 hours 56 minutes, a gain of 41 minutes over the old time.

They proved to be magnificent sea boats, able to cope with a wide range of weather conditions without serious loss of speed; in fact the only weather which caused them to reduce speed to any appreciable amount was fog. With their high sharp bows, without flare, but surmounted by the 70-ft turtle-back deck they could steam at over 19 knots into the teeth of a gale, and cleave their way through heavy seas without shock, slamming or serious danger of suffering structural damage. They were real hard weather ships and their masters never hesitated to drive them.



*The **Connaught** of 1897, clearly showing the 70-ft turtle-back.*

With this fine quartette the mail service was carried on for 17½ years with the utmost regularity, indeed, their time keeping was phenomenal. Loss of time due to accident or breakdown of machinery was so rare that it had but little effect on the crossing averages. Perhaps the most serious mishap which occurred during the period of the contract was when, on 9th September 1902, the **Leinster** rammed and sank the Kish Bank lightship in dense fog, fortunately without any loss of life. The **Leinster** was undamaged except for dents on her bow plates. The last 2½ years of the contract period was completed with only three vessels on account of the **Connaught** having been requisitioned by the Government for troop transport duties.

For the first two years of the First World War the Irish Mail service, so far as the public was concerned, continued much as before, but with increasing difficulties as time went on for those responsible for operating it. On the navigation side, for instance, steaming at speed without lights had its problems. With only three vessels, maintenance became a serious problem and it became a grim struggle to keep going when the submarine campaign reached its peak during 1917.

Little did the people of Dublin realise at this time that they were witnessing 'the beginning of the end' of the old company which for so long had been responsible for the carriage of the Irish Mail across the sea. The first blow fell on 3rd March 1917 when the **Connaught** was torpedoed while on her way from Le Havre to Southampton, fortunately without any troops on board. She was struck by two torpedoes, the first exploding aft on the starboard side. The port engine was stopped immediately, but the starboard engine raced and there was some difficulty in stopping it. A quarter of an hour later the second torpedo struck her amidships and four minutes later the **Connaught** sank, taking three of her crew with her. The 74 survivors, including her master Captain Thomson, were picked up seven hours later by the hospital ship **Grantully Castle**.

Three weeks after this incident the mail contract expired, but it was temporarily renewed. However, the subsidy was reduced by £20,000 per annum.

The submarine campaign in the Irish Sea was intensified in 1917, and the City of Dublin company urged the authorities to take steps to protect the mail boats which were in the unenviable position in that they were obliged to put to sea in all circumstances under the contract conditions. Had the company kept its mail steamers in port when submarines were about without the consent of the Post Office, which it always refused, the contract would have been annulled. The company endeavoured to impress on the Admiralty, the Board of Trade and the Post Office the vital need for an escort, but to no avail.

The mail steamers had many narrow escapes. On 27th December 1917 a torpedo missed the **Leinster** by just a few yards. After that incident an escort was provided, but only for a short period. Subsequently the steamers were on their own again except for occasions such as when American troops were being carried. Thus they had to depend on their speed to elude the attentions of submarines and in this, it has to be admitted, they were very successful.

On 10th October 1918 the City of Dublin company's proud record of safety was shattered. On that fateful day the **Leinster** left Kingstown for Holyhead with 687 passengers and a crew of 70. When she was about 16 miles out from Kingstown, in

heavy weather, she was stuck by two torpedoes, the first exploding just forward of the bridge. She sank in 10 to 12 minutes after being struck in the region of the engine room by the second torpedo.

The destroyers **Lively** and **Millard** immediately went to the scene of the sinking but despite their rescue attempts, seriously hampered by the high seas, 501 lives were lost including that of the master, Captain Birch. It is a strange fact that some months after her loss, the **Leinster's** foremast found its way back to Kingstown harbour.

On 23rd October 1918 the **Ulster** was struck by a torpedo which providentially failed to explode.

When the war ended, the City of Dublin company was left with only the Ulster and the **Munster**. To maintain the service it had to charter vessels which was both costly and unsatisfactory. On the other hand, the London and North Western Railway had lost two of its express steamers, but had its Greenore vessels to draw on as reserves while, at the same time, it had four new ships under construction.

When, therefore, the question of a new mail contract came up for consideration, the railway company was in a very strong position to obtain the award for the through service. It was felt, however, that the City of Dublin company, was entitled to consideration in view of its long and very satisfactory service and the circumstances in which its fleet had been depleted. The railway company put in such an attractive bid for the through service that it secured the new contract and at the same time agreed to take on a large proportion of the shore staff and crews of the City of Dublin company.

Thus, on 27th November 1920, the **Munster** for the last time carried the Irish Mail from Holyhead to Kingstown. After completing discharge she sailed back to Holyhead in company with her sister the **Ulster** - two fine old ships which had served the public and the Post Office well for over 23 years. Their careers ended nearly four years later in a German shipbreaker's yard.

So ended an era of cross-channel service which had extended over a period of seventy years. The City of Dublin company had consistently been in the forefront of technical development. The vessels it had built in 1860, 1885 and 1896 were in size, speed and performance far ahead of anything in their class at the time of their appearance and had been amongst the fastest merchant ships in the world. The Irish Mail services had been operated with conspicuous success for all of the seventy years during which the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company had been awarded the contract. ▯

Oh, what a surprise !!!

"When I was a cadet we were not allowed to go ashore without first reporting to and receiving permission from the mate or master. On one occasion I was lectured by the captain on the evils of a local music hall which evidently left nothing to the imagination. *'There are things there that you are not supposed to see, my son. Avoid it'*. Naturally, when I finally got ashore, it was the first place I headed for. And there I saw what I wasn't supposed to see. I saw the captain."

Captain T. Gilchrist writing in 'The Seafarer' in 1954.

WHAT SHIP ? - UNIDENTIFIED HARRISON LINE STEAMER

From the Editor:

Some months ago, I was listing a collection of shipping photographs which had been bequeathed to me, and I came across a 'snap' of a Harrison Line steamer (reproduced below). This had obviously been taken from Wallasey's Egremont Promenade (note the Liver Building just forward of the superstructure). However, I had no idea what ship this was, so who better to write to than LNRS Vice-President Graeme Cubbin, former Master and Marine Superintendent of the Harrison Line, and author of that superb book "Harrisons of Liverpool, A Chronicle of Ships and Men, 1830-2002".

Graeme replied:

I studied the photograph with interest. The most notable recognition feature is the pair of Samson posts on the poop. These differentiate her from a vast majority of Harrison ships, but, alas, they are not unique. Several Rankin Gilmour purchases had this feature, but we can discount them because other features do not match.

Seven other possibilities remain:

AUTHOR (2), 1905	INTOMBI, 1912
PROFESSOR (2), 1910	BARRISTER (2), 1915
STUDENT (2), 1910	SENATOR (3), 1917
ARTIST (2), 1912	

Of these, the **Barrister** can be discounted: built in1915 and sunk in 1917, she would never have had an opportunity to wear Harrison colours.

Two others, the **Artist** and the **Author**, did not survive the First World War.

and it was only after that period that amateur photography with Brownie box-cameras really took off. So eliminate ?

The cowls of the **Intombi's** Samson posts were apparently of the horned type, while those in the photograph appear to be round.

The stubby vents abreast the mainmast seem to eliminate the **Senator**, whose vents were more slender.

So my money is on the **Student** or the **Professor** (1910-1930) - take your pick!

Graeme Cubbin, 3rd December, 2004.

My next move was to refer to Graeme's book. This is a superb volume, in a class of its own, and the like of which we shall probably never see again . If I were to be sent to Roy Plomley's mythical desert island, then this is the book I would choose to take with me. j.s.

STUDENT (2) 1910-1930 Steel steamship rigged as two-masted schooner. Two decks and five holds. Official Number 128024. 3,580 gross tons, 2,304 nett, 5,988 deadweight. Length 350ft, breadth 46.1ft. International Code: H Q M G.

The **Student** was launched on 8th February 1910 from the yard of Charles Connell & Co Ltd (Yard No. 332) at Scotstoun. She was delivered to the company on 10th March 1910 at a cost of £39,684. Shortly after this she sailed to Mexico on her maiden voyage under Captain R. Richards. On 7th October 1912 the **Student** was in collision in the approaches to Cabedelo, Brazil and she veered out of the channel and grounded in the shallows of Rio Paraibo. After being refloated she ran hard aground again on the English Bank. Three weeks later, after being lightened by jettisoning cargo, the **Student** was towed into deep water by two tugs, two trawlers and the company's **Gladiator**. The cost of these operations and subsequent repairs was estimated at £18,000, borne by the company's own Insurance Account. The **Student's** master, Captain Evans, resigned in the aftermath of these incidents.

In May 1917 the ship was requisitioned by the Government and loaded at Liverpool with military stores destined for Archangel. To obtain an Ice-class Certificate, the **Student's** lower forepeak was stiffened with 12inch x 12inch timbers.

On 4th January 1927, whilst loading for the West Indies at Plantation Quay, Glasgow, the **Student** was damaged by the Anchor liner **Massilia**. The latter vessel was canting off Stobcross Quay, across the Clyde from Plantation Quay, when inward bound from New York. She took a sheer, careered heavily into the **Student** and stove in the plating on the port side in way of No.2 hold which began to make water. The cargo was rapidly discharged and the vessel entered dry dock for repairs.

On 20th February 1930 Harrisons sold the **Student** to the Compagnie des Bateaux à Vapeurs du Nord, Dunkirk, for £13,402 and she was renamed **Lillois**. Just a month later the **Lillois** ran ashore off Oran when on passage from Algiers to Antwerp. She was refloated after discharging some 150 tons of cargo into barges. On 17th December 1942 the **Lillois** was taken over by German forces following their

occupation of Vichy France. Just over three months later, on 28th March 1943, the **Lillois** (*ex* **Student**) was torpedoed and sunk by the British submarine **Torbay**, two miles south of Cape Scalea, Italy.

PROFESSOR (2) 1910 - 1930 Steel steamship rigged as two-masted schooner. Two decks and five holds. Official Number 128017. 3,581 gross tons, 2,288 nett, 5,930 tons deadweight. Length: 350.2ft x 46.15ft breadth. International Code : H Q K F.

The **Professor** was launched by Workman, Clark & Company at Belfast (Yard No. 288) on 30th November 1909. She was delivered at a cost of £39,677. On 13th January 1916 the **Professor** was requisitioned by the Shipping Controller and nine days later sailed from Liverpool for the Mediterranean. As she was approaching Alexandria on 8th February 1916 she was attacked by a German submarine on the surface. The **Professor** retaliated with her 4.7-inch gun and successfully fought off the challenge.

On 7th September 1925, whilst lying at the Point Docks, Durban, the **Armadale Castle** (12,973grt) was berthed alongside the little **Professor**. That night a gale sprang up, and the Union Castle liner bore heavily against the smaller ship, grinding her against the floating fenders and causing several strakes of her shell plating to be set in.

Four days later on 11th September 1925, the coal in the **Professor's** port side 'tween deck bunkers began heating and at the same time a quantity of old coal in the bridge deck alleyways began to emit toxic fumes. Although most of the crew lived forward under the forecastle head, a certain number lived amidships, off the main deck alleyways. Among them were the Bosun, Carpenter, Lamptrimmer and two Ordinary Seamen. Between their quarters and the bridge deck bunker space was a wooden bulkhead and during the night lethal coal fumes filtered through into the cabins where the men lay sleeping. The Ordinary Seamen and the Lamptrimmer were found dead in their bunks next morning.

John Dick, the Carpenter, lucky to be alive, was then given the macabre task of making three handsome coffins for his departed shipmates, who now lie buried in Durban's Municipal Cemetery.

On 17th October 1927 the **Professor** grounded on the bar at Puerto Mexico, causing considerable damage. She proceeded to New Orleans where temporary repairs were effected, enabling her to proceed to Manchester where permanent repairs could be carried out.

In April 1930 the **Professor** was sold to the Pentwyn Steamship Co. Ltd. (Lambert, Barnett and Co., Managers) of Cardiff for approximately £12,000 and renamed **Pentrent**. In September 1933 the old ship was sold to the Italian General Shipping Co. Ltd. for £3,600 for onward sale to Italian shipbreakers at Monfalcone.

First Voyage - 1925 style

A Harrison Line shipmaster, the late Captain H.G. Skelly, made his first voyage to sea in the **Professor** in 1925 and penned a brief account of those early days. He retained a vivid recollection of driving from Euston Station to West India Dock in a

hansom cab. He was clearly disappointed, however, to find that his first assignment as a cadet was to a 'third-class' ship. Apparently, according to Captain Skelly, *"The largest and finest Harrison vessels were known as 'first-class'. The* ***Professor's*** *officers and crew were all junior men ... commanded by a short, stout shipmaster, Captain Thomas Chapman. He was in his fifties, rotund, red of face and quick of temper, but his practical application to the existing order and conditions left no doubt that he managed the sea in all its moods as he managed his officers and crew. He was sailing ship trained, held an Extra Master's Certificate and under his bluff exterior was a generous, kindly man."*

On 2nd August 1925 the **Professor** sailed from London, minus a radio officer whose union had called a strike. Nevertheless, the company had applied for and been granted a permit to sail the ship without one.

Thirty days later, on 1st September, the ship arrived at Durban. During the long voyage, records Captain Skelly, *"We had consumed all the fish, flesh and vegetables from the ice box; half the salt pork and salt beef from the brine casks; and even some of the Steward's very precious tins of meat from his storeroom. We had, incidentally, used all the coal from the bunker spaces and had spent a week hauling up extra coal from No.4 deep tank to the afterdeck and trundling it through to the side bunker hatches in wheelbarrows.*

"Officers, cadets and sailors worked together on this task, the winch drivers being the Chief and Second Engineer, and the Chief Officer the hatchman. My reward at 17.00 was an enquiring word from old Tommy Chapman and three tailor-made cigarettes from his little tin box. For those three cigarettes one would have gladly worked a further three hours, as fourpence per day pay did not allow one the luxury of factory-produced cigarettes, and one of those at night was all the luxury one craved."

It was while the **Professor** was at Durban that the crew learned of the impending cut in the wages of all British seamen. A mass meeting of all the crews of British ships in port was called and it was decided to walk ashore in protest and stay ashore. Unaccountably, by modern practices, the cooks and stewards remained loyal and life on board continued much as usual. It was during this period that the young Skelly had his first glimpse of life in the longed-for 'first-class' ship. This happened to be the **Astronomer** which was also in Durban - but that's another story !

HARRISONS OF LIVERPOOL : A CHRONICLE OF SHIPS AND MEN, 1830-2002
By Graeme Cubbin
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OBITUARY

GEORGE BONWICK

Journalist, Publisher, Shipping Critic

by LNRS Member Captain B.S. McManus

George Bonwick died half way through the morning watch (6.am) on Saturday, 30th October, 2004 in hospital where he had been admitted with bronchitis the previous Thursday. He was born at Sunderland on 6th October 1914.

George Bonwick's father, a 2nd Engineer, was lost when his ship was torpedoed in the Irish Sea. Being an orphan, George qualified for entry into the Royal Merchant Seamen's Orphanage, Bear Wood, Wokingham. (It is now Bearwood College).

In 1928 George began serving his time with Common Brothers of Newcastle and stayed with them for ten years. On completing his time he was not old enough to sit for his 2nd Mate's Certificate, so he sailed as an A.B. and became a member of the National Union of Seamen.

After leaving Common Brothers, George Bonwick sailed for one voyage with the Royal Fleet Auxiliaries. His ship called at Freetown where he caught malaria. At the next port, Trinidad, he was hospitalised and put off pay. Although George took his case to the Navigators' and Engineer Officers' Union, he got nowhere. On leaving the R.F.A. in 1939 he sat and obtained his Master's Foreign-Going Certificate after spending only a fortnight at the navigation school. He then joined a collier as her master at Blyth. However, after one voyage, George decided that if he was staying at sea, he wanted to sail on passenger ships and he joined Canadian Pacific.

George Bonwick was 5th Officer aboard the **Empress of Britain** when, approximately 60 miles north-west of Donegal Bay on 26th October 1940, she was hit by two bombs from a Focke-Wulf Kondor which set her on fire. The ship was more or less in two parts and George was the only deck officer in the stern section. He was mentioned in Despatches for his actions. Two days later, on 28th October 1940, U-32 delivered the *coup de grâce* with two torpedoes.

In the Spring of 1944 George Bonwick was serving on board the **Duchess of Richmond**. Shortly before arriving at Port Said her captain was taken ill and the Chief Officer took command. 2nd Officer Bonwick was promoted Chief Officer. Whilst transiting the Suez Canal, the ship tied up to the western bank. The ropes were straining and, fearing an accident, Bonwick ordered the forecastle to be cleared. A rope parted and its recoil knocked him off his feet. Both his legs sustained compound complicated fractures. He was in hospital for nearly three years. First he was bed-bound for six months at a military hospital in Egypt before being repatriated. On arrival at Liverpool he was taken to Alder Hey (the famous children's hospital which had had two extra wards built on to accept military casualties). Both his legs were in plaster from the foot to the hip. The left leg healed in a year or so. His right leg

required more grafts but whilst the bones knitted satisfactorily, the circulation around the wound had been more or less destroyed and gave him trouble until his leg was amputated on 9th November 1999.

George Bonwick began writing articles, always on shipping subjects, for the Liverpool *Journal of Commerce*. One day he received a letter from the editor who invited him to join the staff after his discharge from hospital. Writing the leading article six days a week was wonderful training. In early 1946, although still a patient at Alder Hey, George took over as editor of *Sea Breezes*.

He now turned to writing books. His first was *Lifeboat Handbook*, then *Seamanship Handbook*, followed by *Ship's Business*, in collaboration with E.C. Steer, one of the nautical department's staff. In 1965 he edited *Automation on Shipboard* for the International Labour Organization.

George Bonwick's books sold very well and the British Shipping Federation issued his *Lifeboat Handbook* to every deck boy rating going to sea for the first time. This success led to him founding the Maritime Press and a monthly journal *Shipping Times*, which he wrote from cover to cover. At the time of the 1956 Suez crisis he changed his magazine's title to *Tanker Times* which later became *Tanker & Bulker International*.

Whilst he was at sea George had gained tanker experience and had studied tanker operation closely. So after completing *Ship's Business* he began to write a book about tankers. However, G.A.B. King, who later became chairman of BP Tankers was looking for a publisher for his book on tankers and Bonwick realized that King's book was better than his. This led to him abandoning his own book and publishing King's *Tanker Practice*.

During 1954 George Bonwick carried out research into slop facilities at tanker loading ports for James Callaghan who was Chairman of the Council for the Protection of Rural England. At about this time George was the adviser to the United Kingdom Pilots' Association of which Callaghan was the President.

A Norwegian American, Earleng Naess, wanted Bonwick to work with him as their views were in harmony. Consequently George sold his publishing interests to George Philip & Son and set up a consultancy with Naess as his first and very substantial client. Other clients followed, mainly American but also Japanese and Dutch. He did not work with British concerns.

Over the years George Bonwick bought shares in many British shipping companies ranging from the household-name liner companies such as Cunard, P & O and Ocean to little-known tramp companies such as Idwal Williams, London and Overseas Freighters and Ropner. As a shareholder he was able to attend the companies' Annual General Meetings where he often expressed very strong criticism indeed, some of which found its way into the national press. In the early 1960s he led a group of small shareholders in an unsuccessful campaign against building a replacement for the **Queen Mary**.

By 1967 George's reputation was well established and the National Union of Seamen (NUS) retained him as its consultant. His reports constituted the bulk of the NUS's submissions to the Rochdale Committee of Inquiry into Shipping which was published in May 1970.

During the 1970s George Bonwick's main target for criticism was Ocean Transport and Trading. He, and he alone, believed Ocean to be the worst managed shipping company in the UK which would be sure to founder if the management was not changed drastically. It wasn't and, as is known, the shipping side collapsed. Since then the non-shipping side has prospered under able management.

In 1981, forty-one years after the **Empress of Britain** was lost, George and his wife went to Kiel to meet his old antagonists, the Focke-Wulf Kondor pilot Bernhard Jopert and the U-boat captain Hans Jenisch.

During the 1980s Bonwick gave evidence to the many government inquiries into shipping. He produced *British Shipping: An Independent Study* in 1981. On 21st March 1988 George submitted a paper on industrial relations to the Transport Committee.

George was a frequent letter writer to the *Financial Times* and *Lloyd's List*. He would not hesitate in requesting an explanation of a shipping incident from the company's chairman. But anyone in shipping, from a journalist to an educationalist who made a mistake, was likely to receive the wrath of his pen. He found so many errors in *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea* that he wrote to the Oxford University Press enclosing a copy of his findings and he asked for his money back. He got it, but the Press never asked for the book to be returned!

George Bonwick is survived by his wife Elizabeth, daughter Denise, granddaughter Katherine, grandson Oliver, and Oliver's five year old daughter.

George Bonwick, born 6th October 1914, died 30th October 2004, aged 90

SIGNING ON

"Shipping Office, ten a.m. tomorrow". The word goes round the ship. The purser looks worried as only pursers can look worried. His is a worrying job with income tax, code and pool numbers and all the other etceteras which make life up to date. The chief officer counts, for the fiftieth time, the number of lifeboat tickets among his crowd. Chief stewards are always a boy or two short. And chief engineers. Who knows what a Chief thinks?

But ten o'clock next morning puts an end to all thinking. Punctually at a quarter past ten the master and purser arrive with brief cases and papers. It takes ten minutes to gather wits, ink and blotting paper, and another five for a pen with a nib of writeable qualities: then, as an afterthought, a shipping master. You find them in a cubby hole like a civil servant's nest. But you cannot do much without a shipping master, despite the fact that he can do nothing without seamen. These are mere trifles. They are nothing compared with the signing, the act of putting name to paper. For seamen, like film stars, must sign a contract.

If there are seven wonders of the world, surely the eighth is the fact that no matter how many times a man signs on, even the oldest and most experienced errs at signing on time. He is a bold man who walks to the articles and without being told or prompted signs both copies in the correct place in the correct way. If he does he is the clever unusual type. Watch him! The average chap approaches the printed sheets, looks apprehensive and seeks relief looking for the pen.

'W.G.J' writing in 'The Nautical Magazine' in February 1952.

A 'JUST-SO STORY'

The first steamer owned by the Lamport and Holt Line had a white funnel with a black top. This was at some period in the 1860s. On one of her early voyages whilst lying at Rio de Janeiro, the first mate told the bosun to put the hands on washing and painting the funnel.

This was done and after the washing had been carried out the mate decided to give the funnel a coat of blue paint, of which there was plenty, as it would make the white show up well. The funnel was accordingly painted blue and then the white was applied. After a while the bosun reported that there was no white paint left. The mate was not on good terms with the master and when he asked for more white paint for the funnel, the captain told him to go to the devil.

Realising that he would be dismissed on arrival back at Liverpool, the mate told the bosun to finish off the funnel with white as far as it would go. He did so, and it was found to reach from the bottom of the black top, about halfway down the remainder of the funnel. In due course the ship arrived back at Liverpool where Mr Lamport and Mr R.D. Holt were on the Pier Head to meet her. As she came up the Mersey, Mr Holt said to Mr Lamport: *"It's her, but what has happened to the funnel?"* Mr Lamport replied: *"I don't know, but its very attractive. Let's keep it as our funnel colour."*

The master reported the wicked and careless mate for running out of white paint, but Mr Lamport and Mr Holt were so pleased with the new funnel colours that he was rapidly promoted to master.

Captain H.J. Chubb, of West Kirby, writing in 'Sea Breezes' in January, 1953.

SEA TRANSPORT FOR VICTORY
JUNE 1944 - AUGUST 1945

by Captain S.W. Roskill, R.N.

This article is a précis of Chapter 14 of Captain Roskill's book – 'A Merchant Fleet in War' which tells the story of the Alfred Holt fleet in World War 2.

For nearly five years the Holt fleet had endured every form of enemy attack and the losses suffered at the hands of enemy warships and raiders, submarines, bombers and mines had been very heavy indeed.

However, by June 1944 the whole picture of the war at sea was changing. Not only was the offensive grand strategy of the Allies unfolding in every theatre, but we had gained so firm a mastery over the enemy's varied onslaught on our shipping that the crews of British merchantmen no longer set out on their long voyages well knowing that there was a strong possibility that they would never reach the end of them. The full extent of the change which had come about is strikingly demonstrated by the fact that, although several Holt ships suffered damage during the last fifteen months of the war, only one, the **Troilus**, was sunk.

The **Troilus** had sailed from Colombo, homeward-bound, at the end of August 1944. Her cargo of coconut oil, tea and copra was consigned to the Ministry of Food and she was routed independently by way of the Suez Canal. At about 02.30 on 1st September 1944, when she was about half way between Colombo and Aden, she was torpedoed by U.859 in the engine room on the starboard side. Fifteen minutes after the first explosion two more torpedoes struck the ship in rapid succession. Out of the crew of 83 and 18 passengers a muster revealed that six had been lost. Five lifeboats had got away safely and the survivors were picked up by HMS **Taff** and HMS **Nadder** and landed at Aden on 10th September, 1944.

By late 1944 all over the world, from the Arctic to the Pacific, Allied merchant ships were delivering an ever-increasing flood of soldiers, vehicles, ammunition, fuel and stores of every conceivable type to the theatres where our offensive blows were gaining steadily in momentum.

From the British point of view by far the greatest responsibility was at this time the build-up of Allied forces preparatory to their re-entry into the continent of Europe. This process had begun in 1943 but in the early months of 1944 it was vastly accelerated. Because the invasion of Normandy was launched from the shores of Britain it is too little appreciated that the seaborne movements on which its success entirely depended began far overseas – and especially in North America. In the first six months of 1944 nearly a million fighting men were carried across the North Atlantic – mainly in British liners; while fuel, stores and raw materials were brought in from all over the world.

By May 1944 every British harbour was crammed far beyond its normal capacity with ships and craft, many of them of strange new types, each of which was delivering some vital cargo, or was preparing to play a part in the great enterprise.

The plan for operation 'Neptune', the maritime side of the whole 'Overlord' undertaking, as the invasion of Normandy was called, was simple enough in its

essentials, but its execution was extremely complex. The landings in Seine Bay by five British, Canadian and American assault divisions necessitated assembling the greatest armada of warships and merchantmen which has ever set out from British ports. In all 1,213 warships, ranging from battleships to midget submarines, over 4,000 combined operation vessels and craft, and hundreds of merchantmen from large liners serving as Infantry Landing Ships to tugs and trawlers, were allocated to the undertaking.

The British assault forces were to attack in three sectors in Seine Bay called, from east to west, 'Sword', Juno' and 'Gold'; while the Americans were to land in two sectors (called 'Omaha' and 'Utah') a short distance to the west of them. The **Glenearn** and the **Glenroy**, which had recently returned from the Mediterranean and were still serving as Landing Ships Infantry, were allocated to the 'Sword' and 'Gold' assault forces respectively. The **Ascanius**, which had been employed as a troop transport since 1941 and had made many voyages in the Indian Ocean, was now detailed as a depot ship for the Eastern (or British) Naval Task Force, while the **Antenor**, which had escorted many Indian Ocean convoys during her time as an Armed Merchant Cruiser, was requisitioned to work on sea transport service between the Solent and the assault area.

In May 1944 the invasion convoys began to assemble in the ports from which they were to take their departure. Harbours to the east of the Isle of Wight were allocated to the British assault convoys, while the Americans used those to the west. Minesweeping flotillas were organized to clear a passage across the Channel, and to render the waters off the assault area safe.

On 23rd May 1944 General Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander, provisionally fixed D-Day for 5th June. The soldiers now began to embark, and on 25th May Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, the Allied Naval Commander, ordered all holders of the operation orders for 'Neptune' to open them. The first outward movements began on 3rd June; but next day the weather was unfavourable and General Eisenhower therefore postponed the undertaking for 24 hours. Very early on the 5th June the Supreme Commander took an irrevocable decision – that the invasion of France would take place the following day. A steady stream of convoys now put to sea, passing in turn through a point south of the Isle of Wight, known as Piccadilly Circus, and then turning south through the channels already cleared by the minesweepers. The weather was still unkindly, but they pressed on steadily towards Seine Bay. Losses whilst on passage were insignificant, and in the early hours of 6th June the assault convoys anchored in their lowering positions about seven miles offshore. At 05.30 all along the fifty mile front, the bombardment ships opened up on the defences of Hitler's vaunted 'Atlantic Wall', while the assault craft formed up in their flotillas and began to move inshore. 'H-Hour' was between 06.30 and 07.45 in different sectors, according to the height of the tide, and all the British forces got ashore with far less difficulty than had been expected. The **Glenroy** and the **Glenearn**, both well experienced in this type of work, hoisted out their landing craft with impeccable efficiency, and sent the assault troops away to their allocated beaches exactly on time. By the following midnight nearly 130,000 Allied soldiers were ashore, with hundreds of tanks and guns to support them. The greatest danger to the expeditionary forces arose not from the enemy's varied countermeasures, but from a violent storm which struck the mass of shipping off Seine Bay on 19th June and blew for three days. Unloading came to a

virtual standstill, and hundreds of the smaller craft were driven ashore. Beaches were strewn with wreckage, piled up in seemingly inextricable confusion. It took a month to make good the deficiencies caused by the storm.

On 6th June the Americans, who had landed on the east coast of the Cotentin peninsula, captured Cherbourg. The port's facilities and equipment were, however, badly wrecked, and the waters of the harbour were so thickly strewn with mines that three weeks elapsed before any deep-draft ships could enter. None the less, we were now less dependent on the vagaries of the weather, and on the protection provided by the artificial harbour which was being built off the British assault area, but was still far from completed.

As soon as the enemy became aware that a serious invasion was in progress, his U-boats began to move into the Channel from their Biscay bases, bombers attacked the shipping in the crowded anchorages, torpedo craft tried to penetrate the screen of patrol vessels we had established, whilst aircraft dropped mines in the waters off the assault area. It was the mines, and especially the new type operated by the change of pressure caused by a ship passing overhead, that caused the greatest trouble. Indeed we never developed a satisfactory method of sweeping them. Among the ships damaged was the **Glenroy** which struck a mine on 17th June, had her engine room flooded, and had to be towed to Portsmouth.

As to the U-boats, as soon as they entered the Channel they were severely harried by our sea and air patrols and suffered heavy losses. Few of them managed to penetrate as far as the routes used by our cross-Channel traffic, but one of those that did so (U.621) torpedoed the **Ascanius** off Cap Barfleur. This was the only casualty suffered by the Holt fleet in Operation 'Neptune', and Allied shipping losses as a whole never came near to endangering the success of the undertaking.

By 5th July, only 29 days since the invasion had been launched, one million Allied soldiers had landed in France, the German counter-attacks had all been held, and we were preparing to break out of the beach-head. This would threaten all the enemy's bases on the Biscay coast, and early in August they therefore began to move the U-boats to Norway. This transfer was carried out with total success, largely because the new 'Schnorkel' breathing tube, which enabled a submarine to stay submerged for very long periods, had greatly reduced the effectiveness of the short-wave radar sets ('Huff-Duff') which had brought us such great benefits during the earlier phases of the Battle of the Atlantic. In September 1944 the 'Schnorkel' U-boats began to infest our coastal waters where they lay in wait for passing convoys, and that campaign lasted until the end of the war.

On 15th August, six weeks after the landing in Normandy, a predominantly American army was landed on the south coast of France. Little resistance was encountered, the northward advance was rapid, and Toulon and Marseilles were both soon captured. This put an end to the air and U-boat attacks on our Mediterranean convoys.

As soon as the success of the Normandy invasion was assured, the Admiralty prepared to resume the Arctic convoys, which had been suspended since the previous March. As the **Tirpitz** was still in Altenfiord and there were two flotillas of U-boats in north Norway, strong escorts had to be provided. But we could now spare adequate forces for these protracted operations, and the convoys of 1944-45 never underwent

such severe ordeals as the earlier ones – except at the hands of the weather. On 15th August the **Samgara** and the **Samidway**, both manned and managed by Alfred Holt, sailed from Loch Ewe in Convoy JW 59, the first Arctic convoy of the new series. One of the escorts was sunk by a U-boat but all 33 merchantmen arrived safely in Kola Inlet on 25th August. The two Holt managed ships returned home in Convoy RA 60, and their arrival in Loch Ewe marked the end of the company's participation in the long and stormy saga of the Arctic convoys. In total these convoys cost Britain 89 merchantmen and 18 warships but they delivered about 4 million tons of stores, 5,000 tanks and over 7000 aircraft to our Russian Allies.

To return to Western Europe, after breaking out of the Normandy beach-head in August 1944 the Allied armies swept rapidly across France and Belgium to capture Antwerp on 4th September. Most of the French Channel ports fell during this great advance. But they were too small, and the enemy had wrecked and blocked them too thoroughly to enable the vast quantities of supplies needed by the armies to be unloaded in them. The great need was, therefore, to get the port of Antwerp, which was virtually intact, open and working. The Germans, however, still held both banks of the River Scheldt leading to it and little was done to loosen the enemy's grip on the river until the middle of October. Not until we had seized the island of Walcheren at the mouth of the Scheldt by assault from the sea in early November did German resistance crumple, and soon afterwards the Navy was able to start clearing the mines from 80 miles of estuary and river. At the end of November 1944 the first merchantmen reached Antwerp, and thereafter convoys sailed steadily to and from the Thames. But the long delay in opening Antwerp probably contributed to our failure to defeat Germany in the autumn of 1944.

Throughout the 1944-45 winter, which was a very severe one, the Germans attacked the Thames-Scheldt convoys with every weapon at their disposal, and there were always about a dozen 'Schnorkel' U-boats lying in wait in our coastal waters. The Allies were anxious about the new types of U-boat, with much higher underwater speed, which we knew the Germans were building in large numbers, and with which they might well have regained the initiative. Fortunately the war ended before more than a handful of them had entered service. During this final phase Dönitz also sent a few boats to widely dispersed remote waters. But as nearly all our shipping was now convoyed and covered by strong sea and air forces, their successes were few and their losses were heavy.

On 29th April 1945 all the German forces in Italy surrendered unconditionally, and so ended the five year struggle for control of the Middle East and of the Mediterranean sea routes. Five days later Dönitz ordered all U-boats to cease hostilities and to return to their bases, and on 8th May the Admiralty broadcast the historic message that the U-boats had been ordered to surface, report their positions, and then proceed to certain designated British ports. So began the surrender of the most ruthless and dangerous enemies ever to attack the merchant shipping on which Britain's survival depended. To British seamen the U-boat was always the principal enemy, and they knew that they would never again be able to sail 'on their lawful occasions' until the seas had been cleansed of them. In all the Germans built 1,162 U-boats between 1939 and 1945, of which 784 were destroyed. Of the 632 sunk at sea, 500 fell to British or British controlled forces. But, out of the total Allied loss of 5,150

merchantmen (21½ million tons), 2,828 (over 14½ million tons or 68 per cent of the total) were sunk by U-boats. As the experiences of the Holt fleet clearly proved, neither the warship raiders, the disguised raiders, the bombers nor the mines came anywhere near to cutting Britain's lifeline: but the U-boats certainly did.

We must now retrace our steps to the closing weeks of 1944 in order to review the final stages of the conflict against Japan. In December the British Pacific Fleet began to form in Ceylon, where its strength was to be built up before moving to Australia. The chief problem that had to be surmounted before our ships could merge with the American Navy was the provision of a 'Fleet Train' of merchantmen capable of keeping them supplied with fuel, stores and ammunition while operating in waters remote from any fixed base. The Americans had by this time created a huge and highly efficient floating supply organisation. But we had promised that our warships would be self-supporting in all important aspects; and we were still so very short of modern merchantmen that it was extraordinarily difficult to find suitable ships. The Admiralty finally collected some sixty ships, though not without a good deal of argument with the Ministry of War Transport, which always (and sometimes justifiably) held that the fighting services were extravagant in the use of precious tonnage.

The Fleet Train was in the main to carry supplies from Sydney to the intermediate base at Manus in the Admiralty Islands (north of Papua in the Bismarck Sea), or to the Leyte Gulf. The **Agamemnon** and the **Menestheus**, which had been requisitioned and converted to minelayers early in the war, were among the ships taken up for the Fleet Train – to serve as 'amenity ships'. In November 1944 they both sailed via the Panama Canal for Vancouver, where they were to be converted. The **Menestheus** did join the British Pacific Fleet – though not until the war was over: but the **Agamemnon** was returned to her owners before her conversion was completed. In retrospect this seems to have been a great waste of two fine ships. The Glen Line's **Denbighshire** arrived in Sydney in February 1945 to serve as a Victualling Store Issue Ship, and was soon sent on first to Manus and then to Leyte; while the **Glenartney** was attached to the fleet's 'Logistic Support Group' in a similar capacity to the **Denbighshire**. The main body of the British Pacific Fleet reached Australia early in February 1945, and on 15th March its commander reported his ships ready for service with Admiral Nimitz's Central Pacific Forces.

Meanwhile, in the south-east Asia theatre the campaign in Burma was progressing very satisfactorily, and on 3rd May 1945 the Fourteenth Army advancing down the Irrawaddy and a seaborne assault force which had landed at the river mouth reached Rangoon almost simultaneously. The **Glenroy**, which had had her mine damage, sustained off Normandy, repaired, arrived in the Indian Ocean in time to take part in the assault on Rangoon. The **Glenearn** had arrived in New Guinea in July 1944 and then worked with American forces in the Philippines. In April 1945, however, a serious petrol explosion took place on board, causing many casualties, and she had to proceed to Sydney for repairs. The **Glengyle**, which like the **Glenearn**, was still equipped as a Landing Ship Infantry and was serving under the White Ensign, also arrived in the Pacific in 1945.

After clearing the Philippines the Americans decided to seize Iwo Jima in the Bonin Islands and Okinawa in the Ryukyu group as stepping stones towards the Japanese mainland. It was during the Okinawa campaign that the British Pacific Fleet

joined with the Americans and they both encountered the full fury of the Japanese 'Kamikaze' suicide bombers. Though these human-guided missiles inflicted some unpleasant losses they completely failed to drive off the Allied fleets which were supporting the land operations, and on 21st June the struggle for Okinawa ended.

Next the Allied fleets began to range up and down the Japanese coast, striking here and there almost at will, and the blockade was tightened to a stranglehold – chiefly by dropping mines in the shallow approaches to harbours. With her Navy and Merchant Navy almost entirely destroyed Japan was rapidly descending into chaos; and, even if the atomic bombs had not been dropped, her resistance could not have continued much longer.

The surrender of Japan on 14th August 1945 did not by any means enable the British warships and merchantmen in the Far East to take a well-earned rest. For the territories we had lost in 1941-42 had to be reoccupied, order had to be restored over a vast area, Allied prisoners had to be rescued and succoured, and food had to be procured and carried to the starving people of south-east Asia. Thus at the end of August the **Glengyle** carried a commando brigade and a Spitfire squadron to Hong Kong at the time when we regained that colony. She then transported 600 released British captives to Madras. The **Antenor** was sent to collect some of the thousands of prisoners-of-war who had been languishing in terrible conditions in camps in Malaya and Siam. Many other Holt ships were soon bringing cargoes into the ports with which they had been associated for nearly a century – conscious now that no enemies were lying in wait for them while on passage, or preparing to pounce on them from the sky after they had reached harbour. Gradually, however, ships were released from requisition and returned to their rightful owners.

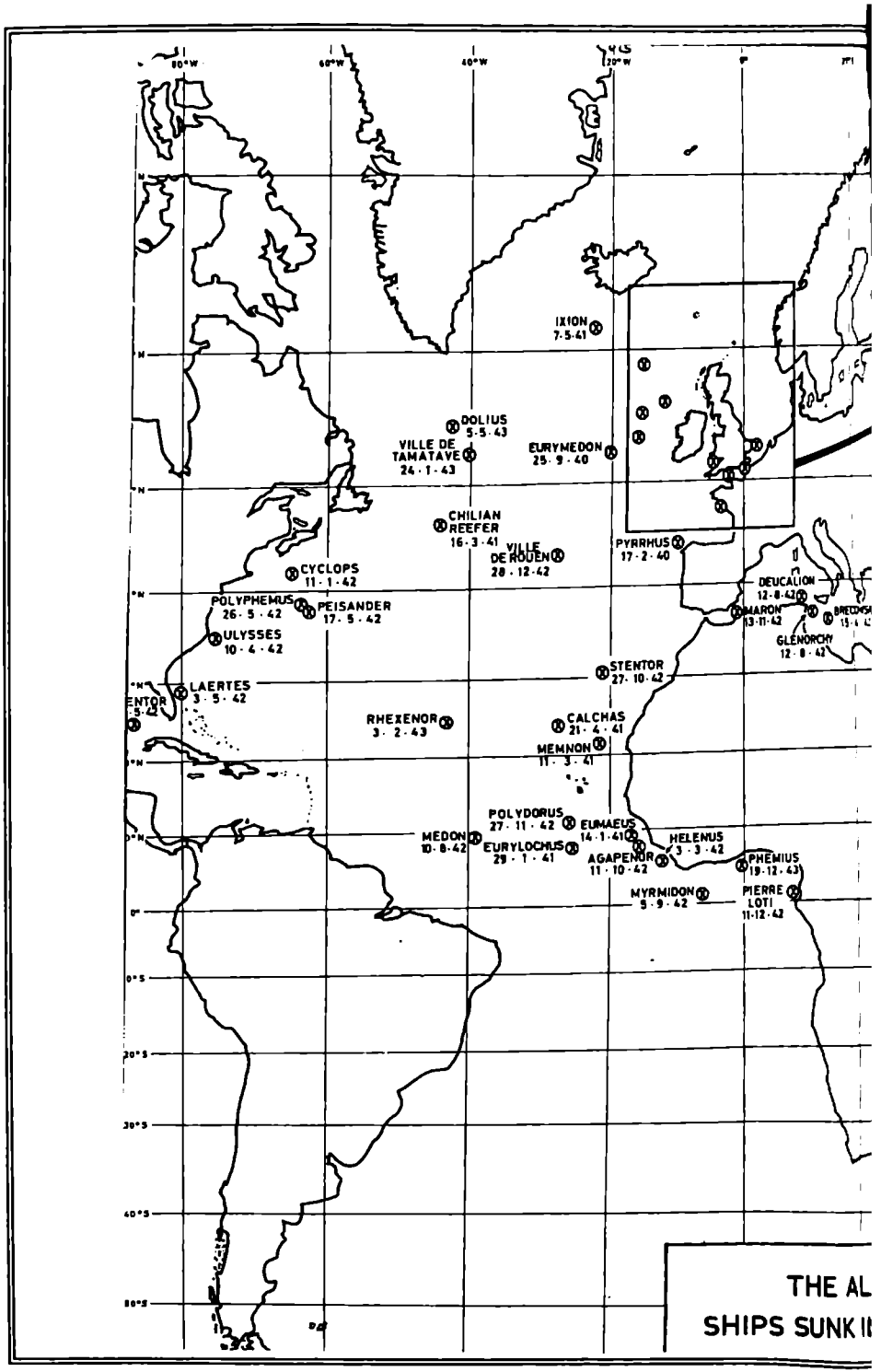
But it was not until 12th February 1946, when the Head Office of the Company cabled to all its ships and agents that the Liner Requisition Scheme would end on 2nd March, and that *'all voyages thereafter will be for owners' account'* that full control of all its vessels was regained. That date may therefore be taken to mark the end of the story of the Alfred Holt fleet in the war of 1939-45.

Epilogue:

The losses sustained by the Holt fleet during the war were as follows:-
(please refer to map on following two pages)

- Ocean Steamship Co: 26 ships totaling 199,380 tons.
- China Mutual Steam Navigation Co: 12 ships totaling 194,097 tons.
- Nederland Stoomvart Maatschappij "Ocean": 3 ships totaling 8,106 tons
- Glen Line: 3 ships totaling 28,179 tons.
- Ships transferred for 'manning and management': 8 ships – 48,876 tons.

The total losses thus amounted to no less than 52 ships (398,542 tons), which, both in number of ships and in tonnage, was more than half the pre-war fleet. Thus, had it not been for the new tonnage built during the war, the size of the fleet would have been very drastically reduced. As it was, in 1945, the Company actually owned or managed 71 ships (564,787 tons). ||||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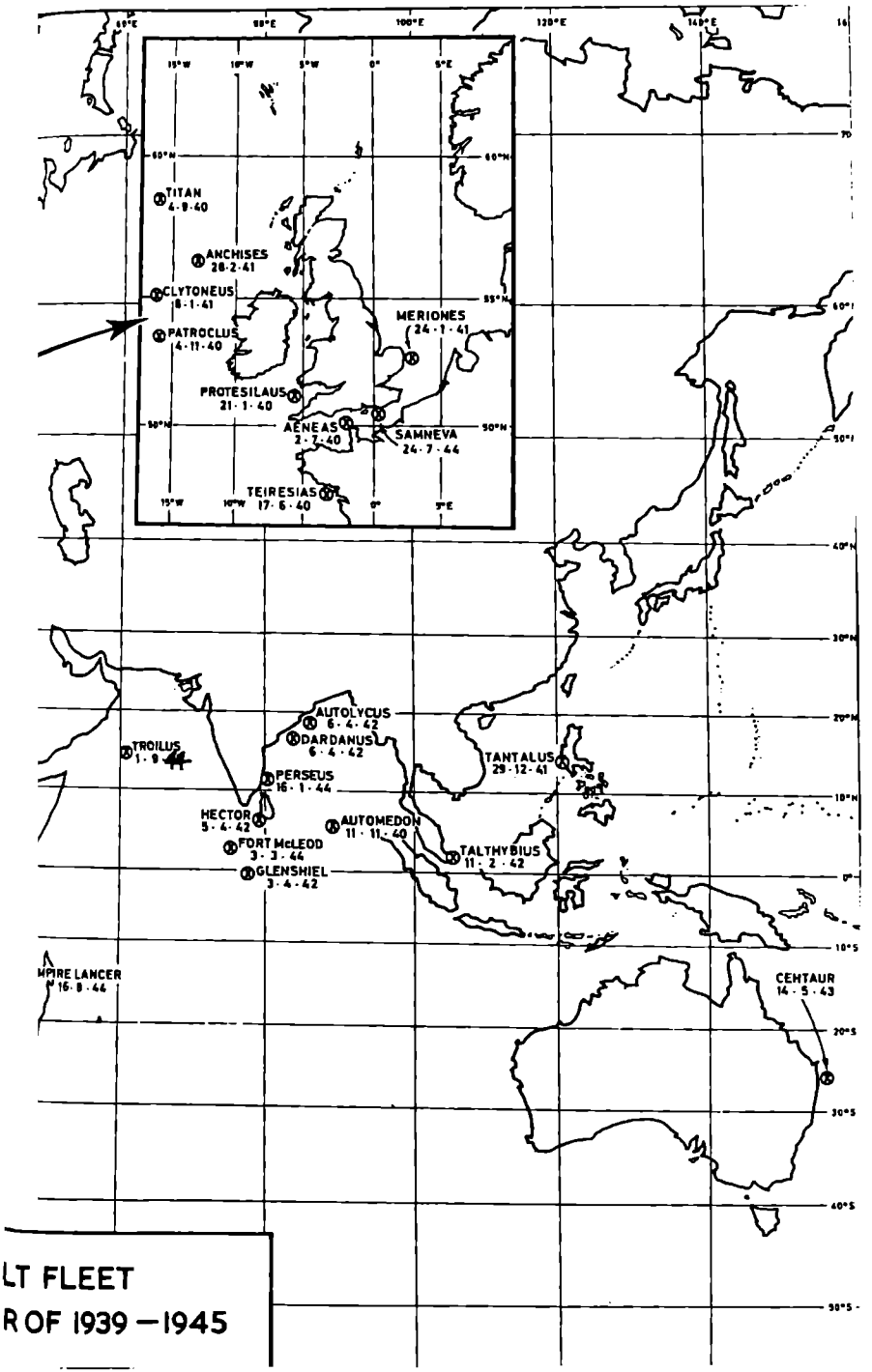
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R OF 1939—1945

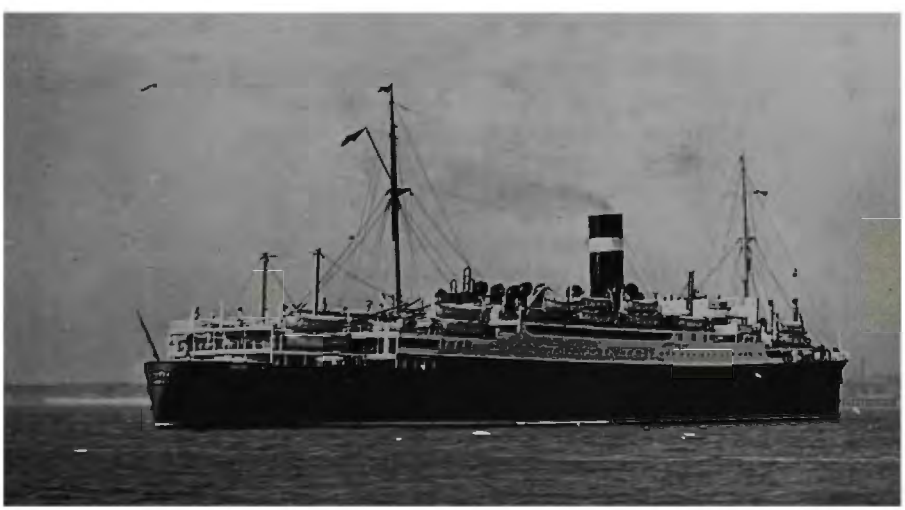
THE *'STORMONT'* COLLISION AND CAPSIZE

by LNRS Member Gordon Wright

Some time ago, the Society received an e-mail from a Mr Peter Owen, late of Bootle and now resident in Canada. His father had been a crew member on board the ***Stormont****, one of two ships involved in an incident on the River Mersey in November 1946, and he was interested in knowing more details about this episode. The request was passed on to me because, by coincidence, I was a sixteen year old deckhand on the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board's tug* ***Assistant*** *at the time, and this tug had a peripheral role in the incident.*

A further coincidence occurred when our editor John Shepherd acquired a collection of photographs, one of which needed to be identified. It turned out to be the cattle boat ***Stormont*** *lying on her side, on a drying-out Pluckington Bank.*

At 07.00 on 20th November 1946, two ships were in collision in the Mersey. It was a dark, misty morning when the steamer **Stormont**, 1,031 tons, was in collision with the passenger vessel **Empire Brent**, 13,595tons, just off Egremont. The **Stormont** was on her regular run from Belfast with 210 cattle and some horses which were to be landed at Woodside Stage. There was also 550 tons of general cargo on board for discharge at Waterloo Dock. The **Empire Brent** was carrying 900 Canadian war brides and families and was outward bound for Halifax, Nova Scotia.



The ***Empire Brent*** *in her original form as the* ***Letitia*** *of Anchor-Donaldson*

The **Stormont** was under the command of Captain Percival Peacock and was making her way up the Mersey on a flood tide. She was keeping close to the Liverpool

side of the river in order to make a wide sweep across the Mersey to stem the tide and berth at Woodside Stage. As the **Stormont** crossed the bows of the **Empire Brent** a collision became inevitable and she was rammed on her port side.

The **Empire Brent** sustained damage to her bows from below the water line to about 15 feet above it, and her stem was torn and pushed inwards about 4 - 5 feet. She was able to berth in the Alfred Basin at Birkenhead under her own power and was subsequently dry docked on 22nd November. A survey was carried out and a report from the Ministry of Transport stated that repairs would be carried out which would enable her to continue her voyage, it was hoped, in early December.

The tug **Assistant** was tied up at Woodside Stage at this time and a group of the crew, including myself, were on deck waiting for our relief after a 24-hour watch. The mate spotted the **Stormont** as she limped up river in a sinking condition, badly damaged on her port side and making water rapidly. We quickly let go our mooring ropes and headed for the **Stormont** and offered a tow rope which was declined. Our skipper Jack Jones had hoped to tow her on to the grid at Queens Dock river wall, but as we were not required we returned to Woodside. The **Stormont** eventually beached on the Pluckington Bank near the Albert Dock wall. The Mersey Docks and Harbour Board's salvage vessels **Watchful** and **Salvor** were in attendance but with the falling tide the **Stormont** turned over and lay on her port side, lying SE by NW, with 80 feet of her stern unsupported.

*The **Stormont** capsized on the Pluckington Bank, off the Albert Dock at Liverpool*

At low water it could be seen that the **Stormont** was damaged on her port side from the shelter deck to below the water line, and all holds and machinery spaces had been flooded. All of the crew were rescued, but the live cargo was not so fortunate. Out of the seven horses on board, bound for the Cheshire Hunt, just one was rescued by the efforts of wreck master Charles Brock. Efforts were made to save the 210 cattle and a small motor boat attempted to tow some of them to safety.

A few managed to swim ashore but only a few survived. Many dead animals floated up and down the Mersey on the tides for days before being picked up or washed ashore but most died or were slaughtered on board the **Stormont** and their carcasses taken away for processing into fertiliser. The salvage vessel **Watchful** retrieved a large motor van owned by Curran Brothers of Belfast, which had been carried as deck cargo.

On 21st November 1946 the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (MD&HB) took possession of the **Stormont** under its statutory powers. The Liverpool and Glasgow Salvage Association was acting as agent for the MD&HB in respect of receiving and disposing of any cargo removed from the wreck. The **Stormont** was surveyed on the afternoon of 21st November and the Liverpool and Glasgow Salvage Association advised the MD&HB and the owners, the Belfast, Mersey & Manchester Steamship Co. Ltd. that the estimated cost of salvage would be in the region of £40,000. The chances of a successful operation were put at about 20% and a salvage attempt was not considered to be justified.

The following day, 22nd November, gale force winds battered the **Stormont** and all operations were suspended. There were still 100 dead cattle on board. Although the weather conditions moderated during 23rd November, high winds and tides were still hampering the efforts of a team of Liverpool dockers to salvage more than 30,000 tins of evaporated milk. This would have been an important cargo in 1946, so soon after the end of the war when many foods were still rationed.

Salvaging the cargo was completed by early December and then work to remove the remains of the ship herself began. The **Stormont** was cut into two pieces and on the afternoon of 12th December the forepart was placed alongside the Albert Dock river wall. The two boilers were next removed and also placed alongside the river wall on 23rd/24th December.

By 28th February 1947, more than three months after the collision, the aft part of the wreck had still not been removed, but on this date efforts had to be temporarily abandoned because a lifting wire fixed under the **Stormont** had carried away. Work continued as and when the weather permitted until 21st March when the last piece of the **Stormont** was placed alongside the Albert Dock river wall. Four months of effort had finally ended.

STORMONT (*ex* SALTEES) Official Number: 111176 Call Sign: M D C M
Gross Tonnage: 1,031 Nett Tonnage: 421 Port of Registry: Belfast
Dimensions: 250.0ft x 31.1ft x 16.3ft
Built by the Caledon Shipbuilding & Engineering Co. Ltd., Dundee in 1899.
Owners: The Belfast, Mersey & Manchester Steamship Co. Ltd.
Engines by Caledon Shipbuilding & Engineering Co. Ltd,
Type of Engines Triple Expansion, Cyl. 25", 40", 50"; stroke 36".

EMPIRE BRENT (*ex* LETITIA) Official Number: 148847 Call Sign: G L B X
Gross Tonnage: 13,595 Nett Tonnage: 8,243 Port of Registry: Glasgow
Dimensions: 525.7ft x 66.4ft x 38.0ft.
Built by The Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd., Govan, in 1925.
Owners: Ministry of Transport (Anchor-Donaldson as **Letitia**).

THE NAVY LEAGUE AND THE LANCASHIRE SEA TRAINING HOME FOR BOYS AT WALLASEY (Part 3)

by LNRS Vice-Chairman Gordon Bodey

Captain Anson's visit was followed a month later by one from Captain A.J. Horsley of HMS **Northampton**, the Royal Navy training cruiser. This vessel was shortly to be superseded (on 15th November 1904) by the much larger cruiser HMS **Hawke**, which was to be a sea-going training ship for youths, stationed with the North America and West Indies squadron.

Following Captain Horsley's visit, when he voiced his approval of what he saw, it was announced that three of the boys from the Wallasey Home were to be accepted into the Royal Navy. Many more were to follow in the future.

In addition to these successful placements, the Pacific Steam Navigation Company (PSNC), whose chairman, Mr Arthur Bibby, (also a member of the committee), had been approached some weeks before by the branch's president, now agreed to take four of the boys, and just a week later they had gone to sea on the **Oruba**. The PSNC also stated that it hoped to take more boys shortly.

Encouraged by these successes, approaches were made by Captain Thomas to the superintendents of other shipping companies in an effort to place more of the Home's boys in jobs and these approaches soon paid dividends. At the beginning of April six more boys were found jobs in the Mercantile Marine, followed only two weeks later by another fourteen going to sea on sailing ships. By July 1904 the total number of boys sent to sea on merchant ships had risen to twenty-six.

When a boy joined a ship (invariably in Liverpool or Birkenhead), he was taken to it by one of the Home's staff the day before the vessel sailed. He took with him his school 'rig out' as well as a monkey jacket, oilskin, and a pair of rubber sea boots - all provided by the Home. If the boy returned the 'rig out' to the Home in reasonable condition on completion of his first voyage, the Home supplied him with a new set - free of charge to the boy, but at a cost of about 30/- (£1.50) to the Home.

Each boy was encouraged to spend his leave at the Home on completion of his first voyage, where food and accommodation would be provided for him at a minimal sum, or he would be found suitable accommodation nearby. On 2nd August 1904, the four boys who had sailed on the **Oruba** returned to the Home. They all re-signed on the ship when she next sailed - two being promoted to ordinary seamen.

This after care on the part of the Home was considered a necessary adjunct to the training course due to the inability of the shipping companies employing the boys to offer any support to them on completion of a voyage. The boys were paid £1 per month during the voyage, and on the day of arrival back in the UK they were discharged. Even though there was usually a job for them back on the ship when she was ready to sail again they would be without continuity of employment, income, home or sustenance for a period which could run into some weeks. Thus, many of them might drift back into the shiftless lives, or worse, which they had led before first attending the Home. The possible high dropout rate would also be counter-productive

to the aim of encouraging a greater number of boys to take up seafaring as a career.

By April 1904, having been taken to task by the Committee on a number of occasions, Captain Thomas's standing as branch secretary and commander of the Home was very low. Apart from his continual refusal to comply with the Committee's wishes, his day-to-day management of the Home was now found to be sadly wanting.

On 2nd May Captain Thomas told the committee that he was out of health and that his doctor had recommended that he take a holiday, thus setting in motion the events that were to follow. A month's leave was granted to him and one week later Sir Alfred Jones offered Captain Thomas a free passage to Jamaica and return on one of his own steamers, the **Port Antonio**, as well as free quarters at a hotel on the island. The vessel was due to sail from Bristol on 21st May. The committee wished Captain Thomas to avail himself of the offer, which he duly did.

At Bristol Captain Thomas sent a letter to the committee from the Port **Antonio** stating that he had given the boys a fortnight's holiday with effect from 21st May on account of two of the instructors having to fulfil their annual drill as RN reservists. Neither the branch's president nor the committee had been consulted about a holiday for the 82 boys then at the Home (many of whom had nowhere to go). The committee was not aware that the two instructors were proceeding on leave, and it had certainly not authorised the boys' holiday.

Following this fiasco an unannounced inspection (on a Sunday) by Mr Read found the galley to be in a filthy state, and the potatoes, a mainstay of the boys' diet, unfit for consumption. An examination of the boys' kit revealed that 163 pairs of socks and 38 pairs of boots were unfit to wear, and that their black serge suits were, in many cases, worn out. Consequently, it was decided to extend Captain Thomas's leave of absence to three months and in his absence to appoint someone in his place more amenable to the requirements of the Home and the committee.

The committee met on 18th July when: *"It was decided unanimously that Captain Thomas was not to return as commander of the Home. The committee arrived at this decision with much regret, fully recognising the valuable work done by him in the earlier stages of the institution, but he has failed repeatedly to carry out the instructions of the committee, and long experience has shown that it is impracticable to work with him."*

A letter was sent to him forbidding him to communicate with the Home or the committee, but not, on the advice of his doctor, mentioning the above decision.

It is difficult to imagine such a formidable, forthright and hands-on person as Sir Alfred Jones not confronting the subversive commander in person, but having grasped the nettle *in absentia*, the post was then advertised.

Among the applications received was one from Vice-Admiral Rodney Lloyd, CB (Retd.). Two applicants were interviewed: a Captain Saville, RN, and Captain A.H.G. Williams, RN. Captain Williams was offered and accepted the post on 2nd August (almost a year to the day from when the Home first opened), and it was arranged that he start work on Friday evening, 5th August 1904.

However, Captain Thomas was to tilt with the Committee yet awhile before bowing out, as will be seen.

On taking up his post as captain superintendent of the Training Home,

Captain Williams, from the start, attended the weekly executive committee meetings; something his predecessor had done but rarely and then usually only when being called to task. He also commenced strict weekly inspections of all of the Home's areas and furnished a written weekly report to the committee.

As noted previously, the lack of an acceptable standard of cleanliness in the galley and the inedible nature of some of the food being prepared had incensed the committee, and on his fourth day Captain Williams had fried fish supplied from outside, much to the delight of the boys.

The cook, despite being warned, had effected no improvement in the galley, and at the end of Captain Williams' second week he reported that *'the galley and places under the control of the cook were the most untidy and the only dirty places in the Home, and that he was not competent for the work required of him.'* The captain was instructed to give him one week's notice and to engage a retired pensioner cook from the Royal Navy. Captain Williams made the suggestion, which was accepted, that one of the boys, who had shown an aptitude for the job, be sent to the Naval School of Cookery for training, with a view to returning to the Home as a cook in due course. Similarly (some six months later) another boy in the Home who had been taught boot-making was to be employed to repair all the footwear and his mother given six shillings per week allowance for his services.

A small incentive was now offered to the boys in the form of a monetary reward for anyone gaining promotion: those boys achieving Petty Officer rank were to receive 3d (1p) per week, and those gaining a good conduct stripe 1d (½p) per week. Another financial incentive offered at this time was at the Home's annual sports day , when prizes totalling £4-4s-6d (£4.23p) were awarded - the money having been donated by members of the committee.

However, the Home now began to suffer a period of unwelcome and debilitating turmoil. What had begun as dissatisfaction with Captain Thomas's cavalier attitude to the administration of the Home's affairs had developed into a saga of implied financial impropriety, intrigue, disruption and possible skulduggery on his part.

Up to the end of August, Captain Thomas had not been given any official notice of dismissal (although he was now barred from, and living off, the premises); the committee having agreed to await his doctor's permission before doing so.

In the interim, a burglary occurred at the Home at about 3.am on Tuesday 9th August. On the night of the burglary, just before he retired to bed, Captain Williams had been assured by the staff that the premises were securely locked. Hearing a noise at the noted time, and seeing a light in his office (previously used as Captain Thomas's study), he went to fetch a light to investigate, upon which a door slammed. On entering the office, he found it in disarray, and among papers scattered about the floor was a plan of the grounds and its buildings, appended to which were marginal notes referring to papers which were now found to be missing. The missing papers had already been read by Captain Williams who said *'they were of a most important character and would be invaluable to some person or persons.'* At about 1.30am two days later, another attempt to burgle the same area was foiled, although the intruder was not caught.

Because the committee felt that Captain Thomas, even though absent, was aware of some of its dealings, two female clerks who worked in the office were questioned regarding any possible part that they may have had in communicating the committee's discussions and decisions to Captain Thomas, which both denied. However, one of them was to be dismissed some weeks later.

A week after the failed attempt to enter Captain Williams' office, Dr Raw said that he would now accept the responsibility of notice being passed to Captain Thomas, and this was duly done (delivered by hand) at five o'clock on Saturday evening, 20th August and a receipt obtained.

At this time the committee was trying to account for some of the monies from the sale of calendars and other funds, which it was implied had gone into accounts other than those of the Navy League. Notices were published in the local press for a week dissociating the committee and the Home from Captain Thomas. This resulted in tradesmen requesting payment (or return of goods) from the League for items supplied to Captain Thomas, including furnishings, equipment, shipping newspapers (the *Journal of Commerce* agreed to write off a claim for £2-2/-), whisky and soda water (although the amount involved with the latter two items was small).

In addition, it emerged that the postmaster at Liscard was forwarding all the League's mail to Captain Thomas's address on his instructions; how much had fallen into his hands before the instruction was countermanded was not known. Consequently a letter was sent to all Navy League subscribers requesting that correspondence and subscriptions be sent only to the honorary secretary.

Despite having been refused permission to attend the committee's next meeting, Captain Thomas, along with his wife and two children, somehow managed to enter the Home at 8.am on Saturday 1st October and they then proceeded to lock themselves in Captain Thomas's old quarters. They could not be persuaded to leave and eventually the police were called and with the aid of the instructors they were forcibly removed from the premises. The gates were locked and a guard posted. It was afterwards found that a number of the Home's keys had been taken, but at 9.pm Captain Thomas returned and handed the keys back through the bars of the gate. For some weeks following Captain Thomas was to make several unsuccessful attempts to enter the premises.

These skirmishes with Captain Thomas were causing much disruption in the Home. In addition, reports were reaching the press and Captain Williams met with Mr Birchall of the *Journal of Commerce* to brief him on the matter. The Press Association was also briefed in order to limit any adverse publicity aroused by Captain Thomas's activities.

All of the above (and much more) was to be aired in court the following March when Captain Thomas, having previously refused independent arbitration, brought an action for damages amounting to £342/19/3d (£342.96p) for wrongful dismissal against the local committee of the Navy League.

Nevertheless, progress at the Training Home continued. A Royal Navy pensioner chief cook was engaged as an immediate replacement for the man sacked and proved himself satisfactory. Captain Williams sent for tenders to various clothing firms to provide the boys with complete and proper uniforms. Mr Read ordered to be

made, so that he could present it to the home, a *'Captain Holland's Steering Apparatus'*[1], and an armoury of cutlasses and four carbines arrived courtesy of the Admiralty. The carbines were found to be satisfactory and it was decided to request forty-six more. These were sent in due course but, being too long in the barrel for use by youths, had to be cut down (with Admiralty permission). The Home was to have its own rifle range in the hall's grounds before they were put to use.

In August, Sir Alfred Jones said that he would employ seven of the undersized boys on his ships as buglers as soon as they became proficient - all to be shipped from Liverpool if possible.

A report to the committee from Captain Williams stated that in order to obtain a grant from the Admiralty (for boys entering the Royal Navy) the boys would have to be able to swim, pull (at an oar) effectively, and understand signalling. It was therefore necessary to acquire two cutters and he was authorised to request their loan from the Admiralty. Sir Spencer Maryon-Wilson offered £25 towards the cost and Mr Read offered to transport them from Plymouth, free of charge, on one of his ships.

This request was found to have been successful when, at a meeting with Commander Crutchley (Secretary of the Navy League's Executive Committee) in London at the end of September 1904, the branch's honorary secretary met with Rear-Admiral Eardley-Wilmot, Superintendent of Ordnance, who informed him that he had just signed an order for the loan of the cutters, two sets of semaphore equipment, and two 7-lb guns, to the Wallasey Sea Training Home. However, it was to be another fifteen months before they arrived at Wallasey!

Meanwhile, two other useful pieces of equipment were made at Clover's dockyard as the gift of Mr Matthew Clover to the Home. Firstly, he had made a working model of a steering apparatus. Then, of the Home's choosing, a ship model on wheels carrying two anchors, an amount of small chain, anchor gear and a derrick, in order to give instruction on weighing anchor, working cable, and basic derrick rigging and use.

The long-planned hospital and drill shed were still not built sixteen months after the Home's opening; the former, despite having Mrs Clover's £300 gift for its building, was not even past the planning stage. It would be May 1905 before the building of the hospital commenced after Mrs Clover had been prevailed upon to give an additional sum towards the estimated £400 cost to provide two wards, with six beds to each and a nurse's room. The opening ceremony of one completed ward took place on Tuesday 22nd August 1905, but it was not until 11th January 1906 that the hospital was completed in full. However, the drill shed had been completed by June 1905 (and was to remain in use until 1937).

Notwithstanding the above, the day-to-day activities of the Home under the skilful and committed direction of Captain Williams, ably assisted by his team of instructors, continued apace.

No boys in the Home at this time were unable to read or write, but some were

[1] *In effect, a simulator. Later, in 1909, the Home was to obtain (on loan from the Admiralty through Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, then Controller of the Navy and an old friend of Captain Williams) the most up to date version of Admiral Holland's steering apparatus, which had a pneumatic mechanism 'for producing oscillations and motion as experienced at sea'.*

slow to the point of backwardness, and Captain Williams, with the assistance of two of the instructors, gave extra instruction to these boys in the evenings. Captain Williams' diligence and influence were to result in ten of the boys (at the end of October 1904) being recommended for the Royal Navy, provided that they satisfied the recruitment officer that they were up to Admiralty standard regarding their training and physique. Of these boys, those not coming up to Admiralty standard were to be sent into the Mercantile Marine.

In addition, there were nine others earmarked for the Mercantile Marine whose ages ranged from 16 years to 19 years - most of them above the Home's stipulated leaving age and some not fit for sea life. Captain Williams had expressed concern about these two points in his first week and was now to say of the Home's output *".... for the most part they are undersized and badly developed lads of no physique and it is questionable if we are doing the Mercantile Marine any good by drafting them to sea. They have been a long time in the School and we can do no more for them."*

He went on to suggest to the committee that it should lay down a set of age-dependent physical criteria (which he supplied) for the guidance of the doctors so that any future intake of badly developed youths would not occur. He also said that the policy then in force of taking in youths regardless of physique, whether the School was full or not, was flawed and *"defeats the object for which the School was started, viz:- to send good strong healthy lads to sea, with a view to their making a profession of it, not to speak of the expense you go to, and then find the lads physically unfit at the end of their training."* Two weeks later it was decided to be rid of all boys who had reached their seventeenth birthday.

Despite the regular subscriptions and donations made to the Home, its finances were always a source of concern. In addition to mortgaging the estate's land to finance development work and the purchase of extra land, overdrafts and bank loans were a regular feature of the day-to-day running of the Home. To help to generate more income, the Navy League Executive Committee in London arranged for County Council scholarships to the Home at £30 per boy per year; from which the London office was to receive £5. The first batch of these was to come from Surrey Council's Education Department (soon to become a consistent long term source of trainees), which offered six scholarships to the Home initially, tenable from May 1905. The Council was asked to send only those boys who were within the Home's age limit and of the best physique.

Discussions had also started with the Manchester branch of the Navy League with a view to obtaining from that branch some financial help toward the running costs of the Wallasey Home. This scheme was soon to develop into a plan to amalgamate the two branches.

The merger plan was to be agreed on 19th December 1904 when, at a meeting in Manchester between the Lord Mayor of Manchester, officials of the Navy League head office, and the Liverpool and Manchester Branches of the Navy League, it was resolved, amongst other things: *'That in the opinion of this meeting it is advisable for the furtherance of the Objects of the Navy League that there should be one Branch for each county of the United Kingdom.'*

to be concluded...

ROUND VOYAGE

by Captain Brian Scott

Captain Scott, of Whangarei, New Zealand, described his experiences on board Lamport & Holt's ***Vigilante*** *in 'A Voyage up the Amazon' in the December "Bulletin". In this article his recalls his time as a Cadet with the Clan Line in the early 1950s.*

I commenced my Cadetship with the Clan Line in October 1952 after leaving school the previous July. My first ship was the ss **Clan MacKinnon**, ex **Empire Dunnet**. I made two voyages in her from the UK/Europe to India/Pakistan, with short deviations carrying British military cargo to various trouble spots.

After one year I was transferred to the tss **Clan Brodie**, ex HMS **Athene**, a former seaplane depot ship, for one voyage from the UK to South Africa, Mauritius and India.

My next ship was the **Clan MacInnes**, a two-year-old motor vessel. My first voyage in her was from the UK to South Africa, then from the UK to India followed by a third voyage from the UK to Australia. Having enjoyed my visits to South Africa and Australia, the thought of another voyage to India did not motivate me at all, so when I received my recall to the **Clan MacInnes**, loading in Glasgow, at the end of my leave in early May 1955, my first reaction was to check *The Journal of Commerce* to learn which ports we were loading for. Much to my delight it was South Africa and Portuguese West and East Africa. So off I went to Glasgow to rejoin my ship.

Loading cargo in Glasgow was typical of the mid-1950s with plenty of whisky, frozen kippers, and Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 5 lower holds floored off with railway lines for the Rhodesian railways, plus many heavy lifts for new power stations and sugar factories. As a result we had a good bottom weight.

At No.2 hatch we had a 60-ton SWL heavy lift derrick, and at No.4 hatch aft there was a 30-ton SWL derrick. Our other derricks had safe working loads of 15, 10 and 5 tons, so we could rig them in all the various permutations of union purchase: doubled-up in UP; 'Frisco Rig; and as swinging derricks with steam guys. This meant that the ship was self-sustaining for handling heavy lifts in the ports of developing countries.

We sailed from Glasgow to Birkenhead with the Clan Line's appropriated Liverpool pilot on board, so were soon on our final loading berth. The **Clan MacInnes** soon filled up with general cargo in the upper and lower 'tween decks, with more heavy lifts stowed in the lower holds over the railway lines loaded in Glasgow. These included 49-ton Centurion army tanks for the South African Army. On the foredeck we loaded two railway locomotives and two small towboats. On the after deck we loaded one railway passenger coach and one rail tank wagon. There were reconditioned World War 2 army vehicles stowed on the hatches which were securely lashed and covered with tarpaulins. No.1 hatch had an upper 'tween deck and a lower 'tween deck, but instead of a lower hold had three deep tanks fitted with heating coils and could be used for the carriage of vegetable oil cargoes or water ballast. With the heating coils

removed, this space could be used for dry cargo. On this particular outward voyage the tanks were full of a partially refined soap-making product being shipped by Lever Brothers Limited of Port Sunlight to their factory at Maydon Wharf in Durban. It would be necessary to monitor the liquid's temperature twice daily until it was pumped ashore.

We sailed on a Saturday afternoon and after disembarking the company pilot at Point Lynas we were on our way down the Irish Sea bound for Dakar for oil bunkers and fresh water. Like those of most UK liner companies, Clan Line masters doubled-up bridge watches until past Ushant. As the **Clan MacInnes** carried four mates and two cadets, the cadets were spared 'four-on and four-off' watches.

Once south of the latitude of Ushant normal shipboard routine fell into place The first mate could do little on deck because of the clutter. The normal outward bound routine on board Clan Line vessels was to strip down all running gear on the derricks for survey and overhaul. On this voyage we had to make do with a visual inspection, and the greasing and oiling of topping lifts, runners, guys and cargo blocks.

The cadets got on with their usual jobs; first all the LSA and fire-fighting equipment was checked, and then a start was made on the lifeboats. The **Clan MacInnes** was used to trial new types of paints and this voyage we had to start stripping out the lifeboats one at a time, clean them thoroughly inside and out, and then apply different paints to the metal hulls. This was a pleasant enough task as it was 'flying fish weather' and not too hard physically.

We carried twelve passengers in quite luxurious accommodation and they spent their days on the boat deck. The Indian stewards always passed us the leftover 'tab nabs' after morning coffee and afternoon teas. One of the lady passengers asked the captain why he mixed up white sailors with the lascars. This was probably prompted by the fact that 'chippie' and the cadets usually looked dirtier and sweatier than the kelassies !

After a brief stop at Dakar for bunkers and fresh water, we continued southwards towards the port of Lobito in Angola, Portuguese South West Africa.

The cadets' routine at sea was quite pleasant. Our Indian steward woke us at 06.30 with a mug of tea and hot buttered toast. At 07.00 the Scottish carpenter took his soundings while one cadet took the temperatures in the holds and the liquid cargo tanks. The other cadet went on the wheel so the seacunny (quartermaster) could help his mate clean the wheelhouse windows and brasswork. We then had breakfast at the second sitting and we always enjoyed a good hearty meal along with the 4th mate, carpenter, assistant purser, junior engineers and electricians. During the day we worked on our allotted tasks until 17.00, when we took the afternoon temperature readings. We did not work on Wednesday afternoons as we had study time to work on our correspondence courses. On Sunday mornings the cadets went to the bridge to practise taking morning and noon sun sights, and in the evenings we joined the first and fourth mates to take star sights.

Time passed quickly and soon we made a brief call at the port of Lobito to discharge the vehicles for the Portuguese army. We then sailed for Cape Town, keeping well off the coast to avoid the treacherous currents of the 'Skeleton Coast' of Namibia, between the Swakop and Kunene rivers. (This area is now a National Park).

It was good to arrive in Cape Town again and berth in the Duncan Dock. Cape Town is about forty kilometres from the Cape of Good Hope, and is one of the most isolated of the world's large cities. Dominated by a 1,000 metre-high mountain with sheer cliffs, it is surrounded by mountain walks, vineyards and beaches. It is the capital of Western Cape Province and was parliamentary capital of the then Union of South Africa.

Cargo work in South African ports was from 08.00 until 20.00, so with four mates and two cadets on the **Clan MacInnes**, we got some shore leave. The Seamen's Mission had a couple of large taxi type cars, so we put money into their 'petrol fund' and enjoyed some very good guided tours of the city and countryside, including numerous museums.

We discharged our railway locomotives and rolling stock at Cape Town, which made cargo work much easier. We did this by using our heavy lift derricks and 'winding ship'. Our coastal voyages from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth (420 miles), then Port Elizabeth to East London, (130 miles) and from East London to Durban (260 miles) were uneventful. At Durban we spent some time at Maydon Wharf alongside Lever Brothers' soap factory. Some family friends of mine had transferred from the UK factory to Durban, so I was able to socialise with their children who had been my schoolmates at primary school.

Durban is a large sub-tropical city with a long surf beach. It is a major port but also a well-known holiday resort. The weather is warm all the year round and due to the Agulhas Current the sea water remains warm. During the summer the weather gets hot and humid with spectacular thunderstorms.

By this time we began to wonder what our homeward loading programme would be. Would we retrace our outward route or proceed up the coast of East Africa to Dar-es-Salaam and Mombasa ? But no, we loaded bagged rice in our empty 'tween decks for Mauritius, and then proceeded north to Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) to continue discharging our outward cargo. Lourenço Marques (LM) was a beautiful city comparable to Cape Town or Rio de Janeiro. We then steamed the 475 miles north to Beira which was the principal port for the Rhodesias, where we discharged our railway lines for the Rhodesian Railways, and cleaned out our deep tanks and removed the heating coils. There was serious port congestion at this time both at LM and Beira, but our much needed cargo secured us priority berthing, and we were soon on our way south of Madagascar, bound for Mauritius.

On the voyage to Mauritius the crew cleaned out the holds whilst chippie and his mate, the 'winchwallah', and the two cadets cleaned out the bilges and repaired the limber boards and spar ceiling. Not a pleasant task as we were light ship and there was a strong swell running. I took a spare bucket down the holds and it was needed by all four of us !

On arrival at Port Louis, Mauritius, we discharged our part cargo of rice. Once again we asked the question, what was our homeward cargo to be ? Would it be a full load of sugar for the UK or might we proceed light ship to the Malabar Coast in India to load ironsand, tea and gunnies ? Both guesses were wrong! We received orders to proceed to Fremantle, Western Australia, to lift a homeward cargo for Scottish Shire Line, part of our group.

We soon departed from Port Louis and set course for Fremantle. It was all go on deck, as all cargo gear was overhauled, hatchboards repaired and 'tween deck lifelines rigged in preparation for the Australian Government Surveyor's inspection.

A few days before arriving at Fremantle we received a radio message to break out the two heavy lift derricks, as we had been granted a permit to carry Australian coastal cargo, namely a civil engineering contractor's fleet of heavy earth-moving vehicles from Fremantle to our first loading port, Port Pirie. We duly arrived at Fremantle, bunkered, took on fresh water and loaded the oversize vehicles in Nos. 2 and 4 lower holds and on deck. We then sailed for the Spencer Gulf through a rough Australian Bight.

On arrival at Port Pirie we discharged our heavy lift cargo and rehoused the 'jumbo' derricks. Our passengers disembarked and I met an old shipmate who was 4th mate on the **Clan Campbell** berthed astern of us. We had been cadets together on the **Clan Brodie**. We exchanged the ships' libraries and spent the evening ashore discussing our news and his examination for 2nd mate foreign going. His ship had sailed out via East African ports and was to load grain and wool in Australia.

It was now the first week in September 1955. Port Pirie was the best provincial port in southern Australia and had had a great maritime history. It had the largest lead smelting and refining plant in the world. There was also a bulk grain silo complex for export cargoes. Rail transport was important and three different rail gauges served the town and port, the tracks running down the main street.

We loaded lead ingots in the 'tween decks and lower holds and a few days later sailed for Brisbane to load canned fruit, mainly pineapples. Loading was quite quick and the cadets had a break from work to go and 'caddie' for the captain and ship's doctor on the famous golf course. I was scared in case I came across a snake on one of the greens! In the mid 1950s Brisbane was fairly quiet and so we organised a social evening for our shoreside friends to repay the generous hospitality they had offered us during the week.

We sailed from Brisbane to Newcastle where we loaded wool and then proceeded to Sydney where our berth was at the Woolloomooloo Wharf just below the Royal Botanical Gardens. There we loaded more wool which came down to the wharf on lorries and was then put through the wool dumping presses before being loaded on board.

By this time our Indian crew had been away from home for a year and were agitating for a crew change. At the same time we were waiting for cargo to go into our No.1 deep tanks and expected to load wet hides as on a previous voyage. However we received a shipment of large crates from the Royal Australian Navy labelled *"Indian Navy. Port of Cochin, Malabar Coast, India"*. This cheered up the crew a lot and they became their usual happy selves again. And so we filled No.1 hold deep tanks and 'tween decks with the Naval cargo and we knew that we would be going the long way home.

We had been fortunate with the weather in our loading ports and had not had too much of the expected rain. In Sydney the other cadet visited relatives, and I went to see one of my father's old Royal Navy shipmates from World War 2 who had a boatyard over at Hunter's Hill, so we both had a short break in what was developing

into a long voyage. We sailed from Sydney to Melbourne where we berthed at Station Pier and loaded wool. We completed filling the holds and then stowed more wool on the hatches between the derricks and covered it with tarpaulins which were well lashed down. After a busy social life in Melbourne we were glad to depart for Fremantle to take on bunkers and fresh water. We had a new group of twelve passengers on board which pleased our old doctor as he had some bridge partners. Our doctor was about seventy years of age, ex Indian Army and Colonial Service, and as well as medal ribbons for both World Wars he had other exotic ones such as 'N.W. Frontier', and he could rival Kipling when he told us about his army career.

After a brief stop at Fremantle we were on our way to India. The crew washed down and painted the masts, derricks and the midship accommodation block. The cadets scraped and repainted No.2 lifeboat with the second batch of trial paints, this time a rubbery type, so we were glad of the warmer weather.

On our arrival at Cochin we tied up at the buoys offshore from Willingdon Island, named after a former Viceroy of India. It was a mainly man-made island and apart from a pleasant civilian hotel and swimming pool, was used as a civil/military airfield and Indian Naval Base. (My father had spent time there during World War 2). As we had not loaded wool on No.1 hatch we soon discharged our naval cargo into lighters alongside. Then chippie and the two cadets fitted the steam heating coils in the three No.1 deep tanks, followed by shore cleaning gangs to hand clean the tanks prior to inspection by a cargo surveyor. We then loaded 450 tons of cashew nut oil from road tankers carried on barges alongside. This oil is a thick, black smelly liquid which we were told was used to make the black insulation on heavy duty electric power cables. It was for discharge at Barry, South Wales.

We carried out a crew change and then loaded coco nut mats and matting in the No.1 'tween decks. All this took two days and just before departure the Indian 6th engineer went down with acute appendicitis and was landed ashore to hospital.

Once clear of Cochin we settled into sea routine with the crew cleaning and painting the steel decks. The cadets went into signwriting and varnishing mode until arrival at Aden for a brief stop for bunkers and fresh water. Our job on passage up the Red Sea was to make a set of new wire preventer guys for the derricks.

The **Clan MacInnes** arrived at the anchorage at Suez Roads in the early morning, fully expecting to wait for a northbound convoy later in the day. A water barge came out to us and we quickly took on fresh water. A Canal Pilot then boarded. He was a bi-lingual Mauritian and an ex Clan Line officer, so he was pleased at the prospect of a curry and rice lunch later. One of our quartermasters injured his wrist whilst housing the accommodation ladder, so I was nominated to replace him on the wheel for the Canal transit. As we had no cargo for Port Said we were allocated a convoy position at the end of twelve oil tankers which were just passing through and so we had a relatively fast passage. The ship steered well as always and when darkness fell 'chippie' and the 2nd electrician operated the searchlight in the bow.

Once clear of Port Said we felt that we were really heading home. During the passage through the Mediterranean the cadets landed the job of painting both the mate's and the tally clerks' offices, and then carried out a stocktaking of all the remaining deck stores. By this time we had passed Gibraltar and we carried out a final

check of the fire fighting equipment and then completed our correspondence course assignments. By the time we were off Santander in Spain and entering the Bay of Biscay with rough seas and poor visibility we were put on bridge watches with the mates, and I got the 8 to 12.

We called in at Dunkirk for the duration of one tide and quickly discharged our deck cargo of wool with the shore cranes lifting sixteen bales at a time. Our kindly mentor, the first mate, signed off as he had to return to Glasgow having obtained a position as a River Clyde pilot. Some time later he became the harbourmaster at Glasgow.

From Dunkirk we sailed close in to the shore with a French pilot on board until we embarked a River Scheldt pilot to take us into Antwerp. This entailed the usual long stand-by up the river. We locked into the Antwerp docks for one tide only and more wool was quickly discharged at the rate of sixteen bales per lift using shore cranes.

The passage down the English Channel and up the Bristol Channel was tiring with rough seas, poor visibility and the usual heavy shipping traffic. We had radar and Decca navigator operating so we coped well and did not lose any time.

We arrived at Barry where our passengers disembarked and we discharged the coconut matting from No.1 'tween decks, and then pumped the 450 tons of cashew nut oil ashore into road tankers. We then filled the three No.1 deep tanks with dock water poured a drum of detergent into each and kept the steam heating coils hot, in the hope that on passage to Manchester the tanks would partially self clean.

One of the Clan Line 'choice' Liverpool Pilots boarded in Barry in order to avoid an open sea transfer off Point Lynas. We had a fast passage from Barry to the River Mersey where we entered the Manchester Ship Canal at Eastham locks. As it was late afternoon and getting dark we moored up at the crane berth just inside the canal. That evening the shore crane assisted our crew to lower the topmasts and the radar mast. As I lived close by, I went home for a few hours to visit my family. We had an early breakfast and commenced our inward canal transit at 08.00 with the company pilot and his helmsman on the bridge.

As usual with a large vessel in the Manchester Ship Canal we had some long stand-bys awaiting outward-bound vessels to pass us, and when we were in the various locks. (The **Clan MacInnes** was built to the maximum dimensions for the Canal and for the Kidderpore Dock at Calcutta). By late afternoon it was getting dark and so we moored overnight at a lay-by berth. Next morning we resumed our passage up the canal to Manchester, arriving at lunchtime. Cargo work commenced immediately and the bales of wool went off to the mills of Bradford, while the lead ingots were loaded on to rail wagons for transit to the industrial Midlands. The local tank cleaning vessel arrived alongside to clean out our deep tanks which took until 23.30, and so it was another long day.

The following day the coastal relief team of officers arrived on board with the Shipping Master, and we signed off articles with instructions to be ready to rejoin the ship at Cardiff on or about 28th December 1955 for a direct voyage to Australia. ‡‡

BOOK REVIEW

THE SINKING OF THE TITANIC
The Mystery Solved

By Captain L.M. Collins

ISBN 0-285-63711-8 Hardback £14-99p

Whilst there must be upwards of twenty books on my local bookseller's shelves covering the **Titanic** disaster, this easy to read, though nonetheless engrossing volume, steers away from the standard fodder as depicted on screen and in dramatised versions of the story. It focuses tightly on the immediate run-up to and during the crucial stage of this fateful maiden voyage and is concerned with much of what has been disregarded or misinterpreted by the various Courts of Inquiry. The reader will discover some well-argued contributory factors in a text which thankfully avoids the inclusion of extensive passenger lists and those episodes of hysteria which brought into question the behaviour and good conduct or otherwise of the ship's officers. It also brings to hand much needed clarity as to the relative positions and actions of all other known vessels in the vicinity and, given their estimated distances from the **Titanic**, a realistic assessment of what was likely to be visible.

Captain Collins, having more than thirty years ice pilotage experience, is well qualified to interpret much of the evidence which was given at both American and British Inquiries. The intention of his book is to re-examine carefully both the seamanship and navigation that were applied at the critical juncture of the voyage assessing good decisions that were taken by those with responsibility and openly criticising those which were not. Through the use of witness statements and Inquiry dialogue we are taken alongside crew members and ship's officers, both in the crow's nest and on the bridge in the run-up to the **Titanic's** encounter with the ice, and we are able to follow the author's painstaking analysis of inadequate safety provision, human error and lapses of judgement which occurred, together with rightful exoneration of those not to blame.

The author's conclusions are neatly constructed from the evidence to hand with particularly helpful interpretation of all technical aspects, vital to make sense of what did happen. It must, however, be said that whilst of considerable relevance to his demonstration of cause and effect, there is an unfortunate tendency to overuse the verbatim statements and testimonies which take up almost half of the entire book. Nevertheless, Captain Collins offers, with much merit, a fresh and invaluable angle on the controversy that will undoubtedly continue to attract many a researcher's attention.

j.p.s.

REPORT ON MEETING

AN ARMCHAIR TRIP DOWN THE CLYDE

by LNRS President Mr Sam Davidson

(Thursday, 20th January, 2005)

A well attended meeting enjoyed a presentation of colour slides by LNRS President Mr Sam Davidson. The slides were of paintings from the 19th century by the artists Robert Salmon and William Clark.

LNRS Chairman David Eccles (left) and LNRS President Sam Davidson (right) examine a slide whilst loading the projector prior to Mr Davidson's presentation.

Photo: John Stokoe

Robert Salmon was born in Whitehaven in 1775. After establishing himself as a painter of ships, he based himself at Liverpool for five years. At the age of 52 he went to live in Boston, USA.

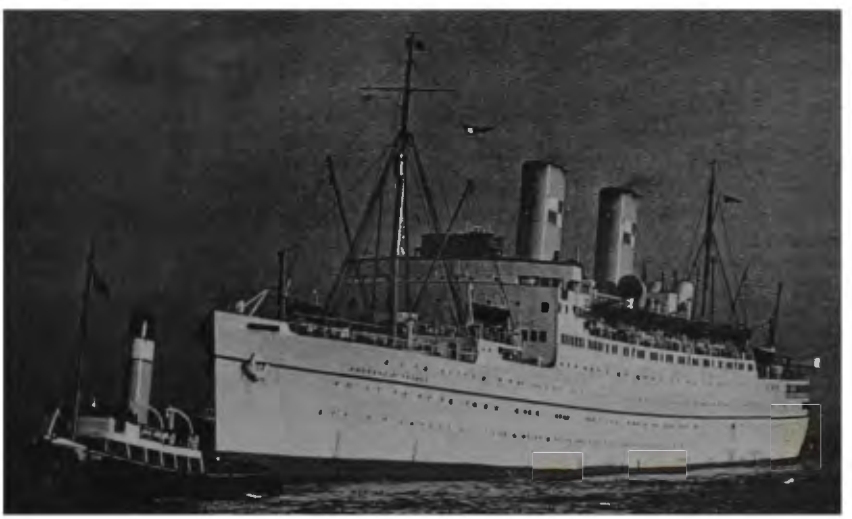
William Clark was the son of a mariner who had settled ashore as a customs officer. William was born in 1803 and lived until 1883.

The trip down the Clyde started at Bowling, near Dumbarton, which is the Clyde entrance to the Forth and Clyde Canal. Next came Dumbarton Rock and the River Leven, followed by Dennys' boat yard. The famous Dumbarton Rock featured on the following painting and Mr Davidson pointed out the amazing attention to detail to be found in the paintings. For instance, what he had at first thought was a fender on the side of a vessel turned out to be a buoyed anchor: a very prudent precaution when anchoring in unfamiliar waters.

Slides of paintings of vessels off the Kilcreggan peninsula and off Greenock (with its well known custom house) followed. Then it was round the Cloch Point and south to the Cumbraes, with the lighthouse on Elbow Point on Little Cumbrae a familiar landmark.

In the outer Firth we saw slides of vessels off Pladda Island (off the south-east tip of Arran) and abeam Ailsa Craig.

At the end of the meeting Tony Barratt proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Davidson and this was echoed by Captain Michael Jones who hoped that Mr Davidson would return again in the near future to show the Society some more of his superb slides of maritime paintings.



The Canadian Pacific liner ***Empress of France****, with the Alexandra Towing Company's tug* ***Nelson*** *(1935) in attendance, in the Mersey in 1957*

NOTES AND QUERIES

From LNRS Member Charles Dawson:

The following is a list of mostly British officers of the Confederate States Navy, mostly taken from the Register published in Washington in 1931. Some details of service are included. This is perhaps of interest to Merseysiders; who knows, there may be a family connection somewhere!

ALCOTT, Henry, born England, sail maker appointed 24.9.1862. Served on CSS **Alabama** 1862-64; was in engagement with USS **Kearsage** off Cherbourg 19.6.1864. Served on CSS **Shenandoah** 1864-66.
FINN, Richard, born Ireland.
FULHAM, George T, born England. Appointed from England. Acting 1st Mate 29.7.1862. **Alabama** 1862-64; was in engagement with USS **Kearsage**.
HALPIN, Robert, born Wicklow, Ireland.
HASKER, Charles H, born England, appointed from Virginia.
HAYES, John, born England
HUTCHINSON, John, born Scotland, 2nd Assistant Engineer 19.10.1864. **Shenandoah** 1864-65.
JAMES, Richard S, born England, appointed from South Carolina. Acting 1st Mate.
JOHNSON, John, born Ireland, appointed from Virginia. 1st Lieutenant.
LINDSAY, Hugh, born Ireland, formerly carpenter in US Navy.
LLEWELLYN, David Herbert, born England. Asst. Surgeon appointed 25.8.1862. **Alabama** 1862-64, drowned in her 19.6.1864 in engagement with USS **Kearsage**.
McCARRICK, Patrick, born Ireland.
MAFFITT, John Newland, born Ireland.
MEULNIER, Max von, born Prussia, appointed at Cape Town. 1st Mate in **Alabama** / **Kearsage** engagement.
O'BRIEN, Matthew, born Ireland, appointed from Louisiana. 3rd Assistant Engineer, appointed 20.5.61,wounded in **Alabama/Kearsage** engagement. **Shenandoah** 1865.
QUINN, Michael, born Ireland, appointed from Virginia. Formerly Chief Engineer in US Navy.
RAMSAY, John F, born England. Appointed from England. Formerly in the British East India service. **Rappahannock** 1863-64; **Laurel**, 1864.
ROBERTSON, William. Appointed from England. 3rd Assistant Engineer. Drowned in **Alabama / Kearsage** engagement.
SULLIVAN, John, born England, appointed from Virginia. Died 17.3.1863.
WALKER, James, Captain of **Adela**, was at one time captain of ps **Great Eastern**.
WASHINGTON, Gwathmey, born England. Appointed from Virginia, formerly lieutenant, US Navy.

A TUG WITH A HISTORY (*Bay City Tribune*, 31st May, 1907)

"The little iron tug **Peter Smith**, known to about every citizen of Bay City, is now being extensively overhauled by Johnson Brothers' shipyard at Ferrysburg, near

Grand Haven, on Lake Michigan. The **Peter Smith** left Bay City two years ago having been sold by Captain Ben Boutell to her present owners, the Buffalo Dredging Company. As is well known this little iron craft has the most unique history of any vessel on the Great Lakes. She was built in Renfrew, Scotland, in 1863 and was launched and christened **Little Ada**.

"The **Little Ada** was built purposely for the Confederate Government for use as a blockade runner. She was one of the most daring runners of the Carolina coast, where she was brought immediately after being launched, and she carried supplies in large quantities, but she was finally captured by a Federal monitor and sailed for the United States under the name of **Ada**.

"After the end of the Civil War, the **Ada** was put in the United States Engineering Department on the Atlantic seaboard. Some years later she was brought to Bay City by Captain Peter Smith and renamed after her new owner. She was employed in the lake raft towing business for many years.

"The repairs at Ferrysburg where she now is revealed a place where a shell had gone through the **Little Ada's** hull and considering its extent, it must have caused considerable damage."

The above cutting from the 'Bay City Tribune' was sent to LNRS Vice-President Harry Hignett by LNRS Member Dan C. McCormick of Massena, New York. Mr McCormick thought that members who enjoy material about the US Civil War would be interested.

THE STRANDING OF THE *PING SUEY* ON DASSEN ISLAND OFF CAPE TOWN ON 24th JUNE, 1916.

"The Silliest Thing You Ever Saw"

by Graham Sibley

During the afternoon of 24th June 1916, the Blue Funnel ship **Ping Suey** stranded on Dassen Island (33°25'S, 18°05'E) at full speed whilst on passage from the UK bound for Cape Town. The weather was fine with a light easterly breeze and moderate visibility. The **Ping Suey** ploughed her way over the reef and came to rest under the lighthouse.

The **Ping Suey** was built by Workman Clark at Belfast in 1899 and was the second of a class of three built for the China Mutual Steam Navigation Company. This Company with its fleet of 13 steamers was taken over by Alfred Holt in 1902.

The **Ping Suey** had a gross tonnage of 6,458 and a speed of 11 knots. Her bridge was on the forward part of the midship house. Since the Blue Funnel Line carried its own insurance, its rules covering navigation were extremely strict. Morning and noon sights had to be taken by the master and all the navigating officers separately, and the noon position thus found was laid down on the chart by the second mate, who then passed the dividers to the master who checked that the position laid down was the correct one. All this was carried out to the letter on board the **Ping Suey** on 24th

June 1916, after which the ship's head was steadied on a course south-south-east in order to pass a reasonable distance off Dassen Island.

The distance to abeam the lighthouse was measured on the chart as being some 90 miles, after which the master, thinking that he would not be required for some hours, went down to the saloon for his lunch and retired to his cabin. So did the mate and the third mate and the second mate took over the afternoon watch.

What none of them realised was that the noon position on the chart was incorrect. The second mate had laid the degrees of longitude one degree to the west of the **Ping Suey's** true position. One degree of longitude in the latitude of Cape Town (34° South) is 50 miles. Consequently the ship was 50 miles closer to Dassen Island than was thought.

In the best tradition of the Blue Funnel Line, the **Ping Suey's** wheelhouse was built of teak; oiled and varnished and beautifully maintained. The chartroom was immediately behind the wheelhouse and separated from it by a solid bulkhead and no door. As a result, there was no view forward from the chartroom.

On this fateful day the mate had ordered the bosun to paint the inside of the bulwarks on the foredeck. So as to avoid flecks of white paint blowing back on to the wheelhouse teak, he had ordered a tarpaulin to be hung from the monkey island to the master's deck, covering the whole of the wheelhouse and thus preventing the helmsman from seeing ahead. There was no lookout, since in open waters he worked on deck with the rest of the crowd.

As a result of all this, only the second mate was left to keep a lookout, and this he failed to do. He went into the chartroom to correct charts, quite contrary to the company's orders.

At all events, Dassen Island appeared dead ahead at about 15.00, and with nobody keeping a lookout, the **Ping Suey** struck the island at full speed and ended up just under the lighthouse tower. Nobody was injured and eventually all the crew were taken off the island by tug and landed at Cape Town.

The lighthouse keeper at Dassen Island reported that he had been in the light room of the tower preparing the light for starting up when he saw the **Ping Suey** appear out of the mist. (He estimated the visibility at two miles). Her masts were in line and she was obviously at full speed. Since he could see the **Ping Suey**, he quite reasonably assumed that the ship would see the island and alter course, but to his astonishment she steamed on and grounded. *"It was the silliest thing you ever saw"* was his comment.

Details of this grounding used to be given to apprentices by the instructor employed by Blue Funnel in the midshipmen's department as an example of how not to navigate. At the Company's Annual General Meeting following the incident, the shareholders were told that the **Ping Suey** was lost *'because of the most flagrant disobedience of the Company's rules of navigation'.*

Almost a year later, in May 1917, the **Ping Suey** was patched up, salved, and sold to Mitchell, Cotts who had her repaired in Hong Kong. Following repairs, Lloyd de Pacifico, Savona, purchased her and renamed her the **Attualita**. She survived a torpedo attack off Gibraltar on 25th April 1918 and sailed on until broken up at Genoa in August 1932. ‡‡

READERS' LETTERS

From LNRS Member J.E. (Ted) Morris:

I received the December *'Bulletin'* this morning and, as always, I enjoyed its every content.

A particular item of interest was the **Empress of Canada** report. I sailed in her as 3rd Officer on her last fateful voyage, leaving Liverpool Landing Stage at 16.00 on Christmas Eve, 1952. The weather from the start and during the entire westbound crossing was abominable, and very few passengers enjoyed the festive celebrations.

We were in Canada for New Year, sailing for home on New Year's Day, and upon our return to Liverpool I was standing-by during the refit before being relieved at noon on Saturday, 24th January, 1953 - the day prior to the tragedy.

At the time I was living in Wallasey in one of the roads which run down to the Mersey. When my father telephoned me following the BBC Home Service ten o'clock news on the Sunday evening, I could easily see the loom of the fire from my bedroom window. I did not have (neither could I afford !) a car in those very different days and I gladly accepted his offer to take me over to Gladstone Dock where I remained all night on the quayside with all those concerned. A sad and awesome experience to watch helplessly as she was devoured by the flames of her demise (and most of my gear with her !).

From LNRS Member Sandy Balfour:

I was most interested to read the account of *'A Voyage up the River Amazon'* in the December *'Bulletin'* as I too sailed in the **Vigilante** as second mate for twelve months in 1965/66 and found it quite an experience. Like Brian Scott I crossed as a passenger aboard RMS **Queen Elizabeth** to New York to join the ship and returned home the same way a year later

It was one of the most interesting runs I was ever on during my somewhat varied seagoing career. Our route was New York - St Kitts - Antigua - Martinique - Dominica - Guadeloupe - Barbados - Grenada - St Lucia - St Vincent and Trinidad; then to Belem followed by three or four river ports on the lower Amazon. We next called at the coastal ports of Sao Luis and Tutoia south of Belem; thence north to Trinidad for bunkers and back to Wilmington, NC and New York - the round trip taking about two months.

THE MONDAY FACILITY

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

MARCH, 2005	7th, 14th and 21st.
APRIL, 2005	4th, 11th, 18th and 25th.
MAY	9th, 16th and 23rd.
JUNE	6th, 13th, 20th and 27th

AND FINALLY .....

DURBAN'S LADY - IN - WHITE

During the course of the Second World War, some three million serving personnel passed through Durban en route to and from Mediterranean and Far Eastern war zones, and of those who did, few will have forgotten the legendary Perla Siedle Gibson - 'Durban's Lady - in - White'.

In April 1940 Mrs Gibson was standing at a Durban dockside being called 'Ma' by thousands of young soldiers lining the rails of a troopship slowly gliding by. "Sing us a song", they shouted, " Come on Ma, be a sport. Give us *Land of Hope and Glory*." Cupping her hands wide over her mouth she sang the first notes. The shouting voices were stilled and as she continued to sing the full throated choir of thousands took up the refrain.

From that day in April 1940 until VJ-Day in August 1945, Mrs Gibson, always wearing a white dress, sang to over 1,000 troopships and many hospital ships in Durban at all times of the day and night and in every kind of weather. She seldom, if ever, missed singing to a troopship in Durban even after learning that her eldest son, serving with the Black Watch, had been killed in Italy.

Not only did Mrs Gibson sing to troopships and hospital ships, but many naval vessels calling at Durban were also treated to her rendering of patriotic songs. These included the cruisers **Cornwall** and **Dorsetshire**, and the **Prince of Wales** and the **Repulse**. All called at Durban en route to meeting their fate at the hands of the Japanese.

Mrs Gibson recalled that on one occasion she was singing to the crew of Durban's 'own' warship, the **Natal**, and when she asked the crew what they would like her to sing, she was astonished when *'There 'll always be an England'* was requested.

In the later stages of the War, Mrs Gibson had to increase her repertoire to include well known American songs.

Mrs Gibson attended the Burma Star Reunion at London's Albert Hall in 1959. She died in 1971 at her home at Pineholme, Durban.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

All Meetings are held in the Education Suite at the Merseyside Maritime Museum and commence at 12.30. Coffee and biscuits are available from 12 Noon.

Thursday, 17th March, 2005
"SALT, COAL, IRON AND STEAM"
(Roy Fenton)

Thursday, 21st April, 2005
"AN EXPLOSIVE SITUATION - LIVERPOOL SLAVERS & KENDAL BAKERS"
(Dr J. M. Vickers)

Thursday, 19th May, 2005
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING