

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

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The Bulker **Portoroz** arriving at Langton Dock to load scrap metal on the 7th February 2010. (Adrian Sweeney)

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MERSEY MARITIME NEWS

February 2010

On the 1st, the Ro-Ro vessel **Celtic Star**, on passage from Dublin, lost power at 22.00 in the Crosby Channel between C20 and C22. The latter buoy broke free from its moorings and floated upriver with the tide. The ship herself was taken under tow, deadship, by the tugs **Ashgarth** and **Thorngarth** which luckily were just leaving Langton Lock on an unrelated job. At 23.50 Celtic Star was safely moored in Langton Dock. The errant buoy was finally captured at 00.30 the next morning in the Garston Channel by the survey/work vessel **Aestus**.

Also on the 1st, it is reported that the former Mersey ferry, **Royal Iris**, which for several years has been languishing on the Thames, had sunk at her moorings. While these reports were a slight exaggeration of the truth, the old ship had certainly taken on water and was perceived to be in a perilous condition. Subsequently a preservation attempt was launched by a local business man but at the time of publication no news has been heard of this worthy project.

Caledonian MacBrayne's vessel the **Clansman** arrived on the Mersey on the 10th for refit at Cammell Laird. She berthed in the West Float at first before moving to dry dock. She left dry dock on the 25th and completed her refit in the West Float before leaving the Mersey on the 27th. **Clansman** usually operates out of Oban, sailing to Castlebay on Barra and Lochboisdale on South Uist.

On the 15th it is noted that the **Hamnevoe**, of Northlink Ferries, had arrived on the Mersey for refit at Cammell Lairds. She departed on the 26th, heading back to Scrabster from which she sails to Stromness on Orkney.

On the 19th **H.M.S Sutherland** arrived at the Liner Stage for a courtesy visit to Liverpool. On the 21st it is noted that the **Mersey Mammoth**, the floating crane/barge has been listed for sale by her owners, Peel Ports. She can be snapped up for 4.5 million Euros!

March 2010

It is reported on the 5th that the old landing craft, the **Landfall** has sunk on her moorings in the East Float. This incident leads to much comment in the local press about the perceived poor record of Merseyside in preserving its maritime heritage.

Another Northlink visitor arrives on the Mersey on the 8th. This time it is the turn of the **Hrossey** to enter Cammell Laird for refit. She passes New Brighton initially at 15.00. She departed the Mersey on the 19th after her refit. **Hrossey** is usually in service between

Aberdeen and Lerwick on Shetland, sometimes also calling at Kirkwall on Orkney.

H.M.S. Albion arrives on the Mersey once again on the 9th, berthing on the liner stage. **Albion** has been to the Mersey several times in recent years but is, of course, always a welcome visitor. She is open to the public over a two day period and departs at 10.00 on the 13th.

On the 23rd, the **Boudicca** of Fred Olsen Cruise Line arrives on the Mersey at 15.00, berthing at the Langton Cruise Terminal. Replacing the venerable **Black Prince** as Fred Olsen's regular Liverpool cruise liner, her first cruise was a 14 night cruise to the Canary Islands. She returned on the 6th April for a 23 night cruise to the Eastern Mediterranean. Her visit caused some controversy as to the suitability of the rather run down facilities at Langton compared with what could be achieved at the new cruise liner facility at the Pier Head. Fred Olsen appear to be disappointed that no further progress appears to have been made in persuading the Authorities to allow the Pier Head facility to be used as a starting and finishing point for cruises.

April 2010

A previous "resident" of the Mersey, the former Dublin Ro-Pax ferry **Brave Merchant** returned to 12 Quays on the 7th to cover for the refit of the current vessels on the route. However she returned with a new name, the **T Rex**. Whether she has been named after the prehistoric carnivore or the rock band of the 1970s, fronted by the late Marc Bolan, is unclear. However passengers on the route would have been pleasantly surprised as to how much better her passenger facilities are than on the vessel she is temporarily replacing, the **Dublin Viking**.

On the 11th, the RFA tanker **Gold Rover**, which had been waiting patiently in Langton Dock, moves over to Cammell Laird for a refit. It is to be hoped she didn't notice her sister, the **Grey Rover**, under process of demolition in Canada Graving Dock!

On the 12th Cammell Laird achieves a Northlink full set! The **Hjaltland**, the third Ro-Pax vessel of their three ship fleet arrives on the Mersey for refit, on the evening tide. She departs the Birkenhead yard at 18.00 on the 22nd, her destination being Aberdeen, where she was due to arrive at 07.00 on the 24th. Her usual route is the same as that of the **Hrossey**.

Another naval visitor to the river on the 16th when **H.M.S. Shoreham**, a minehunter, pays a courtesy visit, berthing in Canning Dock while on the 17th the small cruise vessel **Ocean Nova** berthed, on the early morning tide in Langton Dock. The **Ocean Nova**, formerly a ferry in Greenland waters, had spent the previous few months cruising in the

Antarctic, being based in Argentina. With a length of 73 metres, breadth of 11 metres and a draft of 3.7 metres and a cruising speed of 12 knots she is certainly one of the more compact cruise ships to visit the Mersey. Her cruising programme for the northern hemisphere winter includes some cruises in the Irish Sea and Scottish waters.



The Ocean Nova in Langton Dock, 17th April 2010. (Adrian Sweeney)

The gross tonnage of the **Ocean Nova** is 2183. She has a passenger capacity of between 90 and 96 and sails under the Bahamas flag.

She gained a certain amount of notoriety on the 18th February 2009 when she ran aground in Antarctica's Marguerite Bay amid high winds and rough seas. On board were 64 passengers and 41 crew. The incident happened just a mile away from the Argentine naval base at San Martin. Her passengers were eventually evacuated but fortunately the ship refloated at the next high tide and there was no serious damage.

Her former name, while operating as a passenger ferry on the west coast of Greenland was **Sarpik Ittuk**.

HOOPS & STAVES

J.E. Cowden



What prompts me to write this article is as a result of a piece in *'The Daily Telegraph'* on the 'Demise of the Cooper.'

The extract, of course, refers to the recent announcement of the 99 pence pint of beer. However this article concerns the Cooper whose trade was hoops and staves, which played a large part in Elder Dempster's trade.

The era of the master cooper - a profession that dates back to

Roman times - is also at an end. A decade ago there were about a dozen master coopers, now there is just one, 45 year old Alistair Simms.

Yet most experts agree that beer brewed in wooden barrels is superior to that brewed in metal ones. Almost everything that once defined the traditional British pub is dying out due to big brewers penny-pinching. As the Telegraph reported, painted pub signs are becoming scarce, and I remember my publican mother telling me a dozen years ago, that the last factory making glass beer jugs (the dimpled ones with handles) was closing. It couldn't compete with the demand

for cheap straight glasses - never mind the fact that they shatter in seconds and are responsible for savage "glassing" injuries. But drinkers are partly to blame; anyone who avails themselves of a Wetherspoon's 99p pint should ask themselves how the brewer can afford it - and the answer will likely be, by offering a no-frills charm-free service and beer from a metal barrel.

An entry for the carriage of these items was probably one of the first half-dozen items to be entered in Elder Dempster's southbound freight tariff until the advent of containerisation. Through the passage of time the freight tariff naturally grew in size due to the increase in the variety of cargoes now being exported to West Africa. With such an increase, the freight tariff became somewhat cumbersome, so, therefore, a periodical review of the tariff was undertaken and items considered no longer needing to be shipped to West Africa and those now being manufactured in the newly built factories in the former colonies were withdrawn.

I recall in the late 60s attending a meeting of UKWAL members charged to totally



Handling wooden casks, Toxteth Dock

re-vamp the tariff by selecting and cutting out items which had not been manifested for many, many years. The committee duly assembled with the doyen of the freight tariff, Arthur Mayer, taking the chair. Working our way through the tariff item by item we eventually came to Hoops and Staves. Looking round the table it was fairly clear that the word 'delete' would be forthcoming. However, Arthur, who had always been reluctant in what he would describe as 'tampering with the tariff' informed the assembled committee that whilst the carriage of palm oil in casks had more or less ceased due to the commodity now being carried in bulk, it was, as a matter of fact, only a few weeks back that he had received an enquiry from one of the major shippers about Hoops and Staves and therefore suggested that we leave well alone. Smiles all round.

As past chairman of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society, I recalled Michael Stammers, Curator of Merseyside Maritime Museum interviewing an employee of Stuart & Douglas, a well known Liverpool cooperage firm. In addition they were owners/operators of a number of trading hulks based within the Niger delta; the ships were **Victoria**, **Dayspring** and **England's Queen**. Looking through my files I was fortunate enough to unearth a copy of that interview which I append below.

Cooper Tommy puts his life story on record

An 85 years old Kirkby man made a special trip to the Liverpool Museum this weekend to put the story of his working life on record.

Mr. Tommy Warburton is an expert on coopering - the art of making barrels, which was once an important part of the Liverpool shipping scene.

He started coopering at the turn of the century and was employed for 51 years by various firms with premises on the Liverpool waterfront.

When the Maritime Museum is opened in Liverpool it is hoped to include a display on the coopering trade in Liverpool. So Tommy went down to record the details of the years he spent in the trade.



Really busy

All the big shipping firms had their own team coopers in the early days of the 20th Century said Mr Warburton, who lives at Mersey Heights, Westvale. He recalls the days when colourful military uniforms were packed in barrels to be used as trade with the natives of Africa for palm oil and other goods. He made barrels to carry everything, from rifles to palm oil. When Liverpool dominated the shipping scene the coopers were

really busy. At one time there were thousands employed on the docks. He started work at Stuart & Douglas in 1899 and served a seven year apprenticeship.

Mr. Mike Stammers, the Keeper of Shipping at Liverpool Museum is arranging the cooperage display. "There seems to be very little written information about this trade in Liverpool. I was delighted when I heard about Mr Warburton, he has given me a lot of help and filled in a lot of the gaps".



Mary Slessor with barrels of palm oil on deck. Opobo, June 1930

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You will note that Stuart & Douglas operated from Horsfall Street and I'm sure that many of Elder Dempster's staff will remember walking down Horsfall Street on their way to Toxteth Dock or Sefton Street stores, or maybe to the Dock Office.

In later years Stuart & Douglas was absorbed into a much larger organisation, the African and Eastern Trading Corporation. The Horsfall street premises were sold and later became a garage.

Sources:-

Daily Telegraph, January 2009

Liverpool Echo, December 1971

Elder Dempster House Journal, March 1922
(The first ever ED House Magazine)



THE MONDAY FACILITY

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

June	Mondays	7th	14th	21st	28th
July		5th	12th	19th	26th
August		2nd	9th	16th	23rd

Ship Building on the River Dee

*Summary of the presentation given by LNRS member Tony Barratt
to the May 2009 meeting of the Society*

In all probability, the Romans built ships on the Dee to serve both the upriver Heronbridge trade and to support their activities along the coasts of North Wales and Northern England. Edward I is also thought to have built craft for his conquest of Wales.

The shipbuilding trade peaked in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with shipbuilding taking place from Dawpool on Wirral to Bangor on Dee and on the “Welsh Shore” to Sluice near Talacre. Barges and other craft were also built on the Chester Canal. So far, I have records of 985 ships built on the river between the 1680s and 1942. It was in that year the last commercial building took place near Queensferry when 13 ferro-concrete barges were assembled. It is possible that sections of more barges were built but were transported by road to the Mersey for assembly. A concrete barge, built at Queensferry was made up of 174 pre cast sections which could be formed anywhere and then taken to a waterside site for assembly and launching. So far, I have been unable to identify if any of the Queensferry barges have survived.

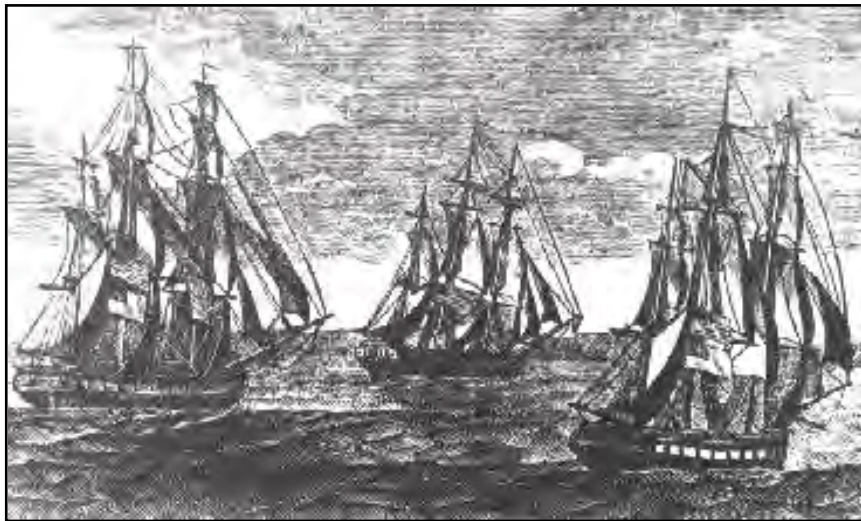
On the Wirral shore, all evidence of shipbuilding has disappeared, but locations have been identified at Dawpool, Parkgate and at Neston. Building also took place at Hoylake but as yet, I have been unable to identify any particular vessels, builders or locations. Above Chester, at least 10 barges were built at Bangor on Dee for the Duke of Bridgewater, presumably to utilise timber from the family estates in the locality. At least one vessel was built at Farndon along with some above the weir in Chester itself. In “The Groves” during the First World War, the building of small boats took place for the Admiralty. Below the weir some shipbuilding occurred on the site that is now occupied by County Hall, but the main building site was that part of the Roodee that is separated from the racecourse by the railway viaduct.

The earliest reference of shipbuilding on the Roodee, so far found, is of some concern being expressed by the city fathers at the practices of Alderman George Mainwaring who was building in the early 1680s. By 1745, a gentleman named Hinks was building HMS **Swan** for the Admiralty. This 75ft long 10-gunned warship was lost in 1762. Between 1758 and 1869 a least 10 different shipbuilders mainly building merchant ships often on a speculative basis occupied the land. One of these builders, John & Joseph Troughton built five ships with the name **Active** between 1793 and 1803 and probably built some or all of the other six vessels with that name, built between 1787 and 1803. It is presumed the name was chosen as it kept their yard “active”!



Crane Wharf with some Roodee shipbuilding taking place in the background.

Also building ships about this time was William Courtney. Although a merchant shipbuilder, he was enlisted to build six ships for the Royal Navy between 1804 and 1814. Two of these in particular had notable careers. HMS **Eden** of 1814 was found to be suffering from dry rot on delivery. This was no reflection on Courtney but on the lack of good quality timber. As an experiment, she was sunk for six months in salt water, which cured the rot, made her more watertight and hardened the timber. This led to the Admiralty specifying salt water soaked timber for subsequent wooden ships. The **Eden** went on to have an active career, including service off West Africa and in the Persian Gulf before being broken up in 1833.



HMS Levant (right) in action with Constitution (centre) HMS Cyane (left)

A near sister to the **Eden** was HMS **Levant**. Delivered in 1814, she was captured by the American frigate **Constitution** on the 20th February 1815. However the war had ended two days earlier, with the Treaty of Ghent, but the American captain was excused, as there was a 30-day period to allow the information to be distributed. The **Levant** was eventually disposed of in 1820. By the end of the Napoleonic War the yards in Chester were employing about 250 men of which about 160 worked for Courtney. In the period 1806 to 1812, it is estimated that there was an average of twelve ships under construction at Chester at any one time whilst in the years 1787 to 1808 the average was 6.5 ships per year. In the century 1740 to 1840, about 450 ships are thought to have been built.

Building warships was the exception (although 52 warships and support craft were built at Saltney and Queensferry in the First World War). Dee shipbuilders mainly built smaller ships for the coastal trades. They were however some early converts to the building of steamships. William Mulvey, whose Roodee yard was set on fire in 1845 by a spark from a passing train, built several steamers including the SS **St David**. A paddle steamer for the Chester to Bagilt service, she was not a success as Cestrians were reluctant to pay the extra three old pence fare that the **St David** charged as against the existing oar powered craft. Rigby & Co of Sandycroft built the engines for this vessel. Shipbuilding at Chester reached its zenith in the 1860s in the form of Nathaniel Cox (later Cox & Miller). They built eight vessels on a par with the **Cutty Sark** in terms of size. With no reflection on work of the builder, the location of their losses show just how widely these ships traded.

Gitiana	built 1861 -	1883 Abandoned off Denmark - Salvaged – Lost Cape Horn 1896
Roodee	1863 -	1875 Burnt out at Manila
Robinson Crusoe	1863 -	1872 Posted “Missing”. Wreckage came ashore St David’s Head
Northeast	1863 -	1872 Ran aground at Cape of Good Hope
Wayfarer	1863 -	1871 Wrecked off Southern Ireland
Delmira	1864 -	1896 Wrecked off New Zealand
Cheshire	1865 -	1865 Disappeared off New Madeira
West	1865 -	1869 Disappeared in N Atlantic



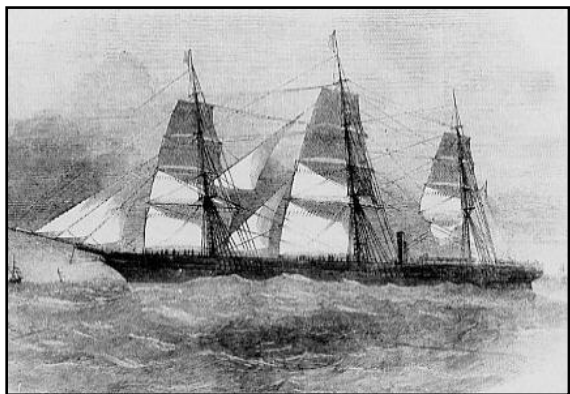
The Dee built clipper ships Roodee & Robinson Crusoe

Moving into Wales, Crichton at Saltney was the first yard reached from Chester. Opened in 1913 it traded until 1935 when the site was sold to the National Shipbuilders Security Ltd and closed. In its existence, the company built over 200 vessels as well as railway engines and even a football stand.



The Crichton site circa 1920 and in 2005

Iron founders and engine builders, Rigby & Co at Sandycroft, later went into shipbuilding but his yard was later transferred to George Cram who earned fame as the builder of the unfortunate **Royal Charter**, which sank off Anglesey when returning from Australia, with the loss of nearly 450 lives. Problems with building this vessel drove Cram into bankruptcy, which meant the closure of the Sandycroft yard and his second yard located on the Roodee.

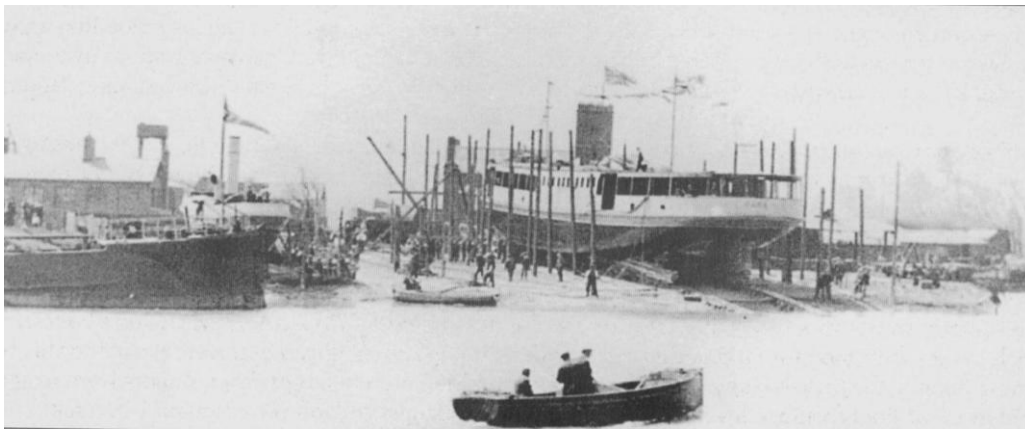


Royal Charter



The site of the Royal Charter slipway in 2005 (with a Dee bore passing by)

Roughly, where the new concrete road bridge crosses the Dee at Queensferry was the site of the Abdela and Mitchell yard between 1908 and 1932. With the exception of the wartime concrete barge building this was the last of several yards in the vicinity. Abdela & Mitchell who also had a yard at Brimscombe were very successful until 1920, but struggled thereafter, succumbing in 1932. In their time at Queensferry they built at least 74 vessels.



Abdela & Mitchell's yard at Queensferry,
The vessel being launched is the 534 ton **Labao** for Amazon service in 1911

At Connahs Quay several builders had yards, the most important of which was Ferguson & Baird. Baird had started shipbuilding near Flint Castle, but due to industrial expansion was forced with his new partner to relocate to Connahs Quay in 1858. The yard closed in 1910 and was used between 1918 and 1932 by Crichton for both building and repair work. During its existence, Ferguson & Baird built about 50 schooners, the most famous of which is the **Kathleen & May** now preserved in Bideford.



The Ferguson & Baird wooden shipbuilding yard is now a timber yard

Other builders but with limited production were located at Flint, Mostyn and Sluice, near Talacre. Most of these builders seemed to only build for their own account mainly using local timber. In all about 60 builders have been identified. Shipbuilding on a much reduced scale took place in the Southern Canal Basin at Chester in the early years of the Twentieth Century. Several other yards operated at other locations on the Canal, including at Cow Lane Bridge, Frodsham Street and at Tower Wharf.

Sources

Mainly: Numerous Shipping Registers, Local Record Offices /Museums and Local History books

THE MARITIME ART OF KENNETH D SHOESMITH.

1890 – 1939

*A summary of a paper given to the Society
by Glyn L Evans on 17th December 2009*

Kenneth Denton Shoesmith was born on 11th June 1890 in Skircoat, Halifax, West Yorkshire, his mother being Mary Hannah Shoesmith, daughter of Denton Shoesmith, market gardener of that address. As there is no father's name entered upon the birth certificate, it would perhaps be politically correct to say that Kenneth was born into a one-parent family.

The Census of 1891 shows Kenneth's grandmother's "Condition of Marriage" as "Widow" and his mother's as "single". Jane, the grandmother, has her "Profession or Occupation" registered as "Letting Apartments." Shortly after this the family moved to No 9 Imperial Terrace, Claremont Park, Blackpool, where, according to the 1901 Census, grandmother Jane's occupation is again "Lettings" with daughter Mary, grandson Kenneth, a servant and two "visitors living on own means".

The young Shoesmith was drawing from the time he could hold a pencil and examples of his very earliest works, drawn on any scrap of available paper [even the Blackpool lodging house letterheads] have, thankfully, been preserved. Initially, no doubt, this preservation was done by a very proud mother then, subsequently, by the methodical artist himself, by his widow (who, upon his death, moved the entire contents of his studio from London to Belfast) and finally at the bequest of the executors of her will, by The Ulster Museum, Belfast where a major collection of his works is now held.

Shoesmith's junior talent was nurtured initially by his being enlisted into The Revival of Youthful Art League under the watchful eye and with the encouragement of Mr T R Ablett of the Royal Drawing Society whose constructive criticism was no doubt instrumental in his protege's winning of several prizes, the earliest being The President's Prize in 1903. This is, no doubt, the Duchess of Argyll Prize, Gold Star, referred to on the reverse of the postcard painted by young Kenneth and sent by his proud Auntie Florrie in Halifax where he was staying for a few days, to her cousin, Gertrude in Macclesfield in 1903. Up to the age of 17, Shoesmith continued to submit his work for appraisal, this being carefully filed away in albums with his mentor's comments and suggestions that were later to be put to such good effect. "Finally," Shoesmith records, "I was sent to that university of so many fine sailors, the training ship **Conway**."

Let me at this stage introduce you to someone I have never met, Sarah Amery. Out of the

blue I received from Sarah, some while after my manuscript for the book had gone to the publishers, an e-mail which read, "I found your address when I searched for information on K D Shoesmith. I wonder if you can help me. I have been clearing out my parents' house recently and have found a rolled up water colour of a ship which has his name at the bottom. I can't imagine why we would have it. The only link I can think of is that my grandfather lived in Blackpool and he lived there too. The painting looks almost like a child's. The ship is very detailed. How can I find out more?"

Sarah sent an image of the painting to me, a galleon. Subsequently added to that find was grandfather's autograph book containing two items from Shoesmith who must have been his schoolboy chum. The first of these, a drawing of **HMS Conway**, is dated December, 1906, the end of his first term as a cadet. That he added his home address in Blackpool would indicate a desire to keep in touch. The second item, dated January 1907, is a painting of **HMS Devonshire**, a Royal Navy battleship built just a few years earlier and the pride of the Fleet. It is a remarkably mature and confident painting for a 17 year old and shows all the promise of things to come. Upon finishing his cadetship in **Conway**, Shoesmith signed indentures with Royal Mail Steam Packet Company on 4th August 1908 and by experience, examination and hard-earned promotion rose to the position of Chief Officer. Then, upon cessation of hostilities in 1918, he left the sea to take up painting full time. Reynolds Illustrated News in 1936 carried an article sub-headed "Mr Kenneth Shoesmith, the marine painter who has been commissioned to paint some of the immense canvases which will panel the public rooms of the giant liner **Queen Mary**, is himself an old sailor". It quoted Shoesmith as saying "I have been fond of drawing since I was old enough to hold a pencil, in fact it was my craze for drawing ships that made me adopt the sea as a career. In those days (in **Conway**) the Mersey afforded an endless pageant of lovely ships, and most of my leisure on the **Conway** was spent in watching them and trying to get them down in my sketch book." Reflecting on his time at sea, he said "In the harbours of the Far East and at sea in the North and South Atlantic, I was constantly excited by the sight of strange craft. More often than not, my "watch below" was spent with pencil and sketchbook in some snug corner of the deck." He went on "When I was appointed Chief Officer I had to put a curb on my hobby. The Chief of a modern liner is never really off-duty and I had no time to follow my artistic inclinations. I held on until the war ended and then - well, I wanted to paint and the sea would not spare me the time - so I gave up the sea."

On the 18th April, 1916 he had married Sarah (Sadie) Ritchie at the Parish Church, Hendon, their home address at that time being Highfield Avenue, Golders Green. They had met when she was enjoying a voyage on one of the Royal Mail Steam Packet vessels, probably **Magdalena**. Sadie was the daughter of a wealthy Belfast shipowner, the late Thomas Ritchie, of Royal Terrace, Belfast, possibly a distant relation of William Ritchie, a shipbuilder from Saltcoats, Ayrshire, who, in 1791, moved to Belfast to open a shipyard at the Old Lime Kiln Dock.

For many years the Shoemiths lived in Alyth Gardens, Golders Green, moving in 1936 to Willifield Way, Hampstead Garden Suburb. The estate agent's prospectus for the property at that time described it as "A well built and very attractive bungalow residence with handsome and lofty studio". My correspondence with the current owners of that house revealed that they were unaware of the property's famous previous owner. Their subsequent search of the loft for any hidden gems unfortunately drew a blank but I did receive from them a current photograph of the studio (showing it largely unchanged) and, more important, an order for a copy of the book!

It was at Willifield Way that Kenneth Shoemith died on 6th April 1939, aged just 48. Some time prior to this he had suffered a stroke rendering his natural "painting" right hand useless. Undaunted, he set about re-training himself to paint left-handed. His figure drawing was not (even by his own admission) of the same high standard as his other work, a fact of which he was most conscious to the extent that, almost up to the end, he attended life drawing classes.

The Hampstead & Highgate Express carried an obituary to Mr Kenneth Shoemith RI on 14th April 1939, from which the following is extracted:- "As a poster artist, which Shoemith always described himself as being, he was quite definitely in the front rank of those who are content to paint what they see and know. He was direct in his methods, sound in his drawing and brilliant in his colour. His ships were not only correct in detail but they were always in and not on the water, for he painted with a seaman's knowledge as well as an artist's perception. He was uninfluenced by any of the schools of art, he was concerned only with what he knew and to tell the whole truth about that. He struck no attitudes, adopted no poses; his watchword was sincerity, his aim the truth. As soon as he gave up the sea and took to painting it, he achieved success, for he knew what he was doing. It was not the result of study but of experience. There are artists who have studied the sea in her moodiness; Shoemith knew all these moods and could put them swiftly and precisely onto canvas. He had a very accurate sense of values and a gorgeous sense of humour, masculine in its vigour but never flamboyant in its expression. He was never disturbed by criticism. There are some artists who put all of themselves into their work and leave nothing for the everyday-ness of life. Shoemith was too much of a man to do that. He put all of his artistry into his pictures, and had still enough of himself left to make his friendship a prize"

The Evening Standard's Correspondent at Southampton reported in the 15th April 1939 edition:- *"A small casket containing the ashes of Mr Kenneth D Shoemith, marine artist, was handed to Captain F. R. Miles, commander of the Royal Mail liner, **Asturias**, before the ship left Southampton today. By the wish of the dead man, Captain Miles will scatter the ashes as the ship is crossing the Channel."*

TSMV PORT PIRIE

by L.N.R.S. Member James Pottinger

This ship was of a class and an era which perhaps epitomised the standards and dominance held by the British Merchant Navy immediately after the end of WWII, when shipowners were gradually building up their fleets to replace those lost in the conflict, confirming their intentions to continue their trading patterns on their traditional routes to the Empire.

Thus from the late 1940"s to the late 1960"s this period could be termed as an Indian Summer in terms of enjoying the fruits of winning the war. However it was to be a false dawn as it turned out. This was a remarkable renaissance in fact when one considered that over 60% of the pre-war total had been lost in the conflict. The introduction of the wartime standard Empire class ships and the purchase or allocation of the numerous Liberty ships, and an immediate post war shipbuilding boom had allowed the British fleet to retain 27% of the world total in 1948. Even up to 1960 ships tended to be built by the owners favoured yards much in the style of previous construction albeit with improvements in accommodation and increased speed, but essentially cargo liners were built with the same operational characteristics as previously. Whilst a return on capital was important there was nevertheless still some pride in the appearance of their ships and their distinctive livery which proclaimed their proud ownership.

With their grey hulls and bright red funnel with black top and two black bands the Port Line proudly proclaimed their presence on the sea routes to the Antipodes. Prior to the end of the war Port Line had prepared designs of replacements for the heavy losses of their valuable refrigerated cargo ships sustained in WWII, and were thus able to place orders for five ships as early as in the summer of 1945. The **Port Pirie** (5) was built by Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson Ltd at Wallsend as yard No 1741 for Port Line Ltd London. She was propelled by two 5-cylinder 2 stroke C.S.A Doxford engines built by the shipbuilder developing a total of 10,700 bhp to give a service speed of 16 knots. To give a measure of standardisation a number of the ships had Doxford engines, and whilst these included five and six cylinder units, all had the same bore and stroke.

She had a refrigerated capacity of 536,616 cubic feet, and the accommodation was designed specifically for 12 passengers, although when the ship was initially completed she had facilities for 24 passengers in view of the shortage of passenger accommodation at that time. The **Port Pirie** was designed by the builders in collaboration with the owner"s superintendent engineer Mr B.P. Arrowsmith and Messer"s J.E. Hall of the well known refrigeration machinery manufacturers. She was laid down on 14.6.1945 and launched on 29.5.1946, completed on 30.1.1947 but was

unable to carry out builder sea trials due to rough weather at the time. Accommodation for passengers, officers and crew was especially comfortable. The crew, including petty officers and stewards, had double and single berth cabins with separate messrooms amidships on the upper deck. The passengers were accommodated on the boat deck with their own card room, writing rooms and lounge.

The Captain had a suite of dayroom, bedroom and bathroom on the navigation bridge just aft of the wheelhouse; the Chief Engineer had similar appointments as the Captain at the aft end of the bridge deck, the remainder of the deck and engineer officers also on this deck. The six cargo holds were served by an outfit of 5, 7, 10, 15 ton derricks, with a 60 ton derrick on the foremast above No 2 cargo hatch, all worked by 18 electric winches. There were three complete steel decks. Above the upper decks are the forecastle, enclosed bridge and poop. Of the six cargo holds, five, together with their lower tween decks and No 1 upper tween decks, are insulated to carry refrigerated cargo. General cargo was carried in No 6 hold and tween decks, forecastle, poop and the centre of the enclosed bridge space.

When Captain W.J. Enright O.B.E, who had joined Royden's Indria Line in July 1909 as 3rd Officer, and his crew joined the new ship in December 1946 he flew the Blue Ensign, and it was believed that she was possibly the first merchant ship to fly this ensign since the end of WWII. The **Port Pirie** arrived at Castellon in Spain on 2.7.1972 for scrapping, and I.M. Varela Davalillo started work in October 1972. An earlier ship, intended to be named **Port Pirie**, was built by John Brown at Clydebank but was purchased on the stocks on 2.11.1941 by the Admiralty and launched on 20.5.1943 as the escort carrier **HMS Nairana**. The extreme work load at John Browns" to carry out emergency repairs to ships damaged in service and Admiralty ship contracts naturally restricted efforts to complete this vessel, but Port Line were not constrained to accept these delays. In fact the Port Line chairman was moved to complain to Sir James Lithgow, the then Controller of Merchant Shipbuilding. After service in the Royal Navy she was loaned to the Royal Netherlands navy from 1946 to 1948 as the aircraft carrier **Karel Doorman**, and after her return to the Admiralty was purchased by Port Line and sent to Harland & Wolff at Belfast for conversion. She made her maiden voyage as **Port Victor** in October 1949, and subsequently served in the fleet until 21.7.1971 when she arrived at Faslane for demolition.

Main Particulars: **Port Pirie**

LOA	529ft
LBP	498ft 3ins
Beam	68ft 5ins
Gross tons	10,535
Deadweight tons	11,210

Acknowledgements:

Lloyds Register of Ships
Port Line,
World Ship Society
Motor Ship, August 1947

QUO VADIS, LIVERPOOL?

(This recently discovered article was published in the Liverpool Echo on 14th. September 1944. It was written by Arthur C Wardle who was founder Secretary of the LNRS)

Recently a leading local politician put the question: 'Whither goest thou, Britain?' How much more pertinently could that be addressed to Liverpoolians themselves as custodians, in normal times, of the world's premier export shipping point?

Today, the city faces a most uncertain future, for her fate may soon be arbitrarily decided by international fiscal arrangements or economic adjustments, and in this perplexity we might take courage from a retrospective glance at the enterprise of our ancestors.

For centuries, the little borough depended for its maritime existence upon transportation of troops, horses and baggage to and from the wars in Ireland and upon a restricted coastal trade, and it was not until the discovery of rock salt refining in the 17th century that Liverpool's overseas trade emerged. With salt refineries established in the town itself and at Hale and Garston, she derived an export bargaining power which encouraged her shipbuilding. This was followed by introduction of raw sugar from Barbados and, in 1666 the erection of a sugar refinery by enterprising merchants. Sugar importations brought also West Indian cottons and other commodities with the result that ocean going Mersey ships increased in number. Next came the importation of tobacco from Virginia and Maryland. By the close of the 17th century, local merchants had built up this trade to dimensions which caused London and Bristol merchants to lift their eyebrows, and today Liverpool stands as the world's greatest tobacco port. Then in 1715, thanks to the ingenuity and enterprise of Sir Thomas Johnson and Thomas Steers, the engineer, the world's first practicable commercial wet dock was completed at Liverpool and proved a veritable boon to her own and other shipping. Thenceforward, her trade leaped forward. Whaling, the slave trade and privateering, certainly contributed to her 18th century affluence but these were passing phases and the real foundations of her subsequent commercial supremacy may be found in such events as the introduction of American cotton, the canalisation of the surrounding counties and in quick response to removal of the East India Company's trading monopoly. Thus the borough developed rapidly into becoming Britain's leading out-port; but we should have declined and gone the way of all sailing ship ports on the introduction of steam navigation, had it not been for the perspicacity of our ancestors.

The early steamship owners were quick to realise that Liverpool, adjacent to the Lancashire collieries and able to offer cheap coal as a result of low canal freights, was

the most economical base for steamship operations, coastal and deep-sea and so the steamship trade established itself at the Mersey, resulting in the building up of a vast system of docks, warehouses and rail and canal routes.

The subsequent history of the port is only too familiar, but the outstanding feature of the story is the individual foresight and effort of successive generations of mercantile and industrial leaders. Today the community has to face up to what may prove a scientific and economic revolution in world trade, and if we are to maintain the requisite volume of trade at the Mersey to ensure our bread and butter, it becomes essential that Liverpool must proffer the cheapest fuel and bunkering facilities for air and surface craft alike, improved loading and discharging conditions and the speediest domestic transport methods.

This problem must be tackled before there can be any attempt to expend monies on the social reforms so glibly mentioned in war-time speeches and interviews. It means hard graft for all and the next two or three years will determine whether Liverpool possesses leaders of experience, foresight and ingenuity or whether superficiality has become such a disease of leadership as to cramp all enterprise.

Did you know that

Our new web site, which is being continually developed and updated to help members to keep in up to date contact with the Society, can be found at:

www.liverpoolnauticalresearchsociety.org

British Steamships

The Editor has recently received a letter from Society member Mr F.W. Hawkes;
25 Cherry Tree Close,
Billinghamurst
West Sussex
RH14 9NG

Dear Sir,

I am a member of the LNRS, and for some 15 years I have been extracting information on British Steamships from the transcript copy Registers held in the National Archives at Kew. Now, with the encouragement of the World Ship Society, I have started to put the results of my researches on to CD"s. I enclose a copy of Issue No 2 for your information. It has been suggested that other members of LNRS might be interested in this information. It is available at a cost of £12 (including postage), cheque payable to World Ship Society, or credit card, direct from me at the above address.

**“American Coastal Rescue Craft –
A Design History of Coastal Rescue Craft Used by the United States Life-Saving
Service and the United States Coast Guard”**

By Dr. William D. Wilkinson and Cmdr. Timothy R. Dring (USNR Rtd)

Reviewed by LNRS Member Dr. Eric S. Long Professor of Engineering Safety Law

The book commences with an account of the early development in the design of English life saving craft in the late 1700s, influenced somewhat by converting the Norwegian yawl, and including high stability, buoyancy and self-bailing design features; and some time later a model was developed with the all-important self-righting capability. The text gives a description of how buoyancy was achieved by air cases fore and aft and cork fenders along the gunwales – and incorporating a „rockered“ keel to improve buoyancy. By the early 1800s the authors’ research shows evidence that self-righting capability was incorporated in a British built lifeboat, and by the mid 1800s the Liverpool Dock Trust ordered a number of double-ended lifeboats, incorporating spritsails, that were designed by Thomas Costain, a Liverpool boat-builder, that became known as the „Liverpool Type“ (but were not self-bailing strangely enough at this time). The text goes on to explain about a competition that was held in Great Britain in 1851 for the best design of life saving craft complying with a list of essential design criteria, following which, the „Liverpool Type“ with its „double-diagonal“ planking (as opposed to single clinker or carvel planking) became an important element in the lifeboats designed for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) between 1851 until the early 1960s. This early part of the literature describes the period of time in which the lifeboat had developed from a pulling surfboat, powered by oars, to an entirely new life saving craft of British design. The text explains how a number of life craft designers were experimenting and constructing double-diagonal (and triple-diagonal) planked hulls, including Thomas Costain mentioned above, during the early to mid 1800s, and including a British patent taken out in 1818 by William Annesley on a system of „cruciform“ planking, taking account of grain direction in the timber, which became known as the „Annesley System“ – such double-diagonal planking method of hull construction provided an extremely strong and resilient hull

Later the authors’ research describes the design of early life saving craft in America from wooden vessels to galvanised iron, where the Francis Metallic Lifeboat Company patented a means of stamping corrugated iron plates by means of a hydraulic press, in the early to mid 1800s, and how the United States Lifesaving Service at the time, purchased a self-righting, self-bailing, pulling (by means of oars) and dual mast sailing lifeboat from the RNLI in the late 1800s that provided a life saving craft that became the basis for further development in America. The authors go on to describe the

characteristics of the RNLI vessel, that comprised large bow and stern air chambers, air chambers under the thwarts and along the sides of the vessel, together with a heavy iron keel to lower the centre of gravity to its lowest point, making the boat completely unstable in the inverted position and so providing excellent self-righting properties; in addition to which the self-bailing property was achieved by means of relieving tubes incorporating valves that allowed shipped water to rapidly drain away – later lifeboats achieved this with a more simplified system of scuppers cut into the side of the hull above the deck line. The book goes on to state the factors that influenced the increased life saving activities in America and the increase of life saving stations specifically along the north-east coastline, together with the development and use of the lightweight surfboat in the late 1800s, with its wide beam and „rockered“ keel, specifically designed for launching directly from the beach – the surfboat as a specific type of life saving craft was never developed in Great Britain to the same extent as in America owing to the different coastline terrain.

The text defines the so-called modern age of lifeboat and surfboat design and construction with the advent of the steam engine and its adoption by the RNLI in the later 1800s, together with the inherent dangers of incorporating such prime movers on life saving craft. The authors go on to describe the adoption of the gasoline engine in American life saving craft, mounted in the watertight airspace with a gravity feed fuel system and single 3-bladed propeller – followed by the introduction of the gasoline engine in the early 1900s for powering RNLI lifeboats, preferring amidships location for the prime mover, as opposed to employing the aft air case as with the American design. The development of the motorised lifeboat was, as described, the most important innovation since the first rescue surfboat was installed in America in the early 1800s. The authors go on to describe developments in Great Britain, France and Germany, with various versions of engine development, including the first diesel engine employed in life saving craft; together with the highest number of motorised lifeboats located in America along the Great Lakes coastline due to the depth of water along the coast, facilitating the construction of the launching ramp; as opposed to the relatively shallow waters along the coast of the Atlantic seaboard which necessitated the beach-launched surfboat. In the early 1900s, the authors describe the development of a lightweight marine gasoline engine suitable for installation in the surfboat, along with an ingenious method of retracting the propellers, by employing a universal joint on the propeller shaft, whilst being launched from the beach, in order to avoid damage – the propellers subsequently being lowered from within the surfboat once afloat and beyond the incoming surf rollers. The text suggests that whilst the midship engine mounting and the tunnel stern to protect the propeller and shaft was developed and readily incorporated in the RNLI craft, it was well into the introduction of the Coast Guard era when it was incorporated in American life saving craft, becoming a standard

feature of lifeboat design until well into the 1980s. Seemingly one of the problems with the tunnel-protected propeller is that it can become air-bound under certain sea conditions, resulting in a loss of propulsion power. The text describes another self-bailing development feature, whereby the self-acting valves are subsequently replaced by two so-called through-hull freeing trunks running fore and aft, whereby water shipped onboard, drains into the trunks via brass gratings, mounted flush with the main deck – subsequently to be replaced with the simple side scuppers as mentioned above. The authors describe the increasingly diverse employment of the Coast Guard during the prohibition years, enforcing U.S. law on the transportation and sale of alcoholic beverages that resulted in further development of lifeboats in terms of speed and manoeuvrability. In addition to which, the increase in pleasure craft in coastal waters required the need for the Coast Guard's lifeboats and surfboats to tow stranded and rescued vessels ashore, requiring further development of the onboard power plant, together with radio communications and direction-finding equipment. The authors go on to describe the safety developments, in as much as ventilating explosive gasoline vapours from the engine compartment, and the fitting of carbon dioxide fire extinguishing systems in future developments. The text includes details of future developments in American life saving craft including: increased strength of construction with stresses distributed over large areas of framework, the addition of bulkheads to provide watertight compartments for damage stability, laminated wood construction due in part to the depleted supplies of seasoned timber during World War 2, smaller sized diesel engines becoming available for marine use so reducing the flammability risks, ice-sheathing on the hull waterline for employment on the Great Lakes, along with the design of the cabin picket lifeboat with multi-mission capabilities; together with the reorganisation of the Coast Guard stations into the district structure as it is today. The authors state that whilst an experimental welded galvanised steel hulled vessel was designed and built just prior to World War 2, this broke with tradition in this respect, and being somewhat ahead of her time, no further work was done on steel hulled lifeboats until the mid 1950s when steel hulled vessels with aluminium super-structures were deployed in the Pacific northwest.

After the War the text describes the gradual phasing out of the pulling surfboat from lifeboat stations and the adoption of the U.S. Army's amphibious trucks employed by beach front stations, which were later withdrawn due to material deterioration in the marine environment. Further lifeboat developments are discussed in the literature, including: improvements in the rudder/steering mechanism with power-assisted steering, the adoption of fibre-reinforced plastic hull construction (later discontinued due to problems with cracking around the engine mounts), and also with designs benefiting from improved metallurgical qualities of steel and aluminium, reliable towing tank studies on dimensionally-scaled models, and improved diesel engine

developments; and along with further discussion on the even greater diversity of the Coast Guard's role, including: marine law enforcement, environmental protection, and port security with the increased potential for drug smuggling – and in the 1960s, undertaking an extremely comprehensive study on the future requirements for life saving craft. Some improvements in the design included: a semi-displacement and planing hull with a „hard“ chine designed to provide increased speed with sea-keeping capabilities and bow design to reduce pounding in heavy seas, hull scantlings designed as a balance between higher strength with improved resistance to damage and reduced weight, double hull construction at the forward end for protection against grounding, the placement of the propellers higher than the lowest part of the stern so obviating the need for semi-tunnel protection in the hull stern, greater reliability provided by twin diesel engines giving redundancy of power plant, hydraulically powered twin rudders for improved manoeuvrability, and coxswain's ergonomically integrated design of cockpit for the steering and engine controls. The authors go on to state that minor stress cracking became evident in the aluminium hulls of some life craft from wear and tear, although subsequently repaired by welding. The text discusses the air-cushioned vehicles that were adopted by the Coast Guard (although their high maintenance requirements and lack of towing capability limited the usefulness of such life saving craft and were subsequently withdrawn from service), along with an „off-the-shelf“ commercial boat such as the „Boston Whaler“, the „NORCREW“ vessel that was originally developed in Norway with mixed gender crews operating on a working shift basis that later became the Independent Maritime Response Vessel in America, and finally the rigid-hull inflatable boat (RHIB) – albeit that the crew experienced operational limitations with the RHIBs in heavy sea states.

The book concludes with the Coast Guard today and the compromise that has to be made being mission requirements and engineering funding limits for lifeboat design; with further maturity of the RHIBs and experimentation with their surf capability and the development of the „near shore RHIB lifeboat“ awarded to a UK company; together with the „standardisation“ of lifesaving craft into fewer categories to facilitate maintainability, which may be problematic given the outside contractors that are now involved with the design and construction of life saving craft. The authors discuss the fact that it is difficult to develop a single design of life craft that is optimised for all regions around the shores of America in which the Coast Guard operates, given the varying surf conditions, weather fronts, environments and coastal terrains. The authors also discuss the effect that the terrorist attack of the 11th September 2001 have had on the Coast Guard's priority operations, resulting in the mounting of heavy automatic weapons onboard life saving craft – which has had a profound effect upon the architecture of such craft

Finally, the book comprises reference Notes appertaining to the issues raised in the body of the text, a Bibliography of secondary sources of related literature, a Glossary and Abbreviations in Appendix „A“, and specific sections on: (a) The U.S. Coast Guard National Motor Lifeboat School, and (b) The U.S Lifesaving Service (USLSS) and U.S Coast Guard (USCG) Methods of Boat Launch in Appendix „B“, together with a useful Index. The book is also full of interesting Illustrations covering the history of life saving craft, together with an accompanying Compact Disc on the designs of some of the life saving craft highlighted in the text, amongst other issues related to Coast Guard operations

The book comprises a wealth of historical information, dating back to the early days of rescue and lifesaving operations in the United States of America, with references made in the text to the RNLI and the lifesaving craft employed in Great Britain, where deemed appropriate. There can be no doubt that the authors have spent a considerable amount of time undertaking the primary research involved when embarking on the task of compiling such comprehensive literature. I applaud the authors for presenting a wealth of information that will, I have no doubt, be of interest to both the nautical historian specifically interested in the history of rescue and lifesaving craft, and also the casual reader with an interest in historical nautical affairs in general. In reviewing the book, I have attempted to point out some of the historical issues raised by the authors for the benefit and interest of the Liverpool Nautical Research Society's members (one of the points of interest to myself was the development of the lifeboat referred to as the „Liverpool Type“ designed by Thomas Costain) – and in doing so I sincerely hope that I have interpreted the text accurately.

EARLY STEAMSHIP TYPES

By Nigel W. Kennedy, F.G.A.

Published in L.N.R.S. Transactions, Volume III, 1946 - 47

If I had the task of discussing almost any other kinds of vessels than Early Steamboats, I should find little difficulty in classifying them into definite types characteristic of certain periods. Such simplicity is impossible, for it was only after about 1820 that Steamships can really be said to have settled down to any definite form of construction or method of propulsion (in the United Kingdom at least), and my review is intended to include all the earliest more or less experimental forms which have come under my notice. Up to that time progress in steam propulsion had of course been closely allied with the development of the steam engine, and of engineering practice, while prejudice had been responsible for much unnecessary

delay in the general adoption of motive power. The diverse methods of propulsion had been mainly experimental and primitive, but as experience was gained, so the form of the steamship was modified and began to have an identity of its own.

Although many pioneers, such as James Watts, have made ambitious claims for the “invention” of the steam engine marine and locomotive, in actual fact no single individual may be credited with this distinction, since the steam engine was a simple and logical consequence of natural evolution and progress. So as soon as steam had been adopted for marine propulsion, progress was steadily maintained, keeping pace with extending mechanical invention, but somewhat checked at times by tardy legislation. Steam power was not the only means suggested, but was soon accepted as the cheapest and most practicable, for while patents were filed for the internal combustion engine, for example, as early as 1825, its adoption and development has had to wait until quite recent times. According to various authorities several half-hearted attempts were made from about 1700 in the propulsion of vessels by steam, long before the steam-engine was actually known, or anyone knew how to construct even a boiler safely, and probably the earliest substantiated attempt was that of Jonathan Hulls, whose little engine was cast at the Eagle Foundry, Birmingham, by Bruton, in 1735. It is claimed that this device propelled a small vessel on the Avon a year later, but authentic records are now very difficult to find. Similarly, the historic case of Dr. Denis Papin, a refugee Frenchman, who is stated to have navigated a small steamboat on the Fulda about 1705, appears to require more corroboration.

There seems little doubt that the first authenticated attempts at the propulsion of vessels by steam took place between 1785 and 1790, when Patrick Miller, William Symington and William Taylor in Scotland; the Marquis de Jouffroy in France; and Fitch and Rumsay in America found their various solutions to the problem, which, however, was not satisfactorily solved for some years after that date.

Few of the earliest steamboats were specially built or designed, as the engines were usually fitted to some convenient vessel, such as a row-boat, barge, or other small vessel, and the trials took place on enclosed water, such as canals, lakes, rivers, etc. before ventures were attempted upon the open sea.

In spite of this general rule, it is remarkable how many inventors did actually design their own vessels, even at an early date, and apparently realised that a vessel under its own power required a different construction from a wind-driven craft. Some vessels did, however make a maiden voyage immediately after conversion to power, as in the case of the former French privateer **L'Actif**, which was converted by an enterprising

Norwich gentleman who employed Matthew Murray (Murray, Fenton & Co, Leeds) to make an engine and fit into the craft which then (1813) travelled under her own power to Yarmouth, by way of the Trent, Humber and east coast, and arrived without mishap and apparently plied satisfactorily for some time.

It is impossible in this paper to discuss in detail the many and varied methods of propulsion suggested or tried from time to time, but the following chronological summary gives some idea of the wide field covered during about a century. Many ideas were projected years before their time, and their adoption was not practicable.

From this summary it is apparent that some seventeen actual trials were made in various vessels during a period of some seventy-five years, and of these, seven were in craft specially designed and constructed by or for the experimenters. In most instances records of the remainder are too vague to denote the type of vessel employed, and it is inferred that they would be converted craft. In later days both engines and hulls were specially designed for steamships by specially trained draughtsmen, but at first only slight differences were made in the lines for sailing craft and steamships by builders whose experience was limited to the former.

Classified list of steamships of the U.K., C.1700-1811, giving Method of Propulsion (Where known)

- c.1700-1704 (?). Capt. Thomas Savery, F.R.S., and Dr. Denis Papin in collaboration may have produced a small vessel, afterwards used on the Weser or Fulda, in Germany. (Various contemporary records). Appears to have used *paddle wheel*.
- 1736 Jonathan Hulls; Small boat stated to have plied on River Avon. Stern-wheel. Engine by Brunton, Eagle Foundry, Birmingham. (Authority-Patent Records, etc.)
- 1785 Joseph Bramah; Took out a patent for a screw, but there is no evidence of his having tried it for marine propulsion.
- 1787 Furness and Ashworth; Stated to have constructed a steamboat which plied successfully on R. Hull. (Patent Office).
- 1788 Furness and Ashworth; Constructed a steamboat worked "*On the paddle principle* " for the Prince Regent, which plied on the Thames, and was destroyed by fire. (Patent Office.)
- 1788 Patrick Miller, William Taylor and William Symington constructed a twin-hulled vessel "of tinned iron" which had *two centre-wheels*, operated by a single cylinder engine made by the Carron Company, and plied on Dalswinton Loch. (Authority, Patent Office, James Nasmyth, Smiles, etc.)

1789. Patrick Miller had a larger, similar twin-hulled boat constructed, which was named **Experiment of Leith** and was tried out on the Firth of Forth.
1790. James Rumsey took out a patent for a steamboat operated by a *chain and rack-and-pinion* motion to submerged paddles. (Robertson Buchanan, 1816, Patent Office, etc.) No details.
1792. Early Naval experiments mentioned by R. Buchanan in his *Steam Navigation* " (Glasgow, 1816). On River Thames. No details.
- 1793 Naval Experiments on Thames, using Jet principle. (R.Buchanan, 1816.)
- 1793/6 Dr. Cartwright, Robert Fulton and Earl Stanhope made tests with experimental vessel propelled by "Duck-foot paddles" apparently working vertically astern.
- 1793 John Smith converted a small sailing boat bought at Liverpool into a steamboat propelled by *seven vertical paddles* on each side, and plying successfully on the Bridgewater Canal between St. Helen's and Warrington, or even Manchester. (*Gentleman's Magazine* 1793, *Patent Office, etc.*)
- 179-? Records of tests made on the Bridgewater Canal by the Duke of Bridgewater; various means of propulsion were tried, one being *chains with moving paddles over the bows*.
1799. **Buonaparte** (or **Old Nancy**) was built at Worsley Yard (almost certainly of iron) and plied on the Sankey Navigation, her motion being produced by a stern-wheel. (Records Worsley.)
1801. **Charlotte Dundas** was engined by W. Symington, and operated by a recessed stern-wheel, plying on Firth & Clyde Canal. (Patent Office)
1801. Hunter and Dickinson stated by several contemporaries to have tried a steamboat on the Thames, but no details so far traced.
1801. Another (anonymous) experiment stated by several writers in the contemporary press to have been made on the Thames, but no details were given.
1803. Symington apparently produced a second **Charlotte Dundas** similar to the first but with improvements.
1807. Steamboat on the Birmingham Canal Navigation, according to Boulton and Watts' Boiler Book entry, but no details stated.
1808. James Linaker (Superintendent, Naval Dockyard, Portsmouth) designed a Jet-propelled vessel, and took out a Patent.
1811. Many early writers (including Robertson Buchanan) mention Dawson's **Comet** which is stated to have plied at Dublin, but so far no details have been forthcoming.

Summarising the above details so far as possible, it is seen that up to 1811 the methods of propulsion suggested or tried include 2 centre-wheel; 4 stern-wheel; 2 (?) side oars; 1 stern oar; 2 jet; 1 chain and float (paddle), and about 5 not described. It is a remarkable fact that none of these pioneer vessels appear to have used side-wheels, nor does this obvious method seem to have been suggested up to this date, nor does the screw seem to have been tried, the latter being quite understandable in view of the many difficulties involved, as was found even so late as 1840.

Classified list of steamships of the U.K. between 1812 and 1820; it is now possible to tabulate them under three principal heads as under:

Date	Centre wheel	Side wheels	Assumed Side wheels	Stern wheel	
1812		2			Bell's Comet and Elizabeth
1813		6	2		2 not stated, not traced
1814		19	2		2 not stated, not traced
1815		17			2 not stated, not traced
					1 iron vessel on Mersey, not identified
1816		21			1 with oscillating wheels
					2 not traced
1817		19			
	1				Etna on Mersey, twin hulls
1818		13			
1819		13			1 not traced
	1				Mersey on Mersey, twin hulls
				1	Sampson on Clyde
1820		22			
		8			Rising Star , believed to have jet propulsion
					Rebuilt vessels mainly on Clyde
<div>2</div> <div>140</div> <div>4</div> <div>1</div> <div>1</div> <div>7</div>					Centre wheel Side wheels Side wheels, assumed Recessed stern wheel Jet propulsion Not stated

On examination we note that a significant change has taken place, and that a very definite type is asserting its merits over other systems, for out of 155 vessels about 144 had side paddle wheels.

It is probable that at least three were built of iron and upwards of ten were fitted with Oldham's revolving paddles (or some other similar oscillating device) prior to 1820, and that in spite of Colonel Steven's successes with the twin-screw in the United States in 1804, the screw was still practically unknown in the U.K. and does not appear as a means of propulsion in one single instance.

Little appears to have been written about the various types of screw, and their disadvantages - slip, effective power, immersion, et cetera - and even by 1840 the screw was being modified, tried and discarded by various inventors. In my opinion its later adoption has developed a very unscientific and ineffective method of propulsion.

Hulls

Most of the earliest steamships were built by celebrated builders of wooden sailing vessels, and at first, lack of experience resulted in the old building traditions being followed closely, until it was found that the bluff bows required by a vessel which floated over the seas running before the wind, were unsuited to a craft which could run into the wind and cut through adverse seas, and that wood was becoming obsolete. In spite of this, many very beautiful steamships were constructed from wood even up to a late date, and on graceful slender lines, with a sharp cut-water and improved flare. Some, as in the case of the re-built **Waterloo** on the Liverpool-Dublin service were coppered.

It is usually stated that the first British iron steamship was **Aaron Manby** built at Tipton, Staffs, in 1822, but this is definitely incorrect, and it is almost certain that a number of successful iron steamships were plying before 1820.

James Nasmyth states very definitely that Miller's twin hulled **Experiment** of 1788 was of tinned iron, and that the passengers included Miller, Symington, Taylor, Robert Burns (the poet), Sir William Monteith and Alexander Nasmyth (James' father) who made an historic sketch of the event (now in the Patent Office), besides three servants. It is almost certain that **Buonaparte**, a steam barge on the Sankey Navigation, was of iron, as she was built at the Bridgewater Foundry at Worsley in 1799. Another vessel, so far unidentified, is referred to in the contemporary press as plying on the Mersey in 1816, made of iron.

Unfortunately few reliable pictures of the earliest steam-ships now exist, but there are sufficient to show that they had frequently a dignity of their own. **London Engineer** of 1817 was stated to be so lightly built that it was said that the thin hull was almost held together by paint.

It may not be generally realised that even so early as 1817 buoyancy tanks as a safety measure were suggested by Captain G. Dodds, and probably incorporated in this trim little **Victory** of that date, on the Richmond-Ramsgate service. These tanks were fitted on the outside of the hull, beneath the sponson-deck, and in some old prints appear as "blisters" each side of the paddles. The sponson-deck was a characteristic feature of the early paddle-steamers, particularly river and cross-channel craft, whose deck

accommodation was considerably increased by this extension. Sometimes this deck extended from bow to stern, where it might project several feet on either side; in other cases it was limited to a flying deck either side of the paddle-boxes, and faded into the main deck in gentle curves, but when it is remembered that even in 1820 the paddles might each be eight or ten feet wide, the increase over the actual beam amidships will be apparent.

Propulsion

I can only refer very briefly to engines and boilers. The first steam boilers were of very simple construction, from lack of materials, some even consisted of wooden barrels reinforced with iron bands, and others spherical or lenticular in shape, formed from two cast-iron halves, bolted together. Such castings varied in thickness from one-quarter inch to two inches, and it is hardly a matter of surprise that explosions of both types of boiler resulted in an official enquiry and the passing of special laws in 1817. Rivetted sheet boilers soon followed, and although Richard Trevethick had invented his tubular boiler before 1812 it does not appear to have been used before 1820. Each engineer had his own ideas of a marine engine, so there was considerable variation in design from the very beginning, but all were either LOW or HIGH pressure engines, the first having a working pressure up to about 6 lbs. per sq. in., while Scotch engines commonly had higher pressures, after which a jet of cold water entered and condensed the steam, causing a partial vacuum, which caused the piston to descend again under atmospheric pressure.

In the High Pressure engine the steam usually underwent double expansion. The engines were at first very small and clumsily built, but improvement was steady and rapid. Two engines or twin cylinder engines, and double-acting cylinders were followed by oscillating cylinders. As an example of progress, the little engine made by the Carron Company for Patrick Miller was of about 1 h.p., while **Rising Star** of 1820 was fitted by Maudezlay with twin 35 h.p. engines, and is stated to have had a speed of 14 knots, against Miller's four miles per hour.

The paddlewheel soon became the most popular means of propulsion, but was never ideal. Two main difficulties were quickly encountered and some very ingenious methods of overcoming them were adopted. The first difficulty was that a fixed-blade or float has maximum effect at one point, and neither enters nor leaves the water with any feathering effect, thus causing unnecessary resistance. The second is, that for maximum effect, the float should never exceed a certain maximum immersion, but since immersion depended on the amount of water the vessel might draw at any particular time, the float might be immersed either too deeply or not at all. In due course it was found possible to raise and lower the axis of the wheel, and also to vary

the pitch or feather of the blades, though many forms were tried out before perfection was achieved, in such vessels as the famous 22-knot **Empress Queen** and her contemporary **La Marguerite** still remembered by many who had the pleasure of delightful trips in them. But how many could credit that the marvellous oscillating wheels dated back to about 1816?

These intricate compensating wheels were developed from quite humble ancestry, for **Comet** was originally fitted with two pairs of simple wheels, consisting of "malting shovels" set in a four-armed cross, and without rims. Rimmed wheels consisting of eight, twelve, sixteen or more floats set radially soon followed, to be succeeded by similar rimmed wheels in which the floats had a feathering effect produced by setting them at an angle, instead of radially, like an undershot water-wheel.

To obtain a continuous propulsive effect, the next advance was to step or "stagger" the blades by combining two or more, wheels in one, side by side, but with a different setting of the blades, which were also given a sort of twist. This can be simply illustrated by holding a ruler between the hands with one edge resting on the table, representing the radial setting. If now it is tilted slightly, this resembles the feathering effect, and if now one hand is moved forward so as to bring the rule slightly out of its original alignment, this illustrates the additional twist, particularly if another blade is imagined at one side. It is almost impossible to describe the automatic feathering devices, such as oscillating or compensating wheels, which consisted of two wheels revolving within each other by means of an eccentric axle. By the year 1820 the wheels had increased in diameter from about four feet, with a width of twelve inches, to, some sixteen feet diameter and a width of six to eight feet.

Early steamers had more or less bluff bows, and a beak frequently projected after the fashion of sailing craft. In many instances the hull was handsomely decorated both with ornate carving and the lavish use of bright paint, and figureheads were not uncommon. The **London Engineer** was a famous example of the period, and **Victory** another, and they were probably the most exquisite achievements to date. Some ships had solid bulwarks, but river craft frequently had ornamental balustrades, or light iron rails sometimes filled in with slender metal lattice.

A comparison of tonnage should give some idea of relative sizes of craft, if this was always given in gross, or displacement tonnage, but unfortunately, during the last hundred and thirty years, methods of computing tonnage have been periodically revised and one finds Builders' Measurement, Old and New Measurement, Gross Tonnage and Displacement, and Net Register which makes tonnage misleading. Miller's little vessel of 1787 was probably about 12 tons, while the tonnage of the

Rising Star of 1820 is quoted as 400, the largest up to then.

Funnels were necessary features and could hardly be hidden but were often both artistic and utilitarian. In the smaller experimental craft the smoke stack was merely something to get rid of the smoke, but on the Clyde it was quite usual for some years for vessels to have a tall funnel which acted as a mast and carried a useful square sail. These early funnels were not sheathed, and sometimes set the decks alight. They were tall to increase draught, sometimes forty odd feet. They were usually round in section, and single, but **Victory** with an oval funnel and **Rising Sun** with two circular stacks side by side were exceptions. Londoners are familiar with the hinged funnels on small boats, enabling them to pass under the low bridges at high tide, but how many realise that Dodds invented a “lobster-backed hinged funnel” in 1818 for this purpose, and the 40 foot funnel of his **Victory** was fitted with this ingenious invention.

The classical experiments made by David Napier with blocks of wood of various shapes on his father’s mill-pond at Camlachie resulted in marked improvements in the form of steam-ship bows, and a sharp cut-water, and he had designed several steamers before 1820 (**Marion** named after his wife, **Post Boy** renamed **Euphrosene** and **Dumbreck**) which were experimental in conception. It should be stated that similar experiments made previously by the Admiralty are mentioned by Robertson Buchanan in 1816. These few observations have, I hope, served to draw some attention to the merits of the early steamships and their general features.

Book Review:

THE FIGHTING CIVILIANS
by Charles Daly

By 1942 the U-Boat threat, although ever present, was gradually diminishing and our seafarers had hardened their approach to this harsh reality and most had learned to cope with the psychological and physical challenges and uncertainties of enemy conflict that might flare up at any moment.

The Fighting Civilians presents the story of a typical voyage of the time, one of the tens of thousands made under the Red and Blue Ensigns throughout the Second World War, providing a stirring tale of day to day life aboard the **Natalian**, (thought to be T & J Harrison’s **Atlantian**) a freighter bound from Liverpool to Suez via the Cape route.

Although written in the format of a novel, which was necessary to overcome censorship restrictions at the time, the storyline was inspired entirely by actual

episodes which were experienced by the author's grandfather Captain Charles Daly who had served during WWII as a deck officer with T & J Harrison Ltd and about which he wrote in considerable detail during the voyages. Whereas actual engagements with enemy vessels happen to be quite few and far between, there nevertheless remains significant tension aboard ship throughout, with a whole host of salt encrusted characters which an ex-seafaring readership should quite easily relate to. The events portrayed are heavily reliant upon a dialogue rich text which fortuitously adds rather than detracts from its sense of purpose and thus retains both pace and interest resulting in an extremely impressive narrative which can easily make this book quite difficult to put down.

It is certainly worth noting that the handwritten manuscript for this book using paper scraps, old exercise books, chart books and even a 1942 calendar came to light at the time of Captain Daly's death in 1984. Once these had been typed up by his widow, the originals were donated to the Imperial War Museum, London. These have now been edited within the family and as such place on record an extremely important and fascinating account of times when our merchant fleet was the pride of Britain.

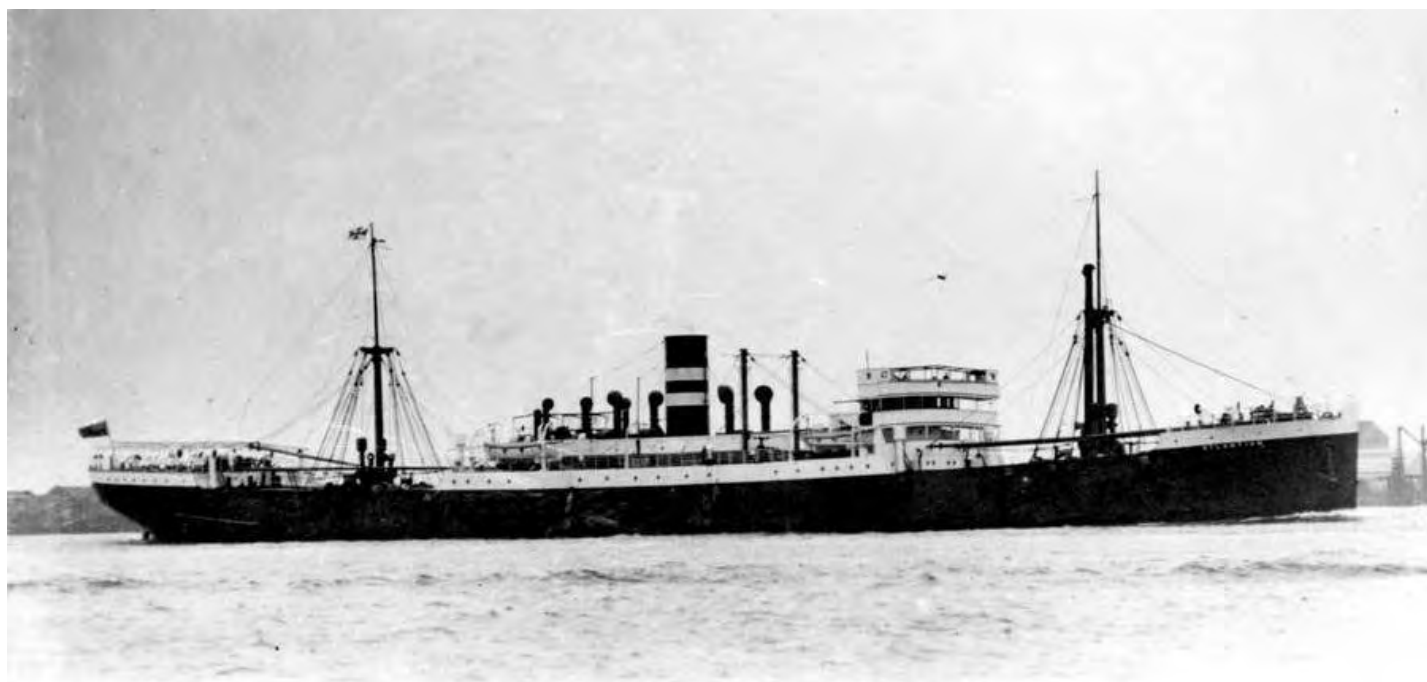
(John Stokoe)

THE FIGHTING CIVILIANS - New Generation Publishing

Available from Amazon or Waterstones Price £7.99

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s.s. Atlantian (Stuart Smith)

THE LEAGUE OF WELLDORS – A BRIEF HISTORY

Lesley Black

*Summary of a presentation to the Society on 21st January, 2010
by Lesley Black, General Manager of the League*

Founded back in 1893 in an empty cotton warehouse, the League of Welldors (or Liverpool Food Association as it was first known) was set up initially to provide school meals to starving children throughout Liverpool, Everton & Bootle. Meals were also delivered by a team of female volunteers to the bedridden at a time when no work meant no money, and no money meant starvation.

From the very beginning people nicknamed the organisation „The Lee Jones“ after the founder Herbert Lee Jackson Jones who was born in Runcorn in May 1868; even today, the nickname is widely used. Lee Jones lived on site and insisted his staff did



the same – “to live amongst the people you serve is the only true way to understand their needs”. Lee Jones died in 1936 and is buried in Anfield Cemetery.

In 1948 the introduction of the Welfare State in Britain meant that families could receive financial support from the Government to help them through the bad times; and so the services the League had provided for more than half a century evolved and have continued to grow over the years.

The organisation is still on the same site, in Limekiln Lane (sandwiched between Scotland Road & Vauxhall Road) and is very proud of what it can offer to the many people who pass through its doors on a daily basis including:

- A fabulous pensioners club which meets every weekday.
- Daily lunches (Monday to Friday) – all cooked on the premises
- Monthly tea dances – nominal charge
- Weekly chair exercises (Free)
- Weekly „Down Memory Lane“
- Regular concerts
- Fabulous charity shop on the premises
- Meeting rooms for groups large & small
- Catering for meetings at a very reasonable charge
- Off road parking for 30 cars
- Twice weekly dance classes for girls aged between 4 & 17

The League receives no funding from either local council or central government for its core services and relies almost entirely on the generosity of individuals and its own fund raising activities to make ends meet.

LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY. ANNUAL AWARD

Following the tragic death of his student daughter in 2002 a member of The Society proposed to the Council that an annual award should be established to promote the cause of nautical research in the coming generations. The member wished to anonymously fund the proposed award and this was also taken up by other members anonymously. The first of the Annual Awards was launched in late 2002 and eleven universities and places of learning in the North West were invited to participate.

In 2003 the person to receive the first Award was Sidney Wilson of Liverpool Hope University for his dissertation "The Development and Role of the Organisations Concerned with the Welfare of Seafarers on the Mersey 1820-1970". Sarah Kennedy of John Moores University received in 2004 the Award for her work entitled "Ro-Ro Tugmasters, an Economic Dissertation " and in 2005 due to the very high standard of submitted works the Award went to two people. These were Richard Williams of Liverpool University on the subject of "A Great Union" concerning the coming together of Cunard and White Star Lines and at the same time Lynn Jackson of Liverpool Hope University received an Award for her work "The Role of the Merchant Navy and Liverpool in the Battle of the Atlantic". The 2006 Award was presented to Charles Jocelyn of John Moores University for his dissertation entitled "A Critical Examination of the International Conventions on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping" and the 2007 Award went to Denise Jones of Liverpool Hope University for her paper entitled "The Liverpool Slave Trade in the Eighteenth Century". In 2008 the Award went to Mark Grimshaw, who is a member of the Society, for his work "The Power and Authority of 18th century Wooden Walls as Represented through Space and Material"

The final LNRS Annual Award launched in 2009 was presented in 2010 to Paul Moore of John Moores University for his study "The Development of Fuel Saving Techniques for Merchant Ships", this final presentation of the Award being made on the 18th. February 2010. Council took the view in 2009 that as the anonymous funding had been exhausted and as the scheme did not appear to result in any perceived additional interest in nautical research that there should be no further Annual Awards and that other methods of encouraging interest should be followed.

From a total of eleven universities and places of learning in the North of England and Wales invited to submit candidates for the Award only three actually participated. John Moores University receiving three Awards, Liverpool Hope University also receiving three awards and one award going to Liverpool University; with one to an LNRS member. Throughout, the Society's judging panel was Alan McClelland, David Eccles and Michael Jones, together with the respective Chairman then in office.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FUEL SAVING TECHNIQUES FOR MERCHANT SHIPS

Researched and written by Paul Moore

BSc Hons Nautical Science- 1st Class

(A synopsis of the winning paper for the LNRS Annual Award 2009)

Global warming and pollution has become a big issue in recent years, with many worries and concerns over the world's climatic change. However, there is still not a definitive answer regarding the true state of the global climate.

All of the world's major industries are concentrating their efforts to try and reduce their own carbon footprint. This dissertation looks at what efforts the shipping industry is making, in order to make itself more environmentally friendly. The way in which this industry is striving for this comes in the form of fuel saving techniques. The aim of this dissertation is to research into the development of fuel saving techniques, especially those for merchant ships.

The main techniques range from simple methods, such as speed reduction, to more adventurous ideas being developed, such as flying a kite from a ship's bow to aid the vessel's engines. Once these main fuel saving techniques were identified they were examined by various methods, including cross examination and comparison calculations, as well as information from professional opinions. This then led into an examination which identified the problems each method faced, with the main concerns proving to be how practical, affordable, and realistic each one was. These problems were then analysed, and an overall conclusion was given as to the best technique available to a ship owner.

The best overall technique which was identified proved to be a system which is already in every-day use. It has also proved to be the cheapest to adopt. This system is known as 'Slow Steam Policy.'

The overall conclusion shows that, although the shipping industry is going to great lengths to find new fuel saving techniques, the best one available at this current date is right under their noses as it is: cheap, reliable, practical, hugely beneficial and overall is the way forward to a greener future.

HERMES OF LIVERPOOL

An illustrated presentation to LNRS on 18th February 2010
by Member David White

In the 1870s and 1880s, some 50,000 Swedes moved through Liverpool each year. Most of them were immigrants on their way to new lives all over the world but additionally there were considerable numbers of Swedish seafarers visiting Liverpool in the normal way. Thus there was a need for the Gustaf Adolph Kyrk on Park Lane. The architect of this amazing building was W D Caroe, whose other significant building is the former Adelphi Bank (now Café Nero) on the corner of Castle Street and Brunswick Street. Arthur Sadius Karlsen, a fisherman of Fjalbakka near Grebbestad, emigrated from Sweden to Cape Town. He was followed shortly by his wife, Gerda who transhipped in Liverpool. It is on record that, while waiting for her ship, Gerda lodged with the family of the pastor of the Gustaf Adolphus Kyrk. In 1908, Arthur and Gerda had a daughter, Esther, who for many years was my mother-in-law.

Esther had in her possession a painting of the ss **Hermes** and believed that her father, Arthur Karlsen, was in the crew of the lifeboat attending the **Hermes** after she went aground on Blaauwberg Strand. This was quite possible, as Arthur, a former fisherman, continued to work around Cape Town docks until his death at the beginning of the Second World War. In the 1950s, Esther was in correspondence with the South African historian Laurence G Green, who confirmed that the vessel was indeed the **Hermes**, that the painting was by T Williams, and appeared in Marischal Murray's book "Ships and South Africa". Though long out of print, copies of this book are available on the Internet but at typically £200 they are still there!

The ship was built in 1899 by Blumer and Co of Sunderland for the British and South American Steam Navigation Co (R P Houston, Managers) and registered in Liverpool. She was of 3,400 grt with an engine of 431 nhp by Dickinson of Sunderland. Though such an engine sounds extremely modest, I am indebted to my engineer colleagues here at the LNRS for explaining to me that the entire horsepower system has changed vastly and, while there is no precise conversion factor, multiplying by a factor of seven would be a reasonable approximation giving in modern terms about 3,000 hp.

The ship went aground on Blaauwberg Strand north of Cape Town on 13th May 1901 while en route from Buenos Aires to Cape Town with a cargo including 3,000 tons of hay. This raised a number of interesting questions. What was a ship which usually operated between the UK and the River Plate doing off Cape Town? Who on earth would ship 3,000 tons of hay from Argentina to South Africa? However, some thought about the dates soon clarified the matter. It was slap bang in the middle of the Boer War, when hay was essential a fuel to military operations as petrol is today. She was

on a British government charter. At the outbreak of the Boer War, the sub-sea telegraph cable between Britain and South Africa was not quite completed. It terminated at St Helena, and even the most important of diplomatic and military telegrams were carried between Cape Town and St Helena by ship for onward cable transmission. However, by 1901 the cable was complete and in operation. Almost daily, telegrams were transmitted in each direction concerning the stricken vessel and faithfully reproduced in Lloyds List. Because of this, a large amount of information about **Hermes** has survived.

Over the next two months, optimism and pessimism swung up and down as salvage attempts were made. Hired steam pumps were put aboard. The practical difficulties of such an operation are hard to imagine. A modern 4" diesel pump, complete with a day's supply of fuel, can be handled with difficulty by two strong men, comfortably by four men. To move a 5" steam pump up the desolate coast to Blaauwberg, plus its boiler, plus fuel, plus fresh water, sounds a major undertaking. Repeated attempts to tow her off failed, and eventually on 10th July, after almost two months aground, the salvage gear was removed and she was abandoned.

Part of my research included trying to source a photograph of the ship. Eventually, one was tracked down in the archives at Greenwich. Unlike some suppliers, who heavily over-print specimen photographs to prevent pirate copying, Greenwich simply confirm that the ship is indeed in their lists and the prospective buyer has to take on trust that the condition is good, average or poor, without really knowing what you are buying. When the photograph arrived, I was absolutely taken aback – it was almost identical to the painting. It is obvious that the photograph was subsequently used by the artist to paint the picture. One major difference is that the lifeboat is missing. What did this imply for the role of Arthur Karlsen? A careful expanded computer examination showed the lifeboat alongside the f'wd starboard side of the ship!

The archives at Mariners Park at Wallasey show that a Court of Inquiry was held in Cape Town while the salvage attempts were still underway. On 5th June, the Inquiry before Mr G B Williams, Magistrate, and Capts Ody, Taylor and Lt Leatham (RN), came to the decision that the stranding was due to the default of the Master and his neglect to let go a second anchor. Also to the neglect of the Second Mate to carry out his instruction to call the Master promptly. Master's certificate was suspended for six months.

Houston Steamers never really recovered from the loss of the **Hermes**. No new tonnage was ever built, and in 1918 the company was merged into Clan Line Steamers. The Houston Line houseflag survived into the 1970s as part of Cayzer Irvine's British & Commonwealth Group but then finally disappeared with the rest of the industry.

THE FINEST IN THE KINGDOM – THE LIFE OF THE LIVERPOOL CARTER

Summary of a talk to Liverpool Nautical Research Society, 15th October 2009

*Presented by Sharon Brown, Curator Land Transport & Industry,
National Museums Liverpool*

“It is the boast of Liverpool that the horses employed in the city’s industry are the finest in the kingdom, and it is a boast to which it is scarcely possible to take exception.” For more than 250 years horses were used to move goods to and from Liverpool docks and businesses. At their peak more than 20,000 horses worked on the streets of Liverpool, more than in any other city outside London. A number of factors made Liverpool a distinct place for short-distance transport, and particularly suited to heavy carting. There was no direct railway connection to most of the seven mile dock estate, so goods had to be carted out of the docks to warehouses or to railway goods stations. Trade increased from 4.4million tons of shipping in 1858 to 19 million by 1914. Haulage companies, and therefore, horses and carters, abounded.

By 1891 there were some 5,000 carters engaged in dock haulage. The city relied on heavy horses for most of its short-distance goods transport until the 1930s when motors began to appear, but horse haulage continued well into the 1950s. During the Second World War the Liverpool Carters and their horses maintained the vital link between the docks and the city. They kept food and raw materials moving when many motor vehicles had been requisitioned by the Government. Liverpool horses kept Liverpool going through the Battle of the Atlantic. The Carter’s contribution during this period was incredible. They shifted over 75,000 tons of cargo and worked day and night to keep supply lines open.

There were many local cartage companies but if you were out of work you could go to the „Carter’s Corner“ at 7.30am and Haulage Companies would send their foreman to choose workers to cover holiday relief or sickness. There were two official corners in the City – one at Hopwood Street off Scotland Road in the north end and one in the south end at Warwick Street in Toxteth. Carters were not considered skilled labour but this was surely not right. Paddy Miller recalls “You had to know a bit about every little thing with carting, to say it wasn’t a skilled job, it was a skilled job, you couldn’t just send anyone to load a wagon, you know, you’d have to know and learn it from a kid, how to put it on so it wouldn’t come off. And then you had to be used to the horses and putting locks on and different things like that going down different brews.” All of the Carters talk about how busy the River was and this therefore meant they were always busy too. Albert Hilton commented that “There was a continual queue of horse and wagons from north to south, the other side from south to north; there was one behind the other. The river was very busy with ships waiting for a berth; it was very rare you’d find a dock empty.”

The Carters worked in all weathers. No conditions were bad enough to call off their days work. They worked in hail, rain or snow, it didn't matter. The Carters adjusted their loads according to the weather. If it started to snow you'd cut the loads down to five ton but normally you'd hold seven, seven and a half, eight ton. May Horses Parades became an annual feature of Liverpool life. They celebrated the power and majesty of the working horse. Prizes were awarded for the „neatest and cleanest“, the best turned out team and the best decorated. The strongest horses competed in Pulling Power competitions not just in Liverpool, but all around the country. Harry Woodings father's horse *Delightful* won the Liverpool Show in 1936. Two weeks preparation had gone into the win, with all of the family occupied in grooming and preparing the decorations. After his success *Delightful* went on a tour of the families houses and some of the local pubs, mopping up a tray of beer as a reward. The end of an era eventually arrived. Motors had replaced the horse and the carters almost completely by the 1950s. Former Carter Albert Hilton never dreamt things would change the way they did because the horses had been going for generations. His father, his Grandfather, they were all Carters and he thought the job would be the same for him – one for life. But he didn't have any regrets, he wouldn't have changed anything. The Carters of Liverpool are a unique group of people who have been campaigning to keep their history alive through the erection of a life size monument to the Liverpool Working Horse. The monument will commemorate the working lives of the carters and their trusty companions and inform future generations of their contribution to the life and economy of Liverpool.



George Wooding with
Delightful after winning
the Liverpool Show,
1936



The **Independencia** berthed at the liner stage on the 24th April 2010. (Adrian Sweeney)

The rather attractive looking frigate of the Brazilian Navy, the **Independencia**, was built in 1979, but she was modernised in 2006. She is a Vosper Thornycroft design, one of their Mark 10 class frigates. She is of 3707 tons, 129 feet in length, 13.5 feet in the beam with a draught of 5.5 feet. Her maximum speed is 30.5 knots and she has a range of about 5300 nautical miles at a speed of 17 knots.

Her main armament consists of a twin launcher for MM Exocet missiles, two Seacat triple launchers and anti-submarine Ikara missiles. Her main gun is a standard Vickers 4.5 inch weapon and she also has two Bofors 40mm guns either side of the bridge. She also has six torpedo tubes launching 324mm torpedoes. She carries one Westland Lynx helicopter.

The **Independencia** is one of a six vessel class in the Brazilian Navy, the lead ship of the class being the **Niteroi**. Other vessels of the class are **Defensora**, **Constituicao**, **Liberal** and **Uniao**.

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

THE BULLETIN

Volume 54 No.2, September 2010

The quarterly journal of society interests



The **Zebu**, in the Mersey, June 12th 2010 (Adrian Sweeney)

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Unfortunately the room booked for our September meeting is not now available, nor are any alternative rooms. We are therefore obliged to change the date of that meeting to Thursday 9th September – the new venue being the Long Room, 2nd floor, Merseyside Maritime Museum.

The October meeting is already scheduled for the second Thursday, and remains as 14th The November meeting remains on the normal third Thursday so still takes place on the 18th November but again relocated to the Long Room.

We apologise for any confusion this may cause but hopefully the meetings for later in the year should remain unaffected; we will give as much notice as possible if this situation changes.

MERSEY MARITIME NEWS

April 2010

The Fred Olsen Cruise liner **Boudicca** arrives back in Langton Dock on the 27th after a cruise in the Mediterranean. Unfortunately the ship and her cruise were in the news because of a serious outbreak of novovirus on board.

On the 29th the **Mersey Viking** of Norfolk Line and the **Norbay** of P&O Ferries both enter the dry docks of Cammell Laird for a refit. The Dublin sailings of the **Norbay** are covered by the **Celtic Star**.

May 2010

Inconvenience for Mersey Ferries passengers on the 4th as the Royal **Daffodil** suffers gearbox problems while at Liverpool and has to go out of service. The **Snowdrop** replaces her.

On the 9th the **T Rex** concludes her charter for Norfolk Line and goes to anchor off Port Lynas to await orders.

Now free of the dreaded norovirus, the **Boudicca** leaves Langton Dock and proceeds to Norway on her next cruise on the 13th.

On the 16th the P&O Ro-Pax vessel **Norcape** enters service on the Liverpool to Dublin service replacing the **Celtic Star** which had been a familiar sight on the Mersey for many years. **Norcape** had been laid up in Huskisson Dock for a number of weeks prior to her taking up service.

Echoes of the bad old days on the 17th when there is an unofficial walk out at Cammell Laird over a possible 180 planned redundancies by the firm. Cammel Laird say that the cancellation of a commercial contract is to blame for the possible redundancies.

The 20th sees "Operation Manta" on the Mersey. This involves Fire and Rescue practice, including the deployment of emergency helicopters, in the event of a fire on a Mersey ferry. The ferry **Snowdrop** simulates an engine room fire on board.

On the 23rd the cruise liner **Aida Aura**, of the German owned cruise line Aida Cruises makes her first visit to Liverpool and berths at the Cruise Liner Terminal. She later leaves for Greenock. (see final page)

The cruise liner **Deutschland**, of Peter Deilmann Cruises, suffers a serious engine room fire while at port in Norway on the 25th. This results in her call at Liverpool later in the month being cancelled.

Very bad news from Fred Olsen Cruise Lines on the 27th when they announce that from June 2011 they will no longer use Liverpool as a starting point for their cruises. They blame the unsatisfactory state of the Langton Dock facilities as the main reason for this decision.

June 2010

On the 6th the **Aida Aura** pays her second visit to the Mersey.

Pleasing expansion plans are announced by Bibby Line on the 17th. They announce that they are to return to the business of deep sea cargo carrying, three years after disposing of its deep sea fleet. They place an order for a 57,000 deadweight dry bulk carrier which they hope is just the first of a fleet of similar ships to be ordered in the next 12 months. The new ship will be a sister of the recently built **Shropshire**, which the company chartered out in the Far East, and the company hope to take delivery of the new ship from the Jinling yard at Nanjing in March 2012. Sir Michael Bibby, Bibby Line Group Managing Director said;

"We're investing in dry bulk carrying as we see that as the best market. We're planning further acquisitions of new-build or second-hand ships, as we're looking to significantly expand our capacity. Hopefully these will be ordered in the next 12 months. The idea is to buy while the market is low and start building up our fleet again..."

On the 19th NYK Line's **Crystal Symphony** calls at the Cruise Liner Terminal while on the 26th the cruise liner **Discovery** arrives on the morning tide. She sails later in the day, at 23.00 for Belfast. In addition on the 27th the **Crown Princess** berths at the Liner Terminal, making it an excellent week for passenger liners on the Mersey.

July 2010

On the 10th the **Aida Aura** pays her third visit of the cruising season to the Cruise Liner Terminal while on the same day the **Maersk Exporter** of Norfolk Line enters Cammell Laird for a refit. She leaves later in the month with a new name, **Scotia Seaways**, following the take over of Norfolk Line by DFDS Seaways.

It is noted that a jack up platform has started work around the Mersey Ferries terminal on the Liverpool side, preparing the way for the arrival of the new Mersey Ferries Landing Stage due next year.

On the 15th the patrol vessel **H.M.S. Tyne** pays a courtesy visit to Merseyside, berthing at the Cruise Liner Terminal.

On the 16th and 17th there are plenty of sailing vessels in the Canning and Half Tide docks. These include the **Zebu**, the **Kathleen and May** and several others in connection with a pirate event being staged in the area on the 17th.

The cruise liner **Grand Princess** visits Liverpool, berthing at the Cruise Liner Terminal. She departs the Mersey on the evening tide at 19.00.

On the 24th the **Aida Aura** pays her 4th visit to the river and leaves for Greenock at 18.00. The **Maersk Importer** enters Cammell Laird for a similar re-branding and re-naming as her sister earlier in the month. She will emerge as **Hibernia Seaways**.

Cunard Line pay their first visit of the year to their original home port when the **Queen Victoria** berths at the Cruise Liner Terminal on the 26th. It was an emotional occasion for her Captain, Paul Wright, as early in his seagoing career he regularly sailed from the old landing stage as 5th Officer on the Canadian Pacific liner, **Empress of Canada**.



The **Queen Victoria** at the Cruise Liner Terminal on the 26th July 2010.
(Adrian Sweeney)

August 2010 On the 1st the P&O vessel **European Endeavour** berths at 12 Quays on charter to DFDS Seaways to take over the Dublin sailings temporarily while the re-branding of the former Norfolk Line vessels and services continues apace. As P&O have a rival service to Dublin sailing from Gladstone Dock, eyebrows are raised in some quarters that the vessel has been chartered to a rival operator. Perhaps the offer was too good to refuse!

The **Mersey Viking** entered Cammell Laird dry dock on the 2nd for engine repairs. It is understood while in dock she will be renamed **Mersey Seaways** and will re-enter service in full DFDS livery.

A DOCUMENT ON THE TRADE IN TOBACCO AND OTHER GOODS BY SHIP BETWEEN LIVERPOOL AND THE BALTIC (1792 – 1797)

By LNRS Member Peter T Walker MSc

Introduction

Shipping and trade have been a major part of Liverpool history and the document described here provides additional information on the trade in the late eighteenth century. The information is contained in a ledger or day-book which was in the possession of the late Mr P McGuffie, whose grandfather, Peter Crawford McGuffie, born 1849, worked in a company concerned in the Baltic trade. The family has a photograph of the "North West Shipping Company" in the Goree Piazzas, Liverpool in 1935, published by the Liverpool Daily Post. Nothing is known of the history of this company, which became the Baltic Shipping Company in 1936, since when the company's affiliation is uncertain and there seem to be no records surviving.

Background

Tobacco was first landed in Liverpool from the Americas in 1648 and it is stated in Chandler that 7000 tons a year were being imported by 1770. A new tobacco store or warehouse had just been built at the King's dock in 1795 which could hold 7000 hogsheads of tobacco. With this increased trade from the Americas, this ledger originated in a company that mainly at first exported tobacco by ship from Liverpool to the Baltic and nearby ports as an agent, factor or broker. Goods other than tobacco were increasingly traded towards the end of the document, supporting the importance of salt in the export trade of Liverpool. The names of merchants in this country mentioned give some idea of the importance of the Liverpool shipping trade in the local economy, for example to the sailcloth industry in Lancaster and Warrington and the salt industry in Cheshire. Occasionally entries throw light on the political situation at the time.

Description of the document

The document is a bound book with the initials "TN" on the spine and it contains pages of longhand dated from 1792 to 1797. It appears to be a Day Book and is indeed entitled "Journal" on the spine, and lists the type of cargo and its weight and value, the amount of insurance, duty and other charges. The names of the merchants or brokers are given as debtors, usually together with their town, often with the ship's name and sometimes the captain. Payments for the costs of the business, such as paper, twine, oil, printing and cartage are listed. At the end of most months a group of entries "cash Dr.a/cs to sundries" appear to be larger payments by foreign merchants, and another "sundry a/cs debtors to cash" records smaller payments for the goods and services mentioned. The totals of these entries would then also be transferred to the respective ledgers. In October each year the list of the stock in hand, including tobacco and materials of the trade, is given. Alongside many of the entries are what must be distinguishing marks such as diamonds or inverted hearts, often containing a letter, e.g. HM or EJ, P, PN, BW or S presumably for marking or identifying the consignments as some of the initials are those of owners or consignees. The volume seems to be part of a double-entry accounting system of daily entries of debtors for goods and services, the totals of which would then be transferred to the respective cash and credit books, unfortunately not known to exist. No entries are in red. It is not stated whether cargoes are being imported or exported, except in the obvious cases of tobacco and salt, exported, and timber, hemp and flax imported. If only more details of sales or of dealings with local and Baltic merchants had survived.

However the beginning of the book has been used as a scrapbook by its possessor in the nineteenth century, who collected contemporary newspaper cuttings about anything local or national that he found interesting or amusing, Among the less amusing are the death of Napoleon in 1821 and George IV in 1830, and one cutting describes the opening of the Liverpool to Manchester Railway and the death of William Huskisson there on 15 September 1830, dating the scrapbook to after this. Beneath the glued cuttings there must be even earlier longhand details of shipments. The book is about 12" x 7" (30 cm x 19 cm).

Origin of the document

All attempts to name the originator of the book and to connect it to the North West Shipping Company have been unsuccessful. The company certainly had a warehouse in Henry Street at one time. One company that existed in Liverpool at the time was Hansen & Bahr, founded by Lorenz Hansen, first listed in a Liverpool directory in 1790. C.L.Bahr is listed as a broker in the Liverpool Mercury in 1816. After Charles Louis Bahr joined as a partner the firm became Hansen and Bahr and then Bahr Behrend & Co. Another possible company was W.H.Stott & Co, started in 1806, later, with Mr Alfred Coker, to become Stott, Coker & Co. and the Coker Line, both of which had offices in nearby streets and were engaged in trade with the Baltic. W.H.Stott & Co. remained as agents but were dissolved in 1994. A number of brokers and agents are named in contemporary newspapers in advertisements inviting cargoes for ships loading for the Baltic and ports on the way. For example in Gore's General Advertiser of 9th August 1792 is the entry "now sailing for Stettin and Dantzic, the Ship **Waaksamkeit**, Michael Blank, Master, and will be ready to sail in 3 weeks. For freight apply to John and Robert Mayers or to L. BRAUN, Brokers". Again, in the Williams Liverpool Advertiser for 13 April 1795, **The Ann** is advertised as loading for "Danzig and Pillau, sailing in ten days, wind and weather permitting, in Old Dock, Thomas Orford, Broker, 13 Park Lane". In the same issue, **The Little Tom**, Joseph Dowson, master, in the Kings Dock, will sail for Hamburg, apply James Maury Esq. or John and Samuel Brown, brokers, of various addresses. In the issue for the 1st June 1795, **The Industry** "a neutral vessel, Mads Anderson, master, North Side Salthouse Dock, will sail for Hamburg, apply Laurents Braun, broker". In number 2032 of 29 June 1795 the **Frau Elizabeth**, Reinhard Eggers, master, will sail for Lubeck, G. Bekenn, broker. This captain is also mentioned in the document. Other brokers are named in advertisements, for example Ewart and Rutson of Exchange Alley, Henry Weiss of Cleveland Square and others, and one of these must have been the originator of the document. Lloyds list of ships lost and the Liverpool and Chester Ports Books and Customs Entries have been consulted but have been no help in identifying the broker or agent concerned. There was a tendency for agents to become managing ship or small fleet owners in order to better control the supply of incoming goods and the logistics of transport of their cargoes, so this company may have become one of Liverpool's well-known shipping lines.

Presentation of the contents

The information is presented in five tables. Table 1 gives the entry number with the date, the name of the debtor, where they were from, the destination of the cargo and the individual and total amount of monies involved. Table 2 shows details of the cargo, its weight and value, under entry number. The amounts of each cargo are summarised in Table 4 and the values in pounds in Table 5. Table 3 gives the names of vessels mentioned, under entry number, together with details of the vessels, when they could be identified among others of the same name in Lloyds Register of Shipping for the relevant years (Barriskill).

Liverpool 7 August 1793

62 Carl Mathiasen Stensborg, Dr
 To 4 hhds Cut 210 cins per Hhd Tobacco

94 ~~CAM~~ 1. 824
 2. 882
 3. 803
 4. 910 3419 at $4\frac{1}{4}$ £60. 10. 10

10 Cins per Hhd 654 $4\frac{1}{4}$. 11. 11. 7
 Lhs 18/ Cins Lading 1/ 19.0

Insurance on £75. 24. 2 1. 11. 6
 Policy 7.6 1. 19.0 75. 5

1/ Capt. Capelinan 7

74 Nikolay Kriegerman, London Dr
 To 4 hhds 5 Cuts Cut 22 Hs Dist Roll

NK 1. 865
 2. 805
 3. 810
 4. 863
 5. 255
 6. 235
 7. 278
 8. 238
 9. 249 4598 at $4\frac{3}{4}$ 91.0

An example of a Journal page

Difficulties in transcription! Sometimes unknown contractions were used for the units, tare, shrinkage, loss of weight of goods, or for currency etc .and it was difficult to know when to include discounts or credits in the calculation of totals, discussed below.

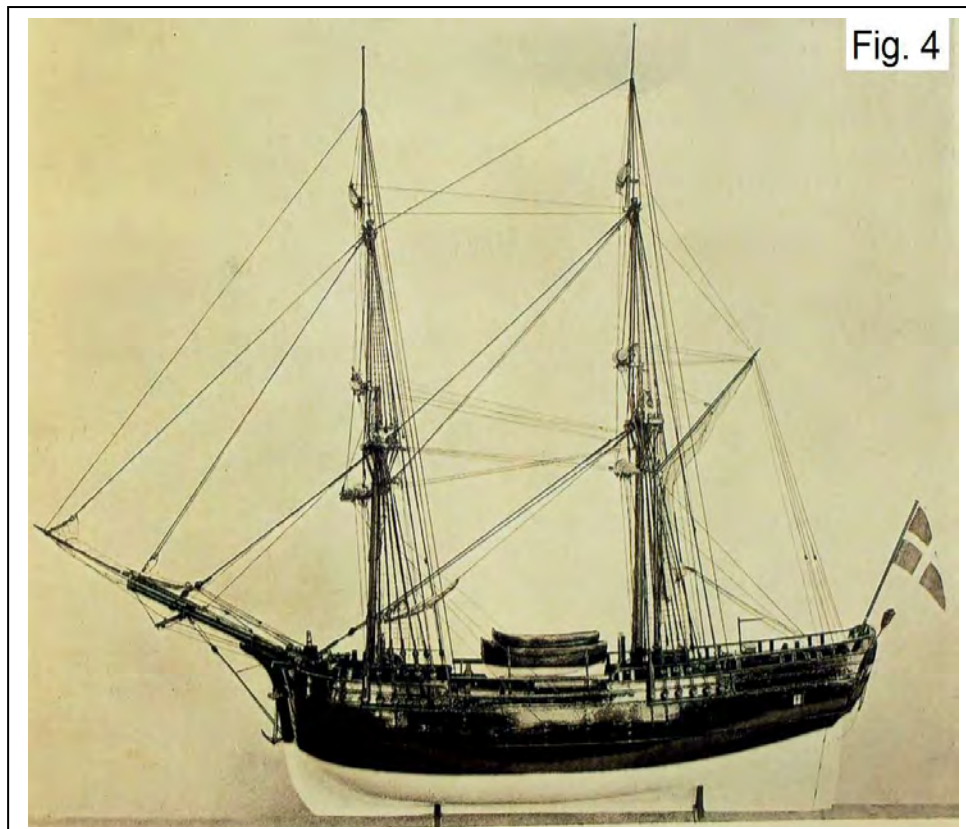
The cargoes. There are good accounts of Liverpool shipping and cargoes in Chandler, Davis and Hyde. Tobacco (T) is the commodity which occurs most in the document, in 178 or 36% of the total of 494 entries. Several different categories of tobacco were shipped, the name or type usually indicative of either the origin, the type or the method of processing before shipping. It should be remembered that Pitt's Act of 1789 (Brooks) excluded foreign grown tobacco except from America, Spain, Portugal and Ireland. Thus, Cut could include clean, fine, mixed, Dutch, Kings Arms or Bishops; Roll included Irish, Spanish, Danish and "Com"d" (?) Leaf could include HHD leaf, Strippers or Strips, which could mean either stalks stripped of leaf or leaf with the stalk removed. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) does not help by saying that "the senses of stem and strip are confused"! Strippers may be folded leaf with both sides of the thick end of the stalk removed (OED), with which Brooks agrees. Stalks was a category in some cases and Siftings is self-explanatory. Carolina suggests place of origin, although most American tobacco came from Maryland and Virginia. Cavendish was sweetened strong tobacco pressed in a mould to form a cake or bar. Shag is defined in the OED as all varieties cut into shreds by being passed through a cutting machine. Bird eye and Pigtail suggest the arrangement of the product, Brooks (p.50) saying pigtail was a thin rope of twisted leaves or Twist. Lugs are described by Brooks (p.257) as the often imperfect leaves on the lower half of the plant. Unexplained are Slip Capire and Marienburg, loose and cut. Marienburg is an old Hanseatic town which was in East Prussia in Germany in those days but is now called Malbork and in Poland. It is connected to the Baltic by the River Nogat, passable by barges, and has records of tobacco factories in the early 1800's. Tobacco had been grown in Germany and Holland but was banned in 1882. It is known that skilled English tobacco workers would go to such areas in the 1700's to set up factories to process leaf into local roll tobacco, but were later prohibited. Perhaps this type of tobacco was sold to a dealer in Lancaster and so it was a special expensive type imported from this town in East Prussia? Tobacco shipping decreased after 1792, beginning to be replaced by timber from 1796 and by timber and salt after 1797, possibly due to the war with France. However the value of tobacco shipped rose between 1794 to 1795 following the end of the American War of Independence.

Timber is the next most frequent cargo, occurring 20 times or approximately 4% of the total. It was imported, for example from Pernau. There was an increasing demand for timber with the development of shipbuilding, for softwoods for increased house building, for propping the coal pits of South Lancashire and to supply fuel for the refining of salt. Deal is frequently mentioned, followed by deck-planks, boards, barks, lathes and staves, no doubt for barrels, but it was difficult to summarise the volume or tonnage of various kinds of timber when they may be given in pounds, feet, shock or number of units, sometimes as length and thickness only.

Hemp of various kinds is the next most mentioned cargo, occurring in 16 or 3% of the total entries. It was much in demand for rope making and caulking shipping. Among types of hemp, Codilla is mentioned, Sometimes the name Cordelia is used, probably a misspelling of Codilla, described as "the coarse tow of flax or hemp" separated during the scutching process and used for the production of tow yarns. It is not surprising that hemp was imported when so much hemp was being grown in Russia around the East Baltic ports,



Ports mentioned in the document



A Flensburg trading Snow, **Veränderung** of 1794

particularly Memel and Riga northwards, much derived from the Russian hinterland. Some users preferred "Russian" hemp to their local hemp. One entry records a cargo of hemp and a debtor, H P Knoop from Riga. Sales of hemp were recorded in Liverpool but it is difficult to know with certainty whether a cargo is being exported or imported because the document is often not specific about this.

Salt, as stated above, was of great economic importance in the development of Merseyside because of its uses in the soap industry, glass manufacture in St Helens, in making earthenware in the local pottery industry and in the developing chemical industries. It occurs in 15 or about 3% of the total. It was valuable as a ballast cargo to the Baltic, vessels returning with timber. Salt came from the Cheshire towns of Northwich and Winsford, no doubt by the Weaver Navigation, opened in 1721. Salt refineries opened near Liverpool and such was the demand that several local merchants opened their own brine pits around Winsford.

Cheese was the next frequent, probably from Cheshire, being mentioned in 13 or 2.6% of the total entries, usually exported to Apenrade in Schleswig Holstein,.

Flax follows, important in sail making, increasingly in demand because of hostilities with the French and as supplies had previously come mainly from France and Holland. Flax also came from the East Baltic ports, particularly Memel and Riga northwards, and was often derived from the Russian hinterland. It can be seen that flax was certainly imported. Two types of flax are named, Kirton and Riston, possibly land races rather than cultivars, because plant breeding was little developed at the time and no references to these names could be found. The names are almost certainly grades or categories of flax, "Risten Three Band" being a very good grade and "outshot" a grade between "clean" and "Codilla". For information on flax, see Horner. The mention of debtors in Lancaster and Warrington emphasises the importance of Liverpool in the economy of the North West and its close inter-relationship with nearby towns. Lancaster was an important sailcloth centre, second only to Warrington and John Albright and Inman and Edmondson were sailcloth manufacturers there in 1779. These names were connected with the great centre of flax weaving and sailcloth manufacture at Kirkham and the Hornby family (J.T. & W. Hornby) who had a factory in Liverpool, were part owners of several ships trading with the Baltic and imported flax and hemp from the Baltic to Liverpool, Lancaster and Wardley. Another Kirkham family was that of Langton (Langton, Shepherd & Birley, Langton Yate & Co., Langton Dock in Liverpool). Many were prominent members of the Society of Friends. Several of the families had agents in the Baltic, for example in Riga. Flax would be carried from Liverpool on the Preston canal, newly opened in 1792, or by coaster to Freckleton on the Ribble and might even be sent across from Hull on the opened parts of the Leeds and Liverpool canal if canal dues were not too expensive. Flax was also sold to Warrington, also an important centre for sail making. It was said that half the heavy sailcloth in the navy came from Warrington. The names Ellis Bent, a large landowner, and Thomas Lee, who may have been buying flax for Manchester, are given as debtors. They are recorded as merchants and sailcloth manufacturers in Warrington directories of 1781 and 1782. Warrington had become the main centre for sailcloth manufacture since 1570 through its links with Liverpool via the Mersey and later the Irwell Navigation.

Among less frequent cargoes were such diverse materials as lead, as drop shot or thick shot (0.8%), white lead or pig lead (0.8%) tallow and soap, curiously measured in lagoons (0.8%) (see below). The value of these products reflect the increasing industrial activity on Merseyside at the time. Rock, obviously as ballast (0.4%), is mentioned and it should be

noted that the Baltic trade was often one way in character, three out of five ships sailing in ballast. Glass as window and crown glass (0.4%), coffee (0.4%), mustard probably prepared as it came in pots (0.4%), unspecified beans (0.4%), butter from Dublin (0.4%) occur next. Commodities that only occurred once (0.2%) were feathers, flour, turpentine, pipes (clay pipes ?) and powder. This was probably colouring or dyestuff, not gunpowder, because the categories were described as flory, a blue pigment derived from dying with woad or indigo, brown and oker, perhaps the present day yellow or red ochre. One entry for earthenware was found. Pitch, tar and turpentine had previously been imported from the Baltic but were being replaced by imports from the Americas. Tobacco and lead were obviously more profitable exports to the Baltic than, for example, cloth, and it is noticeable that the company did not export coal, cloth, wine, corn or sugar, all of which were important in the trade of the port of Liverpool. Sugar is unaccountably mentioned only once as 20 hogsheads being in stock and worth £0.02.06 (£0.13) per lb. but without any entry about dealing or payment. Perhaps a venture in the product was planned or had failed. It should be remembered that Liverpool was not among the five main ports engaged in trading with the Baltic between 1715 and 1717, all of which were on the East Coast of England

Quantity of goods

To produce an exact total for any of the goods shipped is fraught with difficulty as non-standard units of measurement are notoriously variable. Tobacco was traditionally shipped and measured in hogsheads (H) but casks, trusses and boxes are found. The size of the hogshead had been increased from between about 700 - 900 lbs in 1792 to 1100-1400 lbs, with a maximum of 1716 lb. This meant fewer hogsheads in a cargo, advantageous to the grower but disadvantageous to the shipowner and hence later discouraged by government. Another method of confusing the exact tonnage was to get customs to weigh the lightest tobacco cask and charge duty on all the casks at this rate. The tobacco was also increasingly compressed to reduce bulk and this affected the tonnage based on the number of containers. (Davis, p.288-9); here weight per hogshead varied from an average of 592 lb for fine cut, 718 lb (eg.623 - 870 lb), 991 lb (804-1229 lb) for roll, 1060 lb (996-1074 lb) gross and 1058 lb (1036-1072 lb) net for leaf; 1174 lb (971-1614 lb) gross and 1161 lb (955-1604 lb) net for stemmed tobacco. The average reduction for tare was between 0.2% for leaf and 9% for stemmed.

Trusses of tobacco averaged about 67 lb (gross), 63 lb (net) for Irish roll and similar for Cut and Danish roll, but some were up to 72 lb gross, 70 lb net, a 2% reduction for tare. Casks of tobacco varied between 209 and 506 lb. and boxes of shag and fine cut averaged 50 lb. Other measures, such as tierce, probably 42 gallons (Zupko), lagoon of soap, probably a lagon or lagena of 4 quarts (Zupko), although here a "lagoon" averaged 1049 lb. Information on the dimensions of a shock of timber are also difficult to obtain but the OED and various German references give a shock as 60 units, on which any calculations were based. A poll of flour was also found. Salt is given in bushels, which are measures of volume and the weight would depend on the degree of refinement, the packing density and moisture content. It is possible to calculate the average weight of a bushel as 60 - 65 lbs. Information on early measures is also given by Chapman.

Weight is usually given in hundredweights (112 lb), quarters (28 lb) and pounds, but some are converted to pounds or in some cases, tons. Most of the weights or volumes of cargo were corrected for tare, the weight of container or packing, and allowance made for other factors such as shrinkage, moisture or packing density as well as various amounts discounted for unknown reasons, making it difficult to calculate an exact tonnage.

Sometimes an error in tare was made and had to be corrected.

Value of the goods

One of the difficulties in calculating totals was the discounts given to various debtors for reasons unknown, but which may have been the quantity, quality or time of delivery of the goods in question. Credits were also recorded. Exchange rates were a problem, marks, groschen, "rubles" and guilders being found.. Some contractions were difficult to transcribe so that exact exchange rates can only be surmised, 13 marks per £, 4-7 roubles per £ and 22.20 Guilders per £.

The Baltic trade was necessarily seasonal, the Sound between Sweden and Denmark icing in midwinter when there were also severe winter storms in the North Sea and the Baltic and the North Baltic ports were blocked by ice for much of the winter. No master wanted to be iced up in the Baltic for the winter and so they tried to be out by November and not to enter before March.(Davis). More entries were found from April to October than from November to January, although not all necessarily been about shipments.

Costs of the trade

Much information on trade costs can be extracted. The goods had to be wrapped or packaged and paper, including thin and stiff brown, threading/ sheading, stamping and lining cap paper had to be paid for, coin bags, twine, boards, knives, printing, stamps and postage are charged and entered. Oil used for lighting, the total cost of oil for 1796 being £0.15.04 (£0.77). Oats for a sum of £0.04.06 (£0.23) were presumably for horses. The cost of hogsheads, casks, boxes and hampers, mats as dunnage, "gorse" surprisingly, perhaps for packing, hoops, corn bags, cartage and carriage, portorage, shipping, warehouse rent, commission, "measuring etc.", bills of lading, insurance policies and bonds and others, including additional premiums, customs and excise debentures and cockets¹⁷ for £0.10.06 (£0.53) and town duty were recorded. Such expenses as freight down the River Mersey, port charges on entry, Sound duty to pass the Sound between Denmark and Sweden and freight charges from Dantzic are found. There was even the cost of the warehouse in Henry Street, £682.10.00 (£682.50), half the total cost of £1365.

A few entries give interesting comment on port activity at the time. "Hemp let fall in the dock, Capt. Thielson to make good the damage", the sale of damaged flax, the cartage of hemp to Manchester, or the freight of 350 tons of salt down the river. Even the loss of a lighter of salt. The names of local dealers and merchants are interesting, for example Samuel Hurry for insurance and Thomas Greaves for paper. Many other merchants are mentioned as suppliers of goods and services and their names may be helpful to those interested in Liverpool commerce at the time.

Details of the vessels.

Ships of the seventeenth century, perhaps 80 - 150 tons, were being replaced by larger ships of 400 to 600 tons in the 1700's. The average tonnage of English ships trading with the Baltic in 1772 was 216 tons (Davis). Apart from a hoy of 80 tons from Flushing, the **Hoffnung**, and the **Bryer** a brig from Whitehaven of 82 tons, both with a draught of 10 feet, the tonnage ranged from 120 tons to 1188 tons, the **Mercurius**, a brig with two decks, and **Carysfort**, was a ship with three decks and a draught of 19 feet. Descriptions of the type of rigging of those vessels identified are identified (van Loon).

Captains

A few ships' captains are mentioned, although it is not always clear where they came from, for whom they worked: or which ship they captained. Captain Ulrichsen shipped a cargo for a company in Sonderburg, Denmark, Captain Nicolay Thielson for a company in Flushing,

Captain Tepelman, Captain Nissan, Captain Fischer (Apenrade, Denmark), Captain Eggers (Lubeck), Captain Wright (Sonderburg), Captains Carr and William Good were recorded.

Liverpool names mentioned

The names of local dealers and merchants are given, for example Samuel Hurry for insurance, Thomas Greaves for paper and Mary Slater for oil and many others are mentioned as suppliers of goods and services and a record of their names may be interesting to the historians of Liverpool commerce at the time. Some later well-known names occur in the document. John Bibby, George and Henry Brown, John Brown, Robert Brown and William Brown, J Gladstone is shown as the owner of several vessels (the **Minerva**, the **Paragon** and the **Susannah**), a Richard Harrison, probably not the man of the same name associated with the later Harrison Line, Thos. Hope, A. Holt and Thos Holt, Warbrick J Holt, and A. Hutchinson, who did much for Liverpool shipping, was found as the owner of a vessel (the **Adelphi**). Leece, Henry Mather, Renshaw are found and Thomas Moss Tate was a frequent occurrence.

Historical information

Britain was at war with France between 1793 and 1815 and convoy charges are mentioned several times. It is interesting how the charge increased from 1% in March 1797 to 3% in November 1797 and 4% later in 1797. There was a dispute about passage through the Sound between Denmark & Sweden, and Sound Duty was levied by Denmark until revoked by the Redemption Treaty of 1857.

Foreign Ports

The port of destination is only occasionally given, although it may be assumed that the port or place of origin of the debtor is also the destination. Several of the countries have changed their name, allegiance and frontier since the entries described were made. Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania have gained independence from Russia and Germany, East Prussia has been absorbed in an emergent Poland and part of Russia. The modern names of several ports mentioned in the document or in this text are given:

Apenrade in Denmark is Abenrå.
Christianfeldt in Denmark is Christiansfeld
Christiansands in Norway is Kristiansand
Copenhagen in Denmark is København
Dantzig is Gdansk in Poland
Elsinore in Denmark is Helsingør
Flushing in Netherlands is Vlissingen
Konigsburg is Kaliningrad in Russia
Liepaja in Latvia

Marienburg is Malbork in Poland
Memel is Klaipeda in Lithuania
Pernau is Pärnu in Estonia
Pillau is Baltiysk in Russia
Revel is Tallinn in Estonia
Sonderburg in Denmark is Sønderborg
Swinemunde is Swinouyscie in Poland
Tonsberg in Norway is Tønsberg Libau

The frequency of mention of foreign towns is Lubeck 20%, Dantzig 14%, Sonderberg & Apenrade 13%, Flensburg and Riga 8%, Hamburg 7%, Elsinore 5%, Tonsberg and Pernau 3%, Flushing, Revel and Swinemund 2%, and the rest 1%. It should be noted that some of these entries might have been duplicated in another entry about insurance, credit, discount etc.

Thus the present countries with ports mentioned (present names) are:

Belgium: Gent, Ostende

Denmark: Abenrå, Christiansfeld, Helsingør, København, Sønderborg

Estonia: Parnu, Tallinn.
Germany: Flensburg, Hamburg, Lübeck.
Latvia: Liepaja, Riga
Lithuania: Klaipeda
Netherlands: Ostend, Vlissingen
Norway: Kristiansand, Mandal, Tønsberg
Poland: Gdansk, Malbork (?), Swinouyscie
Russia: Baltiysk, Kaliningrad

English and Irish towns mentioned

Apart from Liverpool, several towns are mentioned for the purposes of purchase, sale or insurance of the cargoes.

Dublin for purchase of butter.

Lancaster for sale of tobacco, and for flax

Leeds, tobacco

Hull purchase of tallow

Manchester for hemp

North Shields and "Shields" for insurance

Northwich and Winsford for purchase of salt

Shrewsbury for sale of tobacco

Warrington for sale of timber, hemp and flax

Conclusion

Although some of the information is difficult to interpret, it does provide details of trade with the Baltic over the five years covered by this document. Although originally tobacco, the wider the range of goods carried later and the attempts to develop new ventures, frequently mentioned, were typical of the increased trade of the port at the time. The details of ports, ships, captains and the costs incurred in such trading give a picture of the activity of a shipping company during the period and add to present knowledge as described by Chandler. Several leads are suggested for further research. More information could be found in contemporary newspapers, directories and corporate documents about the suppliers of goods and services mentioned, both locally, which would throw more light on the trades and business connections in and around Merseyside and also on foreign merchants and cargoes from the archives in such countries as Germany, Denmark or Poland. Finally, there must be more information on inward and outward cargoes in the Liverpool Town Books and Customs records.

Acknowledgements

I have been much indebted to the late Mr Peter McGuffie and his family for permission to study the ledger, to the Liverpool Record Office for access to contemporary newspaper files and to the Liverpool Maritime Archive at the Albert Dock for access to other information. Customs and port documents have been consulted at the National Archives at Kew, Lloyd's List at the Southampton Maritime Collection and other information, at the London Guildhall Library, the British Library and Lancaster and Warrington Libraries. I am very grateful to Captain Graeme Cubbin, retired from the Harrison Line, for much help and advice, to Mr. F Barlow for help with computing and to my wife for much forbearance.

Editor's note: This article has been condensed for publication, but for further research the full version together with all appendices and references is available on request. Please contact the Editor by e-mail at: shipsofmann@blueyonder.co.uk

THE FIGUREHEAD JENNY LIND - A REMARKABLE FIND?

By John Stokoe LNRS Hon Secretary

Karl-Eric Svardskog is an antique dealer in Gothenburg, Sweden. In 1994, Gunter, a trader in local used goods asked if he would be interested in buying a „scarecrow“ which he had spotted in a local farm hayloft. The wooden figure attracting Gunter's interest had been extremely effective in its role, not only scaring off the crows but in having a frightening night-time impact on people, and so it had been relegated to a dark corner and covered over, for possibly up to a century.

Karl had made a blind purchase and he was yet to see this wooden figure. His first encounter, by candlelight, proved both dramatic and unreal. The eerie experience was evidently accompanied by Mozart's Requiem streaming from some nearby loudspeakers. To use Karl's own words as he approached the carving - Who are you? Who made you? Where did you come from? And so began a fascinating and painstaking quest over the next decade to discover the origins of his purchase of this near life-size figure

On first sight the „scarecrow“ immediately reminded Karl of similarities with ships' figureheads and his early enquiries, at Karlskrona Maritime Museum, confirmed that this wooden lady had once graced the prow of a merchant ship. The carved hairstyle and fashion bore similarities to the gifted Swedish soprano Jenny Lind who had ruled the European stage with her remarkable vocal range and tone during the 1800's. Some still regard her as the world's first megastar with her sensational tour of America in 1850.

Further investigations revealed that there had been six ships having the name Jenny Lind but one ship noticed on this list was the American clipper **Nightingale**. The mid 19th century was the peak period for American clipper production with these vessels being the fastest sailing ships that the world had ever seen - long and lean, with sharp bows, raked masts and a „cumulus“ of sail.

Karl set about tracking the voyages of the **Nightingale** and particularly to discover what had become of her. She had been built in 1851 with the intention of becoming the first cruising yacht to carry passengers across the Atlantic. Prince Albert's „*Great Exhibition*“ was to be held in London and **Nightingale** herself was set to be exhibited in the Thames. However, this was not to be. Financial problems forced the owners to sell the vessel before completion and instead her maiden voyage took her to Australia and China. But what eventually happened to **Nightingale**? In 1876 she was bought by Norwegian ship-owners and then in 1893 she was abandoned north of the bank of Newfoundland at the ripe old marine age of 42 years. .

If the **Nightingale** had sunk in the Atlantic, how could her figurehead have possibly reached a barn near Gothenburg? The final port of call prior to sinking had in fact been Kragerø in Southern Norway which is a day's sail from Gothenburg. Responding to an enquiry placed in the press by Karl, an old man came forward to say that one of the deckhouses from **Nightingale** was on Kirkeholmen Island. Evidently in 1885 the vessel's bow had been damaged when it hit a reef close by. The **Nightingale** had been towed to this island for repairs which then involved the removal of the figurehead. Thereafter she sailed her final seven years without this ornamentation. It was also

understood that the „scarecrow“, as it had become, had been bought after being taken off the ship. It was relocated in a field close to the Gothenburg to Stockholm railroad which would most probably have been used for transportation. Karl's investigation, with assistance of the media and subsequent contacts, had enabled him to establish the figurehead's final movements. This was followed up with extensive forensic research. For example, tests were able to discover that *Jenny Lind* had been painted 25 times in different shades of white and light yellow with detail added in blue dye or even gilded. The figurehead was carved in Eastern White Pine which it is important to note is an American wood. In all, Karl's extensive research extends to some 300 pages of supporting data and the common impression amongst expertise in the field is that *Jenny* is one of the most investigated and best documented figureheads in existence to this day. It's quality speaks for itself and it's history is impeccable though on-one can estimate it's monetary value.

In January 2008, some weeks before *Jenny* was scheduled to go to auction, various abstract questions had rapidly turned into a concrete attack in which all the findings were dismissed by an American dealer who's own opinion was that the figurehead now presented was a replacement with the carving being typically Scandinavian. The tragic truth is that, as a result of the questioning of *Jenny's* authenticity, not a single American museum has been interested incorporating the **Nightingale** figurehead in its collection. It is therefore firmly felt that the American people have been deprived of a masterpiece from young America.



The figurehead with, inset, a picture of Jenny Lind



The clipper **Nightingale**, pictures courtesy of Carl Hendel Friberg

Let me also add a fascinating footnote concerning the loss of the **Nightingale**. She sank on 5th. April 1893 having been damaged by a storm and had lost all her lifeboats. The crew were rescued by a German vessel **Amerika** owned by Norddeutscher Lloyd. She was under the command of Captain Johann Jakob Jantzen (JJJ) who spotted the wreck already under water up to her decks and sinking. The 16 crew members, having been rescued were taken to Bremerhaven where they were welcomed by the Norwegian Consul. **Nightingale's** skipper Captain Ingebretsen from Kragero expressed his gratefulness by giving his pocket watch to JJJ. Great-grandson Dr. Jan-Peter Jantzen informs us that this remains a treasured family heirloom, well maintained and on very special occasions worn by Jan-Peter's own son.

There have been many more strands of interest attaching to this tale which Karl, who is a friend of our Society, has captured in a memorable short film. Those of you with internet connection can take advantage as it has recently become available on *Youtube*. This is highly commended as a poignant and inspiring piece of maritime research and available in three short episodes on www.youtube.com/user/jennyind69

Author's note: *with grateful thanks to Karl-Eric Svardskog and Jan-Peter Jantzen in the writing of this piece*

At the recent AGM Vice-Chairman David White paid tribute to Ron Dennis for his sterling contribution as Programme Secretary over the past 15 years and presented an engraved tankard. Ron was happy to respond with an array of amusing anecdotes reflecting on some of his experiences in organising and arranging in the region of 120 speakers during his term of office. Ron remains a member of the Society and we hope to see him from time to time at our monthly meetings.



“BROCKLEBANKS”

By the late W. Stewart Rees

The object of this paper is to give a brief outline of the shipbuilding activities of this well-known firm and to trace their progress in this respect.

Daniel Brocklebank, the founder of the House, was born at Torpenhow, Cumberland, in 1741, the youngest son of the Reverend Daniel Brocklebank of that parish; he was apprenticed to Shipbuilding at Whitehaven and in due course completed his indentures and became a shipbuilder. Soon after his marriage at Whitehaven in 1769 he went to America, and there established a shipbuilding yard in 1770, seemingly in the neighbourhood of Sheepscott, Massachusetts Bay State, Maine, which at that time was a British colony. There he built four vessels, and had about completed the fifth, the brig **Castor**, single deck with beams, of 22 tons and 20 guns, when the War of Independence broke out, so taking command of the **Castor** he sailed from Sheepscott on the 8th of May, 1775 for Whitehaven, where he arrived on the 8th June, after a passage of 31 days. The following account of their departure from America and arrival in England is taken from the *Cumberland Paquet*, printed in Whitehaven, and dated the 15th June 1775, Referring to Captain Brocklebank it says:-

He left the country with a new vessel, which he had built there, on board of which he had only one barrel of beef and some bread. Provisions could not be purchased there, he therefore gave his Seamen the choice of running for Nova Scotia or the banks of Newfoundland, to try whether they could secure a sufficiency of fish to support them on their passage to Europe.

They chose the latter and in a few hours caught an amazing great quantity. They had some salt but not enough to preserve the fish they had taken, this deficiency they however soon supplied, by scraping up the salt which had been laid between the timbers (a custom used for preserving ships) wherever they could get it, and by these means got as much as cured a quantity which served them plentifully on the passage.

After twenty days sail, they were in St. George's Channel, and on the 11th from that, came safe into Whitehaven, to the great joy and astonishment of their friends, who did not expect them so soon, as the Captain had purposed building another vessel, but from the disturbed state of the Province thought it most prudent to quit it, and a considerable part of his cargo which he had purchased, and had ready for shipping.

For some years Captain Brocklebank crossed and recrossed the Atlantic in the **Castor**, and in 1779 was granted a Letter of Marque by George III, as commander of that vessel, which was now registered at Whitehaven, armed with 18 carriage guns (six and four pounders) and 8 swivel guns and carried a crew of 45 men, and he was authorised “to set forth in a war-like manner the said ship called the **Castor** and to seize the ships, depots, and goods belonging to the King of Spain and his subjects.”

In 1780 Captain Brocklebank became master of the Ship **Precedent** (300 tons) which had just been built for him at Whitehaven, having been launched as the **Pollux**, but renamed. In March of the following year his former ship the *Castor*, when in convoy, was wrecked in the West Indies. Another **Castor** (342 tons) was constructed for him at Whitehaven in 1782, and when peace was declared in the following year, this ship and the **Precedent** were employed as transports. They both left New York on 2nd

December, 1783; the former, with Captain Brocklebank in command, brought 129 officers and men belonging to the 22nd Regiment (Foot), now the Cheshire Regiment, while the **Precedent** carried 128 officers and men of the 38th Regiment and 14 other passengers. This vessel reached Portsmouth on the 19th January, 1784, and the **Castor** arrived next day. After taking **Castor** from the Mersey to Philadelphia, and returning to Liverpool in 1784, Daniel decided to remain ashore in order to look after his increasing fleet, as other vessels had been built for him at Whitehaven, and he also had a large merchants business.

Having obtained a suitable site just outside the North Wall of the Harbour of Whitehaven, he commenced building ships again in 1788, and the first craft to be completed was the brig **Perseverance**, of 155 tons. With the advent of Brocklebanks, shipbuilding developed into a most important industry at Whitehaven, and as the years went by, more and larger ships were launched. The second **Castor** having been sold, Daniel himself built a third vessel of that name in 1790, a brig (179 tons) which was immediately disposed of, and the next year a fourth **Castor** (247 tons) was completed, and the command given to his eldest son Daniel, aged 19 years; a great responsibility for a young man. Cordage being such an important item in a ship's requirements, Daniel Brocklebank, senior, in 1790 bought the Bransty Ropery at Whitehaven and therefore made his own ropes. These were the days of enemy warships and roving privateers, and although ships sailed in convoy, a number were captured; and so it came about that Brocklebank's ship the **Nestor** (333 tons, built 1792) when homeward bound from the Mediterranean was taken off Cape St. Vincent by the French frigate **L'Ambuscade** (32 guns) and carried into Cadiz. In 1798, another Brocklebank ship the little brig **Ceres** (93 tons), built in 1797, was captured off Peterhead by a French privateer, whilst on a voyage from Whitehaven to Hull, and carried into Bergen. In 1798 the **Alfred**, a ship of 314 tons (built in 1796) after loading in the Old Dock at Liverpool proceeded to Ireland and sailed from Cork, with Daniel junior in command, as part of a convoy consisting of 116 vessels, escorted by 6 warships. Unfortunately, young Daniel, then aged 25 years, died at Jamaica, and was buried at Montego Bay in July 1798. The **Alfred** was sold on her return to Liverpool, and after many years service in the Greenland Seas was wrecked in the ice in 1847, having been afloat for 51 years, a working life that speaks well for the builders' skill.

Daniel Brocklebank died at Whitehaven in March 1801, aged 60 years, and was buried at Trinity Church in that town. According to the *Cumberland Pacquet*, he had recently retired from the business; was highly respected by all who knew him, and during a very active life made 25 voyages across the Atlantic alone, and had built 25 vessels at Whitehaven. These varied from cutters of 60 tons to ships of over 300 tons. Actually two more craft were built during his lifetime, namely, the **Active** (134 tons) and **Cumberland** (340 tons; 100.0ft. x 23.2ft. x 18.6ft.), both in 1800, but they were constructed under the direction of his son Thomas. The **Cumberland** was described at the time of her launch "as the finest on the coast". The title of the firm was now altered from Daniel Brocklebank to Thos. and Jno. Brocklebank, and the business of Shipbuilders, Shipowners and Merchants continued by his two sons: Thomas who at the time was in his 27th year, and John six years younger. The ropemaking was

carried on under the name of Brocklebanks & Co. and the two brothers had as a partner their cousin John Brocklebank, known as the ropemaker, a son of the Reverend Ralph Brocklebank, who was a brother to old Captain Daniel. In the early days Thomas generally remained at Whitehaven, but his brother visited London, Liverpool and other ports in the United Kingdom and Ireland, wherever their ships were discharging or loading. Carpenters at Whitehaven in 1807 worked from 6.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. with half an hour for breakfast and one hour for dinner, and in winter (from 1st November to 1st March) from light to dark; breakfast before they came and not more time than necessary for dinner.

Brocklebank's own vessels brought hemp, oakum, tar, pitch etc., from the Baltic, and oak timber from the Welsh Ports. In addition they engaged small schooners for the same purpose. They also sent some of the largest ships to Canada, and chartered tonnage to load timber for use in the shipbuilding yard at Whitehaven. The business began to expand quickly and many vessels were put into the water from their yard, among them the brig **Ariel** (204 tons), launched in 1807. Two years later in January this vessel, when homeward bound from Caracas for London, was captured in the English Channel by the French privateer **Adventurier** of 14 guns and a crew of some 50 men. And although the **Ariel's** crew numbered only 18 and she carried but 10 guns the actions lasted for two hours and a half, during which the privateer's sails were torn to pieces and her shrouds and topmast cut away, before the Brocklebank ship surrendered. She was then taken into Cherbourg, and her captain made a prisoner and detained in France until released 12 months later. Thomas Brocklebank was greatly interested in India, and in consequence 1815 saw the launch at Whitehaven of the **Princess Charlotte** (514tons), the largest ship built at the Port and intended for the Indian Trade. Her dimensions were 119.3ft. x 31.2ft. x 8.6ft.: she was a full rigged ship, copper-bolted and fastened and wood-sheathed, with a capacity of about 800 tons. She cost £13,000. It will be noticed that her length was about 4 beams.

The *Cumberland Pacquet*, dated Whitehaven, 12th September, 1815, contained the following account of the launch:—

*On Wednesday morning a new vessel the **Princess Charlotte** was launched from the building yard of Messrs. T. and J. Brocklebank. She was 514 tons register measure (which we are informed is 7 tons more than any ship built at this Port) and is believed to be a vessel of uncommon strength and beauty.*

The weather was delightful, and a great concourse of people, computed at not less than 6,000, witnessed her gallant descent from the stocks a little before 10 o'clock. It is what is called a dry launch, and after smoothly running (or rather gliding) about 80 yards without any apparent diminution of speed, she stopped. The tide was then flowing. In a little more than half an hour she was afloat, and soon after one o'clock was towed safely into harbour.

The **Princess Charlotte** had a crew of 35 men, including a surgeon, and on her first voyage from Whitehaven to Batavia and Calcutta she was armed with 10 nine-pounder guns. She had "superior accommodation for passengers". The **Princess Charlotte** proved a most successful vessel and was employed in the Indian service for 30 years

before she was sold. She was lost 9 years later. The **Perseverance**, of similar tonnage, was built in 1819, also for the Indian trade. She was unfortunately driven ashore in bad weather near Madras when outward bound for Calcutta in 1829.

Trouble in the shipyards was not unknown even in those days, as the following account, taken from Gore's *Liverpool Advertiser* of the 20th October, 1825, shows : –

Combination – The system which has done so much injury to the shipbuilding Trade of this Port appears, from the Cumberland Pacquet of Monday last, to have commenced operating in Whitehaven. For some time past the workmen in the employ of Messrs Brocklebank, builders, as well as others and even the boys, have exhibited symptoms of a refractory spirit.

Insolence to the Master and Overseers is the order of the day and those men who do not belong to the "Union" are annoyed on every occasion. Messrs Brocklebank at length determined no longer to submit to this, and on the 17th advertised for men at 24/- per week on condition that they were unconnected with any "Union".

This however, could not have led to what took place in Tuesday morning, for the plan had been laid on the Monday before the advertisement was published.

It appears that on Tuesday, the 18th, the apprentices seized two men who did not belong to the "Union", and mounting them upon poles successively paraded then through the streets.

On the latter occasion they were met at the foot of Duke Street, by Mr. Brocklebank who endeavoured to prevail upon them to liberate the men, but in vain. A scuffle ensued. Mr. Brocklebank pressed in among them and was either knocked or thrown down by one of his own apprentices, and he did not arise again without soiled apparel and bloody face.

Justly incensed, Mr. Brocklebank proceeded to his yard and dismissed every man and boy employed in it and shut it up. Several of the apprentices were taken into custody but were afterwards liberated on bail. They have since had an interview with Mr. Brocklebank and on Monday morning last the Yard was again opened and several, both men and boys, were admitted to work.

Messrs Brocklebank are well known as highly respectable builders and from their extremely liberal conduct at all times to the people under their control merited a very different return from what they recently received.

The shipwrights of Messrs Kelsik Wood and Sons of Maryport are also off work for a somewhat similar reason.

Brocklebanks built their first paddle steamer in 1827, the **Countess of Lonsdale** (241 tons gross, 250 net and 120 Horse Power) for the Whitehaven Steam Navigation co., in which they were largely interested, and she was employed between Whitehaven and Liverpool. In 1828 the firm launched no less than 6 vessels including the **Herculean** (317 tons), all for their own trades,

In 1831 John Brocklebank died at Greenlands, near Whitehaven, aged only 51, having been thrown from his horse, and was buried at Irton in Cumberland. The management of the shipbuilding yard was then taken over by a cousin, Daniel Bird, and on his death in 1845 the yard passed to Joseph Henry Robinson, also related to the Brocklebanks.

The Barque **Hindoo** (266 tons) was launched in 1831, and during the next year the **Patriot King** (338 tons) came into commission, and on her first voyage made the round trip to Calcutta and back to the Mersey in the record time of eight months and 2 days. The newly built **Jumna**, too, launched in 1833 (364 tons, 111.10 ft. x 27.9ft x 18.11 ft.) sailed to Calcutta and returned to Liverpool in eight months and two days and in 1834 she went out to Canton and arrived back in the Mersey the following year, having made a record round voyage of ten months.

Another paddle steamer, the **Earl of Lonsdale**, of same dimension as the **Countess**, was launched in 1834 for the Whitehaven Steam Packet co. In 1836 the **Tigris**, a ship of 422 tons, on her first voyage sailed for Calcutta and then proceeded to China. In the same year the following paragraph appeared in a Liverpool paper of September : -

*A very handsome new vessel of 252 tons register measurement, called the **Globe** was launched on Monday last from the building Yard of Messrs T. & J. Brocklebank at Whitehaven, and is intended for the Foreign Trade.*

It is worth noting that the **Globe** remained in Brocklebank's service for 20 years, then was disposed of and after a similar period was resold, and 20 years later again changed ownership, finally being destroyed by fire in Strangford Lough, Ireland, in 1910, after a career of 74 years!

In 1837 the **Herculean** was reported at Bombay as 73 days from Liverpool.

The **Patriot Queen** (547 tons) came out in 1838; **Princess Royal** (579 tons) came out in 1841; the **Robert Pulsford** (593 tons) in 1844 and the **Sir Henry Pottinger** (629 tons) in 1845, in which year the Brocklebank fleet reached its maximum number, with 50 ships of 12,484 tons, all built at their Yard, and employed in their own trades. In addition the firm had an interest in 15 other vessels. On the 8th November, 1845, Thomas Brocklebank died at Greenlands, near Whitehaven, and was buried at Irton. The notice that appeared in the *Cumberland Pacquet*, read :-

On Saturday evening last, at Greenlands near this Town, Thomas Brocklebank, Esq., of the eminent and well-known Firm of T. and J. Brocklebank, Merchant and shipbuilder, in the 72nd year of his age. Mr. Brocklebank was a gentleman of retiring and unassuming manner, but as a Merchant and a man of general business talents, he had perhaps no equal. He has long been considered, and we believe justly so, as the greatest Shipbuilder in the World.

Two years previously he had taken into partnership his nephew Thomas Fisher, son of his sister Anne, and his cousin Ralph Brocklebank, the son of John the Ropemaker, both of whom had been associated with the firm for a number of years. They both lived at Liverpool. On the death of his uncle, Thomas Fisher, who was the sole surviving male descendant of Daniel Brocklebank, was made senior partner, and under the terms of the Will took the name of Brocklebank. He was made a baronet in 1886.

More ships well known in their day were built at Whitehaven at this time: in 1847 **Thomas Brocklebank** (629 tons) and **Crisis** (426 tons), in 1849 **Harold** (666 tons), in 1850 **Petchlee** (393 tons) and in 1852 **Martaban** (852 tons), to mention but a few.

Launch of the **Martaban** in October, 1852, was witnessed by 5,000 people. She was not only the biggest vessel build at Whitehaven, but also had the greatest proportion of length to beam of any vessel yet built there, her dimensions being, length 171.1 ft., breadth 32 ft., depth 21ft. She was 31ft.8 ins longer but only 1ft.10ins more beam than the **Arachne** of 654 tons constructed the previous year. The **Aracan** completed in 1854 was of similar tonnage and the same beam as the **Martaban**, but 15 ft. longer. As regards the **Martaban**, it may be of interest to quote the late Sir William Bower Forwood, in his book "Reminiscences of a Liverpool Shipowner," who wrote :-

*I remember seeing one of Brocklebank's Ships, the **Martaban** of 600 tons, sailing into the Georges Dock Basin under full Canvas. Her halliards were let go and sails clewed up so quickly that the ship as she passed the pierhead was able to throw a line on it. It is difficult these days to realise such a thing being possible. It was skill supported by discipline.*

In 1854 the **Petchelee** from Calcutta and **Aracan** from Bombay, both came home to the Mersey in 85 days. When the second **Herculean** (531 tons) was completed in 1856 (164.9 ft. x 28.3 ft. x 18.11 ft.) it was recorded that her sharp and fine model was ahead of anything previously built at Whitehaven. The **Rajmahal** (1,302 tons) launched in 1858, length 234.5 ft., breadth 36.9 ft., depth 22.8 ft., was the largest ship ever built by Brocklebanks at their own yard. The **Sumatra**, **Juanpore**, **Veronica**, **Cambay**, **Tenasserim**, **Burdwan**, **Everest** and **Bowfell** followed, and finally, the **Mahanada** (1,000 tons), their last ship, was launched on the 26th April 1865, and the yard was closed. Iron vessels were coming into general use, and the firm considered the question of building such vessels, but difficulties had arisen over the renewal of the lease, of such a nature that they brought to an end Brocklebanks' building activities at Whitehaven, where, during a period of 78 years (from 1788 to 1865) they had constructed 153 wooden vessels; comprising smacks, cutters, sloops, snows, brigs, brigantines, barques, ships and two paddle steamers, totalling 46,693 tons. The Ropery was carried on for another 10 years.

Previous to the death of Daniel Brocklebank in 1801, many of the vessels he constructed were sold, although an interest was retained in some of them, but after his death the majority built by the firm were kept, and employed in their numerous services to India, China, South America, etc. The Brocklebank ships were noted for their wonderful workmanship, and splendid materials, and were all of the highest class.

They were exceptionally strongly built, copper-bolted and fastened. In the early days they were wood-sheathed, at a later date they were copper-sheathed over patent felt, and towards the end of the period the copper was superseded by yellow metal.

The average life of the 126 vessels, built by Thos. and Jno. Brocklebank between 1801 and 1865, exceeded 26 years; 28 of the craft were afloat for 30-40 years; 16 were in service for upwards of 50 years and 9 were still sailing the oceans 51-56 years after launching. The little cutter **Mackerel**, of 23 tons (built 1831, sold 1850) when broken up in 1899, finished a career of 68 years service, and the **Globe**, mentioned already, was 74 years old when she was burnt in 1910.

Brocklebanks were the biggest shipbuilders in Whitehaven, having launched at their yard more vessel than any other firm at that port.

THE TRANS ATLANTIC POST OFFICE.

By Graham Booth

In the Nineteenth Century a number of postal administrations introduced sorting offices on board ships. The British Post Office, for reasons that are not very clear, restricted their use in the U.K. to the predominantly pleasure craft that plied between Ardrishaig and Greenock on the Clyde and the commercial ferries that sailed between Holyhead and Kingstown. Overseas they were limited to some routes to the Far East. In contrast the American postal authorities enthusiastically embraced the concept and the 4 vessels of the American Line that sailed between New York and Southampton all had a sorting office on board in the last decade of the nineteenth century. In 1905 the American administration was pressing their U.K. counterparts to install an equivalent facility on British Trans Atlantic vessels. Against their better judgement the Post Office acquiesced because they wanted certain concessions from the U.S that had nothing to do with sorting at sea. In so doing they became involved in one of the most convoluted exercises they had ever attempted and even today we do not fully understand how it worked.

In principle it was easy. Teams of 4 sorters (two British and two American) were put on 4 vessels of the American Line (**New York, Philadelphia, St Louis** and **St Paul**) and 4 vessels of the White Star Line (**Majestic Teutonic, Oceanic** and **Baltic**), later **Adriatic, Olympic** and **Titanic** were added to the list. In addition **Cedric** and **Celtic** may have had sorting offices on board, but if so they were very seldom used. For many years it was argued that Cunard vessels also had a Sea Post Office, supported by statements like the one that was reprinted in the last issue of the Bulletin from Lloyds List, that negotiations had come to a satisfactory conclusion and that **Caronia** had a fully equipped sea post on board. In addition there are a number of postcards similar to one I have in my own collection which is of the **Campania** with a message "This is the boat that is taking us across the ocean. We hope to get to New York on Saturday" with the stamp cancelled by a Trans Atlantic Post Office mark. However close examination of sailing records show that on the date of the postmark the **Campania** had arrived in New York, so that the card was handed by her purser to the post office officials on board the White Star liner **Oceanic** and was cancelled on board on the return voyage. Although negotiations certainly took place with Cunard and a number of vessels were fitted with specific rooms for the carriage of mail, it is probable that the two sides could never agree on compensation for the loss of commercial space if a sorting office was put on board.

The design of the cancellers used by the two countries was very different so it was agreed that for postal purposes all 8 vessels would be regarded as British from their arrival in British territorial waters going east and on the westward voyage as far as American territorial waters, and then as American for the remainder of the return voyage. The team on board, whether American or British, were supposed to use the cancellers of the nation that the ship was deemed to belong to, but for the most part refused to do so. In addition neither set of clerks used the date that a letter was actually posted on board – the British used the first day of the voyage and the Americans the expected last date so that it was impossible to prove that the wrong

canceller had been used. I have in my collection a card written on the **Adriatic** headed Boxing Night saying “We are getting near New York. About 24 hours away”. One would be forgiven if one assumed the sorters had been celebrating too strongly because the cancel is dated the 18th. This was the date of the start of the voyage and the practice caused complaints about excessive delays to the mail. Eventually the British adopted the American method. Finally there was a numeral code included in the cancel to identify the origin of the letter. It was too simple for the Post Office to identify the ship by name, so that even today postal historians still argue about whether the codes identified the vessel, or whether they identified the sorting team and went with them when occasionally they changed vessels because one was withdrawn for major maintenance.

The Americans used a design of cancel that said “United States Sea Post Office”. They did not change it when the cooperative effort with the British began and they did not change it when the British withdrew, not even after the American Line sailings were transferred to Liverpool because of the war. When the service started in 1905 the British used a canceller that read “British Sea Post Liverpool”. When White Star’s fast service was transferred to Southampton in 1907 it was changed to “British Sea Post Southampton”, and eventually after the Southampton Postmaster pointed out that none of the letters were actually cancelled in Southampton, and in the case of the American Line vessels were actually landed at Plymouth travelling eastwards, the canceller was changed to read “Trans Atlantic Post Office.” The combined effort terminated in 1914. For many years it was assumed that termination was because of the war, but in fact the British gave notice in the summer of 1914, and must have been relieved that they got out of something that they never really wanted to get into in the first place.

THE MONDAY FACILITY

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

September	Mondays	6 th , 13 th , 20 th , 27 th
October		4 th , 11 th , 18 th , 25 th
November		1 st , 8 th , 15 th , 22 nd

REPORT ON SOCIETY VISIT

On 10th June 15 Society member enjoyed a fascinating visit to the U-534 exhibition at Birkenhead; much helped by the assistance of tour guide Chris.

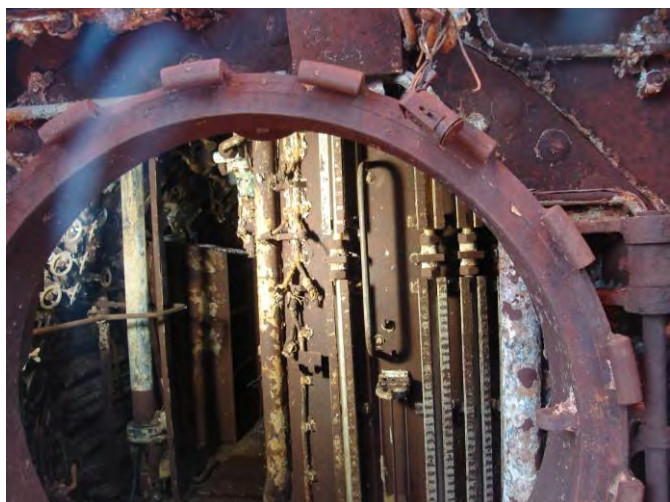
Following the demise of the Historic Warships display at West Float, Birkenhead, the former World War II German U-boat was taken over by Mersey Travel. For improved visibility and to fit the available site adjacent to Woodside Ferry terminal the vessel was cut into 4 large sections. Visitors cannot enter the hull but glass panels sealing the ends of each section, and good interior lighting, make for effective viewing – sadly being sectionalised does hinder gaining an impression of her original size.

Built at Hamburg in 1942 and used for training and weather reporting during the war, she did not sink any other vessels. On May 5th, 1945 she was underway in the Kattegat and, although Admiral Doenitz had ordered all his U-boats to surrender as from 08.00 that day, for some unknown reason U-534 refused to do so.

Heading north towards Norway, she was attacked by RAF aircraft; and taking heavy damage began to sink by the stern. Forty-nine of the fifty-two crew members survived. In August 1993 the wreckage was raised from the seabed in the hope of finding hidden treasure on board, but nothing was found and she was donated to Merseyside. The mystery of why U-534 refused to surrender remains to this day.

For more information see:-

<http://www.ubootstory.co.uk>



Looking aft through a circular hatch. The manometers surround the periscope housing.



Looking aft between the two main diesel engines

Report and photographs by Bill Ogle

FAWCETT, PRESTON & CO. - MARINE ENGINES

by Malcolm McDonald

The author has compiled a list of all marine engines built by Fawcett, Preston & Co., of Liverpool. The information is contained in the three Fawcett, Preston engine books, which are held in the North Street Archive of National Galleries and Museums on Merseyside.

This work originated during the course of the author's research into Irish cross-channel services from Liverpool. Although the builders of the ships were normally named in the Customs' Merchant Shipping Registers on first registration, the practice of naming engine builders in those registers did not occur until around 1870. Similarly, Lloyds Register, which in the early days of steamships was by no means complete anyway, did not start showing engine builders until around the same time. The Fawcett, Preston engine books therefore proved an invaluable source of information on the builders of the engines of many of the early Liverpool steamships. The name of the engine-builder can also sometimes be found in newspaper reports on the launch and/or trials of a ship, and occasionally in newspaper advertisements for the sale of a ship.

The business was bought by William Fawcett in 1794, and he remained associated with the business for many years. At that time, it was an armaments manufacturer. William Fawcett was bankrupted in 1813, and the business was bought by the Littledale family. The firm was then named Fawcett & Littledale. Later, William Fawcett bought back a one third share in the business. In the 1820's, the Littledale holding was sold to the Preston family, and the business was re-styled Fawcett & Preston. Later it became Fawcett, Preston & Co. The precise dates of these changes are unclear, but the final style was in use before 1840. With the decline in orders for armaments, William Fawcett turned to colonial sugar plantations, and started to sell cane roller mills and their associated steam engines. The firm built its first steam engine in 1813, when engine book no. 1 begins. The firm's first marine engine was completed in 1817 - a 22 HP engine for the Tranmere ferry **Etna**, which had twin hulls fastened together by a platform, with the engine in one hull, the boiler in the other and a single paddle wheel between the two hulls. From this small start grew a major business in marine engines, which were fewer in number, but much larger, than the other engines. Most of the earliest marine engine orders relied on the firm's overseas expertise, coming from Savannah, Bordeaux and Charleston. These engines were shipped overseas, for final assembly abroad. An order for an engine for another Tranmere ferry, **Mersey**, followed in 1819. Both the Tranmere ferries were built in Liverpool, by Dawson & Pearson. In the following year, the Portuguese packet **Conde de Palmella** was completed by the Liverpool builder Mottershead & Hayes, with engines by Fawcetts erected on board in Liverpool.

The earliest steamships had been built around 1812, with the Clyde taking the lead, but they were a little later reaching the Mersey. The earliest Mersey steamships were used for river ferry services, to Runcorn and Tranmere. Inevitably it took longer before shipowners were willing to hazard regular sailings to sea by steamships. The first cross-channel steamship to reach the Mersey was **Waterloo**, which began a regular

service between Belfast and Liverpool in July 1819. The start of William Fawcett's expansion into engines for seagoing ships occurred in 1821, with the delivery of 2 x 24 HP engines for **Cambria**, which was the first steamship to sail between Liverpool and North Wales. Her destination was Bagillt, on the River Dee, and she maintained that connection until 1825, when she was sold to London owners. The following year saw engines for no less than six British steamships, including three, **St. Patrick**, **St. George** and **Prince Llewellyn**, for the newly formed Saint George Steam Packet Co., which remained a customer until 1836. The other British ships were **Albion**, a partner for **Cambria**, **Duke of Lancaster**, to sail from Liverpool to Lancaster and Ulverston, and **Duke of Beaufort**, for the Bristol Channel. The first two ships for the Saint George Steam Packet Co. were used for a service across the Irish Sea, to Dublin and on to Bristol - William Fawcett's first British cross-channel ships. The same year also saw several orders from France, and one from Portugal. The following year, 1823, produced fewer orders, but they included one for engines for a ship, **Henry Bell**, to sail between Liverpool and Glasgow, the first time that a Fawcett engine had regularly sailed into waters dominated by Clydeside engineering. Any shortfall in 1823's orders was fully compensated in 1824, with orders for eight sets of engines for British ships. Two of these orders were placed by Charles Wye Williams, the founder of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Co., for the new company's first two ships, **City of Dublin** and **Town of Liverpool**. He was to be William Fawcett's best customer until 1845. There were two further orders from the Saint George Steam Packet Co., including a new set of engines for **Emerald Isle**, which had only been completed in 1823, but with unsatisfactory engines not made by William Fawcett. The Post Office also featured for the first time, with an order for engines for one of its Holyhead mail packets.

The year 1825 saw further progress, in particular with overseas orders, which included a Dutch service between Zeeland and Rotterdam, an Italian service from Trieste, probably to Venice, and a Brazilian coastal service. The latter ship, **Britannia**, was built in Liverpool, by John William Haselden. The year was also notable for William Fawcett's first British ship to trade overseas, **Telica**, which was intended for service in the Bay of Panama, but soon went to India. The following year, 1826, had a record number of marine engine orders - no less than 26, including 11 for British owners. One notable order in 1828 was for **William Fawcett**, which was intended for the trade between Dublin and London. Later she was to achieve fame as the first ship in the fleet of the P&O company, and this ship is sometimes erroneously confused with the Mersey ferry of the same name, which was completed in 1829, also with engines by William Fawcett.

There is no doubt that, by the late 1820s, William Fawcett was the dominant force in engine building for ships in the central section of the Irish Sea; in an 1829 list of steamships, there were 27 sea-going steamships registered at Liverpool, of which 17 had engines by William Fawcett. In addition, another 14 ships with his engines were registered at Beaumaris, Bristol, Newport, Chepstow, Lancaster, Campbeltown, Belfast, Dublin, Waterford and Cork.

Orders from France, primarily Bordeaux and Nantes, were placed regularly during this period, and 1829 saw the first of a series of orders by the French Government, for a ship to be built at Rochefort. In the following year, orders were placed for engines for

two ships intended for the mail service between Toulon and Corsica, followed by engines for a third in 1833. Also in 1833, the French Government ordered three sets of engines, including two for mail ships between Calais and Dover. Further orders from this source followed until 1841. Another French order, in 1834, was for two ships to sail between Le Havre and Hamburg.

One very notable ship was **Garryowen**, whose engines were built by William Fawcett in 1834. She was only the third ship to be built by the new shipbuilder John Laird, and was particularly interesting for being a very early iron ship. She was intended for service on the Shannon estuary, from Limerick. After she had arrived there, she was used by the Admiralty to investigate the behaviour of compasses in iron ships. The Shannon is very exposed, and in January 1839 **Garryowen** broke away from her moorings at Kilrush and went aground. It is reported that it was only the strength of her iron hull and bulkheads that prevented her from becoming a wreck. After her withdrawal from the Shannon service, she returned to Liverpool, where her engines were removed in 1866. She was then sent out to West Africa, to be used as a hulk. Until the development of his own engine works, John Laird was to be a regular customer of Fawcett, Preston.

In the early years of the business, the marine engines were built for river, coastal and cross-channel ships. With the development of transatlantic steamships in the late 1830's, Fawcett, Preston gained a new source of business. The firm's first transatlantic vessel was **Royal William**, which had been built in 1837 for the City of Dublin Company's Liverpool-Kingstown mail service. The City of Dublin Steam Packet Co. was involved in the establishment of the Transatlantic Steamship Co., which ordered two ships. The first of these two ships was **Liverpool**, which did not have Fawcett, Preston engines, but, before **Liverpool** entered service in 1838, the City of Dublin company despatched **Royal William** on three transatlantic voyages. **Liverpool** then entered transatlantic service, but soon afterwards both she and the second ship were sold to P&O, so that it could extend its service on to Alexandria. The second ship had engines by Fawcett, Preston, and was to have been named **United States**, but was given the name **Oriental** by P&O. A contemporary transatlantic steamship also with engines by Fawcett, Preston was **President**, owned by the British & American Steam Navigation Co. Unfortunately, she disappeared in March 1841, during her third crossing from New York, and no trace of her, or of her crew and passengers, was ever found. This seemed to mark the end of Fawcett Preston's transatlantic ambitions. Future orders for ocean-going ships were for other routes, and the company never developed the same degree of dominance that it had built up in the short-sea trades in the 1820's.

Following **Oriental**, P&O placed further orders with Fawcett, Preston. **Lady Mary Wood** (1841) was followed by two highly significant ships, **Hindustan** and **Bentinck** in 1842. P&O had developed a successful mail service to Alexandria, and had ambitions for a service to India. In those days, before the building of the Suez Canal, this involved passengers in an overland journey across Egypt, followed by an uncomfortable passage in the inferior ships of the East India Company. P&O ordered these two ships to operate from Suez to Calcutta, as the shorter route to Bombay was a monopoly of the East India Company. This service established the basis of P&O as it

operated for many years until the second half of the twentieth century. Further P&O ships with Fawcett engines were **Malta** (1845), **Nubia** (1852) and **Alma** (1853), in addition to three ships purchased second-hand by P&O in 1852 and 1855.

Fawcett, Preston's first set of engines for the Royal Navy was built in 1846, for **HMS Inflexible**, and there were occasional naval orders in later years. However, the firm never became a major naval engine builder, and most of its naval orders were placed during the two world wars.

Around this time, a major change in the nature of the business can be seen. The last engines for the City of Dublin Steam Packet Co. were for the auxiliary screw steamships **Emerald** and **Diamond** in 1845. After this, there were very few orders for Irish Sea ships. The reason almost certainly lies in the growth of iron shipbuilding and the failure of Liverpool's traditional wooden shipbuilders to adapt. As a result, those builders lost this market to builders in other parts of the country, who did not order Fawcett, Preston engines. A further problem was the tendency of iron shipbuilders to develop their own engine works. More modern Mersey shipbuilders, who lacked their own engine works, did emerge on the Mersey, but their ships were normally not Irish Sea ships.

The orders from John Laird peaked between 1851 and 1855, when he was responsible for almost all of Fawcett, Preston's marine orders. His orders included passenger liners - five for the (British) South American & General Steam Navigation Co., all of which were sold to French owners, two for P&O, one for the (British) Canadian Steam Navigation Co., three for the French company Messageries Impériales, the predecessor of Messageries Maritimes, which also bought two of the ships sold by the South American & General Steam Navigation Co. and two for a Spanish company, which sold them before completion to French owners. Another two sets of engines, in 1852, were for **Faith** and **Forerunner**, the first ships in the fleet of the African SteamShip Co., which later became Elder Dempster Lines.

After the cessation of orders from John Laird, the next few years saw Fawcett, Preston with few orders for marine engines, illustrating the dangers to a business of relying too heavily on a single customer. However, the situation changed radically with the outbreak of the American Civil War. Fawcett, Preston was greatly involved in supporting the Confederates, building engines for their commerce raiders and blockade-runners. The latter were ships ordered for service into southern ports, often from Nassau, taking in war supplies and bringing out cotton; they needed high speeds to avoid capture by Federal warships. Fawcett, Preston's first such ship was **Oreto** (1861), which was renamed **Florida** after delivery. The US Government made many protests while this ship was being built, but was unable to stop her delivery. **Alexandra** (1862) fared worse, being caught up in British Government politics, and was seized illegally; it took a year's legal action to secure her release, after which she was named **Ann**. In total, there appear to have been fourteen such ships for which engines were supplied by Fawcett, Preston. Blockade runners ran high risks when attempting to carry out their duties, but **Lelia** was particularly unfortunate in sinking off the Mersey on 14th January 1865, on her delivery voyage, taking with her the son of William C. Miller, her builder.

By the end of the civil war, Fawcett, Preston seems to have had the opportunity to seek out new orders, and there was a good number of them from 1865 onwards. Initially, most of the orders were from overseas, but there was an increasing number placed by iron shipbuilders on the Mersey and by local tug owners. Fawcett, Preston's first order for compound engines was dated 1868, for Edward Glynn's **Zoulla**. This opened up a further source of business, and a number of ships were taken in hand to compound their engines. By 1870, overseas orders had virtually ceased, and the business came almost entirely from local shipbuilders, together with replacement engines. In the latter case, a particularly fruitful relationship was established with the Lamport & Holt Line, which sent eight ships for re-engining between 1871 and 1887. Another local shipping company, Frederick Leyland & Co., was an even better customer, with nine ships receiving new engines between 1887 and 1901. Steam engine technology continued to advance, and the next development was the triple expansion engine. Fawcett, Preston built its first engine of this type in 1887 for Thomas Royden's **Indra**, but had also undertaken a conversion of the engines of **Benguela**, owned by the British and African Steam Navigation Co., from compound to triple expansion earlier in the same year.

By 1890, the marine engine building business was nearly at an end, with engine orders for new ships heavily outnumbered by replacement engines for existing ships. There was a slight revival in 1896, when the shipbuilder Harland & Wolff, of Belfast, which normally built its own engines, sub-contracted the engines for two ships, **Monmouth** and **Manhattan**, to Fawcett, Preston. This was followed by an order for engines for two warships, **HMS Bramble** and **HMS Britomart**. This might have been viewed as the start of a revival, but was in fact virtually the end. These two warships marked the end of shipbuilding within the City of Liverpool, thus removing a major source of engine orders. There were two orders for engine alterations in 1898, and one in 1899 for replacement engines for the former City of Dublin vessel **Leitrim**, which was being converted for use as a self-propelled grain elevator at Gloucester. There were two orders in 1901 and one in 1903. The final order, which was for a steam launch for Chile, came in 1904.

The First World War saw a revival of marine engine building, with orders from the British and French Admiralties, and from the Chester shipbuilder J. Crichton & Co., also for the Admiralty. After that, marine engine building ceased again until 1942, when the Admiralty ordered fifteen engines. However, the last four in the series were cancelled. This marked the final end of marine engine building by Fawcett, Preston, although the company continued in business making other types of engines.

It is known that at least seven, and probably eight, ships received Fawcett Preston engines which were transferred from an earlier ship; since identification of these engines is particularly difficult, there could have been more, and this may explain some of the mystery engines shown in shipping registers as coming from Fawcett, Preston.

These transfers led to some remarkable examples of longevity for the engines involved. The longest lasting example is of **James Watt**, which was built in 1824, and went out to Australia in 1836. She was broken up in 1847, when her engines were transferred to the locally built paddle steamer **Eagle**. The latter was not broken up until

1893, giving these early steam engines a life of nearly 60 years. Perhaps the most interesting story of engine replacements concerns the Sydney ferry **Manly** of 1896. As her name implies, she served on the ferry service from Sydney to Manly, a passage which takes about 30 minutes, and which is repeated regularly throughout the day, all year round. By the time **Manly** was withdrawn in 1924, her engines had already seen 28 years of good use. However, they were then transferred to the Solomon Islands vessel **Durour**, replacing her existing diesel engines. This ship had been built in the Netherlands in 1914, and had already been re-built once at another Dutch shipyard, in 1920. Before her purchase for the Solomon Islands service, she had been owned by a French company, but was registered in Monaco - perhaps an early example of tax avoidance. **Durour** lasted until 1937, and her end was one which could never have been imagined. On 29th May 1937, she was on a slipway at Rabaul, when a volcano on the nearby Vulcan Island erupted. **Durour** was totally covered on one side by volcanic ash, which set her alight and whose acid content caused severe damage to her hull and machinery. An earthquake which accompanied the eruption changed the shoreline of the harbour, leaving her 200 yards from the water. In the circumstances, it is hardly surprising that she was declared a constructive total loss. The engines had given nearly 40 years" service, and it is interesting to speculate how many more years would have remained for them if fate had not intervened.

Looking back on the history of the company as a marine engine builder, it is clear that its best times were in its early days, when it achieved dominance in the Irish and coastal trades from Liverpool. However, it failed to capitalise on its position when ocean going steamships came into fashion. With the growth of engine building by shipbuilders, and the cessation of shipbuilding in Liverpool, the marine engine business gradually entered into an irreversible decline, although the company continued to manufacture steam engines for other purposes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SOURCES

I am particularly grateful to the Board of Trustees and the staff of the National Museums and Galleries Liverpool (Merseyside Maritime Museum) for their help in making a wide variety of records available to me, including in particular the Fawcett, Preston engine books themselves. I am also grateful for the help willingly given by the staff of Ayrshire Archives, the Cumbria Record Office, Gwynedd Archives, Gwent Archives, the Suffolk Record Office, Liverpool City Library, the Manx Museum, the National Archives (Kew), the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, the Irish National Archives, Customs & Excise at Cork and the Vaughan Evans Library at the Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney. I have benefited greatly from the help given by Walter Lewis of the University of the Great Lakes. Without their assistance, this information would have been much less complete. I apologise if I have inadvertently omitted any other source of help. Needless to say, any errors are entirely my fault.

Editor's note: The author provided extensive details of his source documents and references, which can be provided on request to the editor by e-mail at: shipsofmann@blueyonder.co.uk

THE "RADIO ROOM" AT FORT PERCH ROCK

By LNRS Member W.G.Williamson

A chance for ex Radio Officers to wallow in nostalgia is on offer in the old round room of Fort Perch Rock at New Brighton. The former searchlight control room with superb views of the entrance to the Mersey has been transformed in recent years. In place of World War II searchlight control equipment and switches to explode mines in the river during expected German naval attack the room is now crammed with post war civilian radio gear.

In reality not one but three radio stations are on display, exhibiting Merchant Navy marine communication equipment from the early 1960s, the mid 1970s and the early 1980s. The majority of this equipment is in full working order, thanks to a dedicated group of enthusiasts who have spent a great deal of time installing and fault finding on the gear. Thus the items on display represent probably the finest collection of working radiocommunication equipment in the country at the present time. The three stations are being preserved as a tribute to the many thousands of Radio Officers who served at sea during the hundred-year period their profession existed. In addition to the live equipment there are a number of static displays, again covering all aspects of the Radio Officers' profession.

The oldest of the ships' radio stations on display is located to the right after entering the round room. This particular station dates from the 1950s into the 1960s and shows how radio stations were laid out, with each item of equipment mounted individually in its own space. Featured in this Marconi station is an *Oceanspan VII* main transmitter whose colourful control switches will be familiar to many seafarers who sailed in this era. The main receiver is the very popular *Atalanta*. A *Salvor III* transmitter and a *Sentinel* receiver represent emergency equipment. The latter were both operated from a battery supply. Completing this installation is an automatic alarm called the *Lifeguard N*, an auto-keying device called the *Autokey N* plus an aerial switching unit and battery-charging system. The all-important Morse key is also represented. With this set up the Radio Officer could communicate to anywhere in the world using the high frequency Commonwealth Area Scheme. The world was divided into a number of areas and the RO would contact the nearest station such as Halifax in Canada or Sydney in Australia and send his message. This would be then put on the international telex system for onward routing to the UK.

The second radio station on display is one manufactured by the Kelvin Hughes Company. This consists of the high-powered *Zealand* MF/HF transmitter with aerial switch at the top. This equipment provided worldwide communications via Morse code, radiotelephony or radiotelex. The console unit associated with this transmitter contains the reserve transmitter, main and reserve receivers, battery charging unit and associated equipment. This equipment is typical of a KH station of the 1980 - 1990 period.

The final station is again a Marconi station dating from 1970 with a characteristic

console lay out. This unit contains a battery charging unit, aerial switching unit, main and reserve receivers, reserve transmitter, an automatic alarm and an auto-keying device. To the right of the console is the associated transmitter, the *Commandant*. This was a powerful set operating on medium and high frequencies with facilities to send in Morse code or in radiotelephony mode. Communications from the ship would be routed to Portishead Radio direct using the high frequency bands from anywhere at sea.

Other equipment on display is a Sailor battery charging unit and a Marconi *Lodestar III* automatic direction finder. Smaller ships used radiotelephones mainly for medium-range medium frequency (MF) communications. A Marconi *Marlin* is an example of this type of equipment.

A Sailor VHF radio was used to talk to other ships, pilot stations or harbourmasters etc over distances of up to about 25/30 miles. Live signals on Channel 12 VHF allow visitors to listen in to communications between ships and port control in the Liverpool area.

A commercial company has installed a live radar set in the round room for demonstration to prospective clients. This means that general visitors can see the radar in action showing a plan view of the approaches to the Mersey and observe ships moving on the river.

Another small room on the level below the round room has been designated as a Merchant Navy memorial room. This contains a number of memorabilia, photographs and documents relating to Radio Officers and the Battle of the Atlantic. It also contains examples of emergency lifeboat radio equipment from the past up to the present time.

The bronze memorial plaque listing all the International Marine Radio Company's Radio Officers killed during the Second World War was at risk of being scrapped. This plaque was saved by former IMR employees and has now found a permanent home at Fort Perch Rock. As space in the round room was limited the plaque had to be mounted in the café.

The origins of the fort itself go back to 1803. At that time the Liverpool merchants were greatly concerned about a possible invasion by the French during the turbulent times after the French Revolution. They put forward the idea of a fort at New Brighton to guard the river approaches to the city. Naturally there were disputes about how it was to be financed and consequently construction didn't get under way until 1826 and it was completed three years later. It was built out of red sandstone blocks on a base of sandstone rocks, confusingly known as the Black Rocks. Designed by a Captain John Sikes Kitson of the Royal Engineers it had room for 100 men plus officers with adequate provisions and armaments. It had 18 guns, sixteen of which were 32-pounders and they faced the Rock Channel which was the main entrance for shipping to the Mersey at that time.

During the First World War an incident occurred causing the guns at Fort Perch Rock to be fired in anger. The Rock Channel had been declared closed at the start of the war so when a Norwegian sailing ship came up the channel she was fired upon. Unfortunately the gunners misjudged the elevation on their gun and the shell flew over the ship and landed in Hightown on the other side of the Mersey. Apparently an irate householder collected the shell, put it in a bucket and took it to the Merseyside Defence HQ and demanded an explanation! A second shell was fired across the Norwegian bow, this time with less elevation. Unfortunately this shell hit the bows of an Allen liner anchored in the river. The captain of the Norwegian vessel when eventually challenged about his ship's use of the closed channel replied that he did not know that a war had started.

The War Office sold the fort to a private individual in 1975 and it is now used as a small museum and recreational facility. The current owner's father was an aviation enthusiast and various other items on display were recovered from aircraft shot down and wrecked during World War II.

As with many projects of this type the final results could not have been achieved without the assistance of many people and organisations. A small group of dedicated volunteers have wired up the equipment, repaired and restored it to working order after many years of lying in various storage places and warehouses. Some financial assistance was obtained from the Radio Officers Association to provide benches that would hold the equipment. From time to time local amateur radio enthusiasts hold events at the radio room in the fort and communicate on amateur bands with other enthusiasts around the world.

This small privately owned museum is open to the public most weekends and weekly during the summer season. Local radio enthusiasts volunteer to man the display and demonstrate the equipment to the public. They also tell of what the Radio Officers duties entailed. As many are ex mariners they can draw on their own seafaring experiences to give visitors an idea of what life was like in the Merchant Navy. An activity that is particularly popular with the children visiting the site is trying their hand at sending Morse code. An audio amplifier has been rigged up to a Morse key so visitors can hear their attempts at sending Morse.

For further information readers can have a look at the website at:

www.fortperchrockmarinradio.co.uk

CALCUTTA

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

One of the most significant changes in world travel in recent years has been the availability and popularity of holiday destinations hitherto not considered as being either suitable or popular to merit promotion.

Among these more unusual destinations, unusual that is to the casual holidaymaker, is the continent of India, hitherto possibly considered as an outpost frequented by the backpacker determined to rough it and engage more closely with the native inhabitants, or as a more distant posting in the line of work.

Whilst the attractions of the Indian continent can well merit examination, and have a charm not found in many other locations, it has to be said that certain areas of the sub continent are not what one would normally choose as a holiday destination.

With the exception of younger and otherwise disenfranchised sons of well connected families eager to make their fame and fortune. Also career civil servants, and those of the armed forces posted to India, who for long had laboured to stabilise the chaos prevailing in the vast nation amidst the myriad of factions and overlords, and brought some order and discipline, albeit based on British precepts of conduct. Most of the impressions gained previously of the vast continent by visitors were through the eyes of those serving in the Royal Navy and Merchant Navy.

The reason for the final choice of the site for the town cannot be definitely established. It is not at the head of the waterway as the Hooghly extends some 50 kilometres further upstream. The first settlement was established on the east bank, at that time three villages existed there, and it was from one of them known as Kali-kata. dedicated to the goddess Kali, that the name Calcutta was derived, now called Kolkata.

Calcutta could never have conditions favourable for the establishment of a major seaport, lying far inland on a tortuous waterway marked by shifting sandbars and shoals, and was only navigable by constant dredging. Being the westerly tributary of the joint delta of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers, the head extends some 300 kilometres from the sea and is over 400 kilometres wide with swampy land extending 100 kilometres inland.

The British occupation of Calcutta was started in 1640, replacing earlier incursions by the Portuguese and Dutch. The establishment there of the seat of the East India Company in 1707 confirmed its status as an important trading post. After a period of unrest and insurrection it was recaptured by Robert Clive in 1775, who built Fort William, a 3 kilometre octagonal fort. To provide a clear arc of fire from cannon the surrounding forest was cleared to give open ground, thus were the origins of the open Maidan, now a sports ground and racing track well known to many seafarers.

The river was originally bridged by pontoons until replaced by the iron girders of the distinctive Howrah Bridge in 1943.

Given its developing prominence as a port it is perhaps surprising that there were no

major fixed installations along its banks. From the earliest days ships moored in midstream along the 25 kilometre stretch of the city, cargo being handled by lighters for onward distribution or collection.

A few wooden piers were built along the shore south of Fort William after 1870, followed by the construction of a 823 metre long by 183 metre wide wet dock at Kidderpore in 1893. A second, and larger at 1370 metres by 122 metres, was later added as an extension.

Another dock was built in 1928 at 2 kilometres downstream, called the King George Dock, now named Netaji Subhas, and some small riverside jetties to take smaller ships were added. The oil terminal is at Budge Budge some 20 kilometres downstream.

On joining a shipping company with a long standing tradition of trading to India, it was always at the back of one's mind that the arrival in India, to a first tripper at least, marked somehow a defining point in a rite of passage. Its various attractions, and also the more negative aspects, were long imprinted in one's mind on the outward voyage by the more experienced shipmates. These were inevitably embellished in the telling, and truth to tell, the anticipation was tempered with some trepidation as to what would be one's reaction.

As a taste of what was to come, arrival at first port of call at Port Said, gave one the first sniff of the mystic east. The air of odours, heat and dust assailed the senses and being wafted a long distance offshore, and could be savoured well before landfall.

This was to be a foretaste of what was an entirely new world to a first tripper to the east. The port which contributed to the greatest delay and disruption to cargo discharge and loading was Calcutta. Starting with an often long delay whilst, waiting offshore at Sandheads for a pilot to take the ship up the tortuous river passage with its many shifting sandbanks to the port itself which was about 80 miles inland. On many occasions we joined up to a dozen or more ships lying at anchor at this exposed location, and during the Monsoon season in July with its high winds we often had to steam around, to dodge ships which were dragging anchors or had otherwise neglected to post a vigilant anchor watch. In fact we spend 28 days at anchor on this exposed location, and it was only after returning home on leave that I learned that a lad from my home village was R/O on a nearby Nourse ship.

The pilot cutter was a fairly large handsome white painted vessel, usually built by Lobnitz of Renfrew, and there was little warning when your turn came. A small powered open boat would be seen to approach the ship and this would be the first indication that it was our turn to travel up to Calcutta.

These pilot boats also performed a welcome duty in that when a Brocklebank ship was leaving the port they passed over incoming mail with the Pilot on their outward passage which was then delivered on an ad hoc basis to any Brocklebank ships waiting at anchor whenever they felt inclined. Even when docked at Calcutta we seemed to be often at the whim of some distant authority, one day at this berth, and another at a different one for no apparent reason. Shifting ship was inevitably done on Sunday, necessitating full sea watches and engine power, thus negating the chance of a day off. The fabled motto of the company whilst in port was "six days thou shalt labour, and on the seventh thou shalt shift ship"! All of which meant that sea watches had to be manned for these duties.

As an example, a seven month voyage I made in the late 1950's included almost 80% of that time in port, discharging, loading or shifting ship, the actual steaming time on passage being the least proportion of the total voyage. Our cargo consisted of a variety of goods, mainly manufactured, but often basic steel sections and other hardware, returning with gunny, jute, cotton and other staple goods, a pattern of trade long vanished today. One's general impression of Calcutta was always of total chaos, an impression which was confirmed by the seemingly never ending crowds at all points of the compass around the dock area. No matter what time one was on the move it always seemed that a football crowd had just emerged. This phenomenon was especially noticeable when the traffic was held up by the opening of a bridge to allow the ship to pass through into the docks. This delay seemed to ensure that an amazing number of pedestrians and motorised traffic of all varieties were penned up at each side of the barriers whatever the hour day or night.

This is not altogether surprising, as in the late 20th century it had the highest recorded population density in the world, up to 30,000 inhabitants per square kilometre. The sew-sew and book wallahs were always welcome. The former could literally make up a made-to-measure suit from a couple of buttons, and tailored boiler suits were a novelty to we engineers. The book wallah often offered some rather, at that time any rate, risqué publications and illustrations for the discerning reader! I am sure many readers will have their own memories of the port, some perhaps not really suitable for the retelling.

The berth in the open Hooghly River some distance downriver from the massive steel structure of the Howrah Bridge was the most trying, especially in the Monsoon season. The bore tides passed up and down twice a day which involved some very protracted mooring arrangements. Lengths of anchor cable had to be disconnected from the forward anchor chains and dragged aft to the stern from the forecastle, and ranged aft to be shackled to mooring buoys in the river to make sure the ship was securely anchored fore and aft. Having long links with the port, Brocklebanks were wise to the problems and on most ships had fitted hawse pipe openings in each quarter to run the cables out to the buoys. However this had not extended to the provision of additional chains aft for this purpose. On our ship, long lengths of chain had still to be unshackled and brought aft from the forecastle.

Depending on the strength of the tide surge the ship would rear up as much as six feet as if in the grip of some gigantic hand. The oncoming wave could be clearly seen approaching on the relative calm surface of the river, a sensation which was especially unnerving. I recall once seeing a small native craft being swept downriver along the side of the ship to become trapped under the foot of our gangway. Curiously even the birds sensed something was amiss, as there was usually a deathly calm preceding the passage of the wave.

The other main berths were within the Kidderpore Dock system, either alongside or anchored in the middle of the dock. When moored in mid stream a small sampan type native boat, complete with its oarsman, would be laid on to take the ship's company ashore and aboard on request. This craft was propelled by what we would call sculling by a single oar at the stern, and I used to cause some amusement when I would take the oar and scull as I had done many times previously as a boy in the fishing village of

Hamnavoe in Shetland. Whenever I did this the native oarsman used to ham it up by reclining on the small rattan shelter with his feet up, much to the amazement of the dockworkers and the boatmen on the other craft assigned for the same purpose for other ships. To see the Burra Sahib doing the donkey work for a change was a sight to see!

The enclosed docks were reached from the river by locks and through a series of bridges. These were lifted or swung to let ships through, and during the time it took for a ship to pass through a volume of traffic would build up on each side of the waterway waiting to cross, both on foot and on wheels of all description, which can only be likened to a football crowd. This scene was repeated each time any traverse took place during the twenty four hours cycle; literally a city that never sleeps. Calcutta was a fascinating place to the sailor, a total contrast of affluence and dire poverty. It was said that a third of the population was born, lived, and died on the pavement, and judging by the divergence between the levels of affluence and dire poverty this was no false claim.

As Merchant Navy Officers we were somewhat privileged, and had an entrée to various facilities perhaps not open to all. The excellent swimming club was an example of this. Any white person from whatever country was welcome, but nobody of darker persuasion was welcome, even if it was their own country. All for 14 rupees for a fortnight, the equivalent of just over £1. It was quite an experience to see an Indian "boy", often an elderly person with grown up family, running attendance on a young child in response to "boy, come here and dry my feet, or bring me the air mail edition of the London Times". Chowringhee was the main street through Calcutta, and as such was bounded by many large buildings, including hotels and cinemas, which incidentally had a no-smoking ban in force as far back as the mid fifties.

Many of the public buildings, such as the Queen Victoria Memorial building especially, were large and impressive edifices, a relic of the British Raj, but some were showing signs of somewhat faded grandeur. Off the main thoroughfares there was the inevitable warren of narrow back streets, the overall impression was one of a seemingly constant state of chaos and noise, with foot and vehicular traffic going in all directions, battered taxis, brightly coloured buses with passengers hanging on outside, horse and peddler pulled gharries, interspersed incongruously by spindle shanked cattle wandering in and out of the melee. Our usual mode of transport was using taxis, usually the locally assembled derivative of a Morris Oxford, comparatively cheap and not the relative extravagance in other countries.

I well recall one occasion when three of us were being driven back to the ship late one evening; all was going well until the vehicle ran over a large hole in the road, with the engine then coming to a sudden stop. The driver went out and lifted the bonnet lid and tried all the usual remedies without success. After a while we went out to have a look, and it was then that we noticed that the engine mounts had broken off and the whole engine had dropped about six inches, with all the spark plug leads having been sheared clean off where they crossed a bracket. Another memorable ride was when a few of us decided to travel in a horse driven gharri. However we were one too many for the seating arrangements and the unfortunate R/O ended up hung up by his elbows down between the shafts of the gharri with his feet just touching the road. Luck would have it that he had the shortest legs amongst us, and had great difficulty in keeping pace as he pattered

along between the shafts to the great amusement of passers-by. His precarious situation was not helped by the fact that his face was right up against the stern of the horse!

As stated, the month of July was especially trying in the port, as being the height of the monsoon season when the humidity and temperature were especially high and the general climate was decidedly not conducive to heavy manual labour. Unfortunately this port of call was usually where the majority of the engine room maintenance was carried out, the majority of which on the **Maihar** consisted of unbolting, checking and then re-assembling massive lumps of slippery and hot steel on the main engine, or contending with the savage heat radiated from the surface of the boilers when overhauling valves and other steam components.

Luckily our Chief and 2nd Engineer had some compassion, and they amended our usual working pattern in port of 0800-1600 hours to the more bearable 0600-1400 to escape the worst of the heat. This also allowed a few hours ashore in the afternoon for all except the one Engineer, detailed as "day aboard" on a rota. This ensured that there was always someone qualified to deal with any emergency aboard when sea watches were not set with the engine room fully manned. If he was lucky he would spend an otherwise peaceful 24 hours, but if cargo was being worked then it was odds on that some emergency would occur either in the engine room or on deck with the cargo winches.

With three Senior Watchkeepers on board it was a boon to have your day aboard in port on Friday, as this ensured a couple of days' peace after work as day work stopped at noon on Saturday for the weekend unless moving ship or other such manoeuvres. Nevertheless, ones off-duty relaxation aboard was usually determined by the number of Brocklebank ships in port at the same time. It was not unusual to have five of the company's ships berthed simultaneously, and visiting former shipmates and making new acquaintances was the norm, all of which usually resulted in some merriment aboard or ashore.

All a memory of past times which, I am sure, will remain with those who visited the port in that era.



S.S. Maihar, author's own painting

Editor's note: Maihar was built for Brocklebanks by Russell & Co., Port Glasgow in 1917. She had survived two World Wars by the time she was re-boilered in 1957 and continued in their service until sold in 1962. Becoming the Lebanese flagged Capella she made her final voyage, arriving at a Japanese breakers' yard in May that same year.



The **Crystal Symphony** photographed on the 27th June 2010 from the **Manannan** by the Editor.

The **Crystal Symphony** entered service in May 1995. She was built by Kvaerner Masa –Yards in Turku, Finland and is owned and operated by Crystal Cruises. She has a gross tonnage of 51,044, a length of 781 feet, a beam of 99 feet and a draught of 24.9 feet. She has 12 decks, 8 of which are accessible to passengers and has a service speed of 20 knots. She carries 922 passengers and 545 crew.

The ship has had three major refits, the most recent being in 2009 which cost \$25 million.

This year she has cruised the Indian Ocean in April, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean in May before coming to Britain in June. For the rest of the summer of 2010 she will cruise in the Baltic before embarking during the winter on a 19 day Panama Canal cruise departing from New York. She will then sail on the west coast of Mexico and cross the Pacific to the Hawaiian Islands,



The **Aida Aura** at the CLT 10th July 2010. (Adrian Sweeney)

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Liverpool Seaways in her new DFDS livery, in the Mersey, September 2010. (Adrian Sweeney)

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Maritime Archive Library Christmas Closure

As is normal annual practice, the Maritime Archive Library will be closed for stocktaking over the Christmas and New Year period. Members should note the final Monday session will be on the 20th December 2010, re-opening on the 24th January 2011.

FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE

A summary of a paper given to the Society by Tommy Molloy (ITF Inspector) on Thursday 9th September 2010.

The International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) is unique amongst international trade union organisations in having a powerful influence on wages and conditions of one particular group of workers, namely seafarers working on ships flying Flags of Convenience (FOCs). FOCs provide a means of avoiding labour regulations in the country of ownership and often become a vehicle for paying low wages and forcing long hours of work and unsafe working conditions. Since FOC ships have no real nationality, they are beyond the reach of any single national seafarers' trade union.

The ITF has been obliged to take on internationally the role traditionally exercised by national trade unions, to organise and negotiate on behalf of FOC crews. For fifty years the ITF has been waging a vigorous campaign against shipowners who abandon the flag of their own country in search of the cheapest possible crews and the lowest possible training and safety standards for their ships.

In defining an FOC, the Fair Practices Committee (FPC) takes as its most important criterion whether the nationality of the shipowner is the same as the nationality of the flag. In 1974, the ITF defined an FOC as:

Where beneficial ownership and control of a vessel is found to lie elsewhere than in the country of the flag the vessel is flying, the vessel is considered as sailing under a flag of convenience.

Over the past fifty years, the ITF's maritime affiliates have developed a set of policies which seek to establish minimum acceptable standards applicable to seafarers serving on FOC vessels. The policies form the basis of an ITF Standard Collective Agreement which sets the wages and working conditions for all crew on FOCs irrespective of nationality. It is the only agreement normally available to shipowners who run into industrial action. All FOC vessels covered by an ITF-acceptable agreement are issued with an ITF Blue Certificate by the ITF Secretariat, which signifies the ITF's acceptance of the wages and working conditions on board. About a quarter of all FOC vessels are currently covered by ITF agreements, thus giving direct protection to over 123,000 seafarers.

Compliance with ITF-registered agreements is monitored by a network of over 130 ITF inspectors (of which the author is one) in ports throughout the world. ITF inspectors are union officials working directly with the ITF. By inspecting FOC ships, they monitor the payment of wages and other social and employment conditions and, if necessary, take action to enforce ITF policy. In recent years the number of inspectors has doubled and they are now to be found in ports in every region of the world.

While the political campaign has not so far succeeded in preventing a constant growth in ships using FOC registers, the industrial campaign has succeeded in enforcing decent minimum wages and conditions on board nearly 5,000 FOC ships. In addition, the ITF has become the standard-bearer for exploited and mistreated seafarers, irrespective of nationality or trade union membership, throughout the world. Every year,

millions of dollars are recovered by the ITF and its affiliated unions in backpay and in compensation for death or injury on behalf of seafarers who have nowhere else to turn. The ITF's FPC takes into account the degree to which foreign-owned vessels are registered and fly the country flag, as well as the following additional criteria, when declaring a register to be an FOC:

- the ability and willingness of the flag state to enforce international minimum standards on its vessels, including respect for basic human and trade union rights, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining with bona fide trade unions
- the social record as determined by the degree of ratification and enforcement of ILO Conventions and Recommendations
- the safety and environmental record as revealed by the ratification and enforcement of IMO Conventions and revealed by Port State Control inspections, deficiencies and detentions

The ITF believes that there should be a genuine link between the real owner of a vessel and the flag that vessel flies, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). There is no genuine link in the case of FOC registries. In many cases, these flags are not even run from the country concerned, eg the Liberian Register is run from New York.

Once a ship is registered under an FOC, many shipowners then recruit the cheapest labour they can find, pay minimal wages and cut costs by lowering standards of living and working conditions for the crew.

Globalisation has helped to fuel this rush to the bottom. In an increasingly fierce competitive shipping market, each new FOC registry is forced to promote itself by offering the lowest possible fees and the minimum of regulation. In the same way, ship owners are forced to look for the cheapest and least regulated ways of running their vessels in order to compete.

Seafarers who are employed on FOC ships are often denied their basic human rights, since FOC registers do not enforce minimum social standards. This is what makes the flag so attractive to shipowners. The home countries of the crew can do little to protect them because the laws that apply on board are those of the country of registration. As a result, most FOC seafarers are not members of a trade union and, for those who are, the union is often powerless to influence what happens on board. Seafarers are vital to us. They travel the globe with everything we need but they are an invisible labour force. What goes on at sea is mostly out of sight of regulators, so shipowners can get away with abusing seafarers' rights without detection.

In nearly 55 years of campaigning against FOCs, the ITF has developed a network of inspectors to investigate suspect ships and their reports reveal a catalogue of abuse of seafarers:

- very low wages
- unpaid wages
- poor on-board conditions

- inadequate food and lack of clean drinking water
- extended periods of work without proper rest

Many FOC vessels are older than the average age of the rest of the world fleet. Tens of thousands of seafarers endure miserable, life-threatening conditions on sub-standard vessels. Many of the detentions by Port State Control authorities involve ageing and badly-maintained FOC vessels that should never have sailed. Many of these ships deserve their title of “floating coffins”. Casualties are higher among FOC vessels, with typically in a year 63% of all losses being accounted for by just 13 FOC registers. The top five in terms of numbers of ships lost are all FOCs; Panama, Cyprus, St Vincent, Cambodia and Malta.

Poor safety practices and unsafe ships make seafaring one of the most dangerous of all occupations. It is estimated that there are over 2,000 deaths a year at sea. Accidents are frequent but for many shipowners the delivery of cargoes and the costs of any delay are their only concerns. Despite the hardships, many FOC seafarers are too frightened to complain. Unscrupulous manning agents circulate the names of seafarers who do complain to the ITF or PSC inspectors. It is common practice for a ship’s captain to write “ITF Troublemaker” in a seafarer’s discharge book. With such a mark on their record, a seafarer may never be employed again. Some seafarers have been jailed on returning home. With even more cheap sources of labour opening up, notably China, conditions and pay risk becoming worse. Seafarers on their own have little chance of winning compensation. A severed hand can ruin a life, end a seafaring career and rob a large extended family of a regular income. The ITF pursues these cases through the courts but often we must unravel a complex company structure before we can work out who has responsibility for the ship and its crew. Investigators attempting to check who owns certain ships acknowledge that the ship-owning structures of today are virtually impenetrable if the owner of a ship wishes to remain anonymous.

The ITF hears daily of crews owed large sums of money. Some crews simply aren’t paid. Those that are sometimes find that companies delay, or fail to make, payments to their families when they want to send money home. In many cases, months go by without any sign of money promised to seafarers. With no pay, they cannot even afford to escape and make their own way home. One of the most successful aspects of the ITF inspectors’ work is recovering back pay for seafarers, an average of some \$28 million a year. Many owners pay up promptly when challenged – they are fully aware of their responsibilities.

The ITF’s campaign against FOCs has resulted in better working and living conditions for seafarers of all nationalities. Without the ITF, there would be no protection and rights for thousands of seafarers today. Standardisation of working conditions is the ultimate goal and trade unions play a crucial role in achieving this. When national regulation can be so easily undermined by any unscrupulous company with branch offices in other countries, international trade unionism is essential. Without it, working conditions inevitably plummet.

SHARP AND WAID, SHIPOWNERS, by John Kelly.

The Douglas based businessmen Joseph Sharp and William Alfred Waid are almost forgotten today. However their coal merchant's business was very important to the Douglas community of just over 100 years ago. They also had the contract to supply coal to the Steam Packet's vessels in Douglas Harbour and their cargo boat, the **Sarah Blanche** was the most frequent visitor to Douglas Harbour in the year 1900 and possibly in many other years about that time. They were also involved in the local fishing industry and founded the first steam trawler owning company to be based in Douglas.

Joseph Sharp was born in Stockport in about 1853 and he came to live in Douglas with his wife Sarah and their two eldest children in about 1875 to become an agent in the coal trade.

William Alfred Waid was born in England in about 1861. He and his wife Blanche moved to Douglas during the early 1880s.

Sharp and Waid set up in business in about 1884 and their coal depot was in due course sited in Fort Street, Douglas, on the same site where the old Douglas hospital and dispensary had operated from 1850 to 1888, when it relocated to the present Manx Museum premises. The coal depot had a storage capacity of over 3,000 tons and an area of 1,020 square yards

On the 25th February 1889, the **S.S. Weston** was the first of two small cargo boats to be registered in Douglas for Sharp and Waid. She was purchased second hand and was built at South Shields in 1875 as a tug for the Bristol and Exeter Railway. She was absorbed into the Great Western Railway Company fleet in 1876 and was sold in about 1885 to W T Mackay and Company, Middlesbrough. She was an iron hulled vessel with a length of 107 feet, gross tonnage of 166 and a net tonnage of 93. When sailing light her forward draught was only three feet and when fully laden her aft draught was nine feet. Her small coal fired steam engine developed a mere 39 horse power. She was mainly used to import coal from Garston to Douglas but also imported coal to other Island ports including Peel for the Glenfaba brickworks and Port St. Mary for Ballacorkish Mines. She exported ore from Laxey to Bagillt on the River Dee in North Wales and also traded between off Island ports occasionally with other cargoes.

The **Weston** had a crew of six, comprising the master, engineer, mate, two able seamen and one fireman. There was no cook nor cabin boy. At the same time, as was common practise, the crew had to purchase their own food to cook and eat on the ship whilst it was at sea. The first master of the ship was a Robert Clugston of Fort Street Douglas who was paid £2/10s per week. He had been born at Rushen in 1864. The mate was Robert's older brother, Richard, born in Rushen in 1862. Robert would later command the company's second steamer. In 1890 Robert Clugston was succeeded as master by Thomas Crebbin, of Circular Road Douglas on a reduced wage of £2/5s per week. Captain Crebbin had been born in Rushen in 1863. As was commonplace at

that time neither Captain Clugston nor Captain Crebbin had professional maritime qualifications. Indeed the first Steam Packet Captain to hold a certificate was their longest serving master and fleet Commodore Alexander McQueen who joined the Company as a master in 1860 after it had been trading for thirty years. Captain McQueen retired in 1897 as the first master of the **Empress Queen**.

In December 1889, the small cargo steamer **St. Mary**, of Castletown, lost her propeller whilst steaming down the River Mersey in company with the **Weston**. The **Weston** towed the **St. Mary** to a graving dock in Liverpool for the fitting of a new propeller. Sharp and Waid intended to lodge a claim for their services.

In the early 1890s several unusual loads were carried on the **Weston**. On the 29th July 1890 she loaded 87 tons of ironwork for delivery to Ramsey for the construction of the new harbour swingbridge. On the 2nd July 1891 part of the Hercules crane, which had been used in the extension work on the Victoria Pier at Douglas arrived in Peel on the **Weston** to assist in the construction works for Peel breakwater.

As business increased, the small **Weston** could not cope with the traffic demands and on the 12th August 1891 Sharp and Waid's second, larger, cargo boat was launched. She was a twin screw coal burning steamer called **Sarah Blanche**. She was built at the yard of John Fullerton and Company, Paisley, Scotland and she was launched by Sarah Sharp. The vessel was named after Mrs. Sharp and Mrs. Waid. She was 130 feet long with a 21 foot beam and her compound engines could develop 55 horse power to give her a speed of 11 knots. Her gross tonnage was 254 with a net tonnage of 99. She was expected to carry about 240 tons of cargo. Her maximum aft draught when loaded was ten feet nine inches. She usually carried a crew of eight or nine to include a second engineer, a third seaman and occasionally a steward. As was common practise at that time the master, mate and engineers lived in the accommodation below and behind the bridge and the crew lived in the forecabin. **Sarah Blanche** had the distinction of being the first newly built cargo only steamship to be operated by a Douglas based shipowner.

On 16th September 1861 **Sarah Blanche** arrived in Douglas from Glasgow to unload her first cargo. Her first master was Robert Clugston, still on a wage of £2/10 per week! He would remain as her master for over ten years. On the 19th September she was registered in Douglas to Sharp and Waid and on the 21st September she departed from Douglas to load the first of her many cargoes from Garston on the Mersey. On 16th September 1861 it had been reported in the local press that all insular cargo steamers trading to Douglas were in port at the same time – the **Sarah Blanche**, the **Prince Edward** and the **St. Mary** (both owned by the Manx Steam Trading Company), the **Mermaid** (owned by the Port Soderick Steamship Company), and **Lady Loch** (owned by Messrs. Knox of Douglas). There were also six passenger ships in the harbour. It is not clear why the **Weston** was not included in the list. Perhaps she was trading off Island at that time.

Between April and June 1892 the **Sarah Blanche** was chartered to Messrs. Finn for the mackerel fishing season on the south west coast of Ireland. She was used to export fish from Baltimore and Kinsale to Milford Haven in Wales. A similar charter

took place between April and June 1893, when she conveyed fish from Castletownshend, Ireland, to Milford and Fleetwood. A third charter in 1896 saw her conveying fish from Crookhaven at the southern tip of Ireland to Milford and Fleetwood. The mackerel fishing season in Ireland had been pioneered in the mid 1860's by a Manxman, Robert Corrin of Knockaloe-beg. Within a few years some 800 vessels from the Isle of Man and other places were engaged in this fishing giving employment to over 6,000 fishermen. The last Manx vessels took part in the Kinsale fishing at the time of the First World War.

In April 1893, Sharp and Waid secured the very important contract to supply coal to the ships of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company in Douglas Harbour.

On the 24th August 1893 the **Sarah Blanche** was coaling the ships of the Steam Packet Company in Douglas Harbour when she collided with the 73 ton steamer **Galgorm Castle**, of Barrow, which was bringing a cargo of coal to Douglas. The latter ship sank at the entrance to the inner harbour. On the 26th August the disabled vessel was towed to the upper harbour by the **Weston**, where she was pumped out, her cargo was discharged and she was repaired.

Injuries to crew members and shore staff were quite rare but on the 30th November 1893 a William Dunn was struck by the coal tub whilst unloading the **Sarah Blanche** in Douglas and received a head injury. The coal tubs were large buckets which were filled manually with the cargo of coal in the hold of the vessel by gangs of men called coal heavers. They used large shovels for loading and levelling the coal. The filled tubs were lifted out of the hold and swung on to the quayside using the ship's derricks.

On the 3rd February 1894 Sharp and Waid commissioned Mr. Robert Knox, engineer and boat owner of the Lake, Douglas, to fit an electric light plant to the **Sarah Blanche**.

Two years later, Sharp and Waid diversified into owning steam trawlers. On the 19th February 1896 the 90 foot steam trawler **Snowdrop** was registered at Douglas to J. Sharp. Two weeks later, on the 2nd March 1896 the 80 foot trawler **Tudor Prince** was registered at Douglas for Manx fish merchant Daniel Flinn of Douglas and W.A. Waid. In January 1896 these three men together with Joseph Carr had formed the Douglas Steam Boat Trawl Company Ltd. and this Company purchased the two boats on the 17th February 1897. However things did not seem to work out and **Snowdrop** was sold the same month to French buyers and **Tudor Prince** was sold on 2nd April 1897 to Daniel Flinn and again on the 8th April to a Robert Knox.

As well as the **Snowdrop** and **Tudor Prince**, there were five other steam trawlers owned at Douglas during the 1880s and 1890s, these being the **Mermaid**, **Lady Loch**, **Rose Ann**, **Albatross** and **Skart**. **Mermaid** was built at Peel in 1888 as a pleasure steamer to operate from Douglas to Port Soderick. She was fitted out to become the Island's first steam trawler during the following winter in order to maximise her income out of season.

In November 1896 the **Weston** was sold to foreign owners. Thomas Crebbin

continued to be her master until the end of her service.

On the 29th January 1898 a John Douglas Quaggin was set alight by an exploding lamp in the cook's galley of the **Sarah Blanche**. He, along with three other men, had been engaged as contractors to clean the boiler of the vessel in Douglas inner harbour. Mr. Quaggin died in hospital four days later. The inquest found that his death was accidental but the cost of the funeral was met by Sharp and Waid. At that time it was not unusual to engage contractors to clean the boilers of steam coasters while they were in port. The work was usually carried out by three men over a period of about one and a half days at a total cost of £2-0s-0d.

On 20th September 1898 Captain Clugson was fined £5 plus costs for taking an incorrect course when sailing the **Sarah Blanche** out of the Mersey on the 5th September. This was contrary to the Mersey Channels Act of 1897 which regulated traffic flow on the river to minimise the risk of collision. He had been reported by one of the crew of a Mersey lightship.

During the year 1900 the most frequent visitor to Douglas Harbour was the **Sarah Blanche**. She made 125 visits under Captain Clugson, bringing in a total of 28,000 tons of coal at an average of 224 tons per voyage. This was an impressive achievement considering the slow speed of the ship and the increased time taken to load and unload cargo vessels in those days. This vessel probably delivered more coal to the Island's ports than any other during her 42 year career. Other coasters also delivered coal to Douglas at this time the most notable being those owned by Monk's of Liverpool who had the contract to supply the Douglas Gas Company. Their vessels had girls names such as **Edith, Lucy** and **Gladys**.

On the 6th February 1900 the Steam Packet vessel **Ellan Vannin** was damaged following a collision with the Anchor Line steamer **Astoria**. Her usual passenger sailings were suspended whilst the vessel was repaired but the **Sarah Blanche** was chartered by the Steam Packet during February to assist with Ramsey cargo sailings. On the 29th March 1900 the **Sarah Blanche** arrived in Douglas with a part cargo of telegraph poles for the new connection to Peel.

On the 9th January 1901 the **Sarah Blanch** collided with Manchester Hopper Barge No. 1 in the Manchester Ship Canal. A ten foot long hole was ripped in her bow and she was out of commission for ten days. She returned to Douglas on the 20th January with her hull painted red instead of the usual black.

In February 1901 Joseph Sharp sold his interest in the coal business, including the **Sarah Blanche**, other property in Douglas and shareholdings in the Steam Packet Company to his partner, Mr. Waid for £4,070. Mr. Waid then sold the business to Andrew Knowles and Sons Ltd. colliery proprietors of Pendlebury, near Manchester for a reported £30,000! (£1,800,000 at today's value) This sale also included the **Sarah Blanche** with the coal depot in Fort Street being rented by Mr Waid to Knowles' for a 21 year period at £300 per year. Knowles already operated a coal yard in Hill Street.

Mr Waid went on to be a director and then deputy chairman of the Steam Packet Company and his wife Blanche launched the Company's first geared turbine steamer **King Orry** at Birkenhead in 1913. Two photos of Mr Waid appeared on page 11 of the book Steam Packet 175 (Ferry Publications). He died in Douglas in February 1941. Joseph Sharp was a Douglas town councillor from 1902 to 1910 and in 1911 he became a J.P. He was Mayor of Douglas from 1906 to 1908 and he died in April 1925. In the early 1900s he was one of the largest owners of real estate in Douglas.

Under the ownership of Knowles' an increased number of sailings were made from Manchester. Among the masters to serve on the **Sarah Blanche** up to the start of the First World War were;

Robert Clugson (1901 -1902), Thomas Hudson (1902), Thomas Craine (1902), Edward Elliot (1902 – 1905), John J Manifold (1905 – 1906), Edward Midgley (1906), Thomas Craine (1906), Dalziel Ross Torrance (1906 -1910), and Thomas Craine again (1910 -1914). At that time they were selling best house coal in Douglas for £1.10 per ton delivered. During the First World War the **Sarah Blanche** continued to import coal into Douglas.

Robert Clugson had left the **Sarah Blanche** in 1902 to further his career and study for maritime qualifications. On 26th May 1902 he joined the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company vessel, **Douglas**, as second mate. The Captain of the **Douglas** at this time was Willie Cannell. His elder brother, John Cannell was Master of the Blackpool pleasure steamer **Greyhound** and before that he had been Master of the excursion steamer **Fairy Queen** which ran summer sailings from Douglas to Laxey and Ramsey from 1891 to 1900. Sadly on 13th November 1912 Captain Clugson was drowned at the age of 48 when the ship under his command, the small steam coaster **Zelia** of Liverpool sank in the Irish Sea whilst on passage from Garston to Dublin with a cargo of coal. The vessel had only been in service for four months. Captain Clugson's son, T.R. Clugson was master of the steamship **Alyn** which was bound for Dublin at the same time.

Captain Torrance left the ship in Douglas on the 21st March 1910 feeling unwell and he died on the 2nd April. He had been born in Liverpool and was about 52 years of age. He had served as Mate on the Steam Packet vessel **Queen Victoria**, under Commodore Alexander McQueen in the 1890s. He then worked for a firm sailing out of Belfast before joining the **Sarah Blanche**.

On the 16th November 1901 the **Sarah Blanche** hit the Victoria Pier, Douglas causing considerable damage to her bow, whilst making a call during a voyage from Laxey to Swansea with a cargo of lead ore. Worse was to follow in 1905 when the **Sarah Blanche**, on the 21st February sank in the Eastham Channel at the entrance to the Manchester Ship Canal. She was bound from Harrington to Manchester with a cargo of pig iron. She was later refloated and returned to service.

Another incident took place on the 23rd February 1906, when the **Sarah Blanche** went aground at Langness Point whilst on passage from Partington to Douglas with a cargo of coal. The crew took to the lifeboat and stood by and she refloated after about 45

minutes. The Castletown lifeboat and Rocket Brigade were in attendance but were not needed. It was reported at the time that the crew refused to return to the ship until she had refloated and there was some speculation as to why she had gone aground in the first place. Captain Midgley was new to the ship but some of the crew were from the Port St. Mary area and were familiar with the coastline.

Later in the same year, on the 21st June 1906, there was a further sad incident. A 19 year old Douglas seaman, Joseph Joughin, was drowned in the Manchester Ship Canal when he overbalanced whilst washing the deck and fell from the ship's forecastle head while on passage from Manchester to Laxey. His body was recovered after over an hour of grappling and it was landed in Douglas. He was buried at Braddan Cemetery in a marked plot and his headstone was paid for by the officers and crew of the **Sarah Blanche**. The inscription confirms it was done as "...a token of their esteem."

On the 16th September 1911 the **Sarah Blanche** celebrated 20 years of trading to Douglas. She was still fitted with her original boiler and still had her original Chief Engineer, Thomas Lowey. He however left the vessel on 30th March 1912 due to ill health serving over 20 years. This is probably the longest period a senior crewman had served without a break on the same Manx steamship apart from Willie Collister who was Master of the cargo vessel **Tryconnel** for 26 years from August 1904 until his retirement in 1930 and Louis Cormode who was Master of the Ramsey coaster **J B Kee** for 21 years from 1936 till her sinking in the River Mersey in November 1957.

On 18th November 1913, the death occurred of the **Sarah Blanche's** former master Edward Elliott, 61, in hospital in Kinsale. He had been born in Port St. Mary in 1852 and was in command of the vessel from 1902 to 1905. At the time of his death he was in command of the Liverpool steamer **Osprey** and was on passage between Liverpool and Kinsale. His body was returned to Douglas on the **Osprey** in a stormy passage which lasted 22 hours. Mr. Elliott's younger brother Joseph Elliott commanded a number of Manx steamers including the **Glenmay** and the **Glenmona**.

In November 1917 the **Sarah Blanche**, under Captain Robert Callister, rescued ten men from an open boat whilst on passage from the Mersey to Dublin. They were landed at Holyhead. In December 1920 the **Sarah Blanche** stranded at Balbriggan Beach with no serious damage.

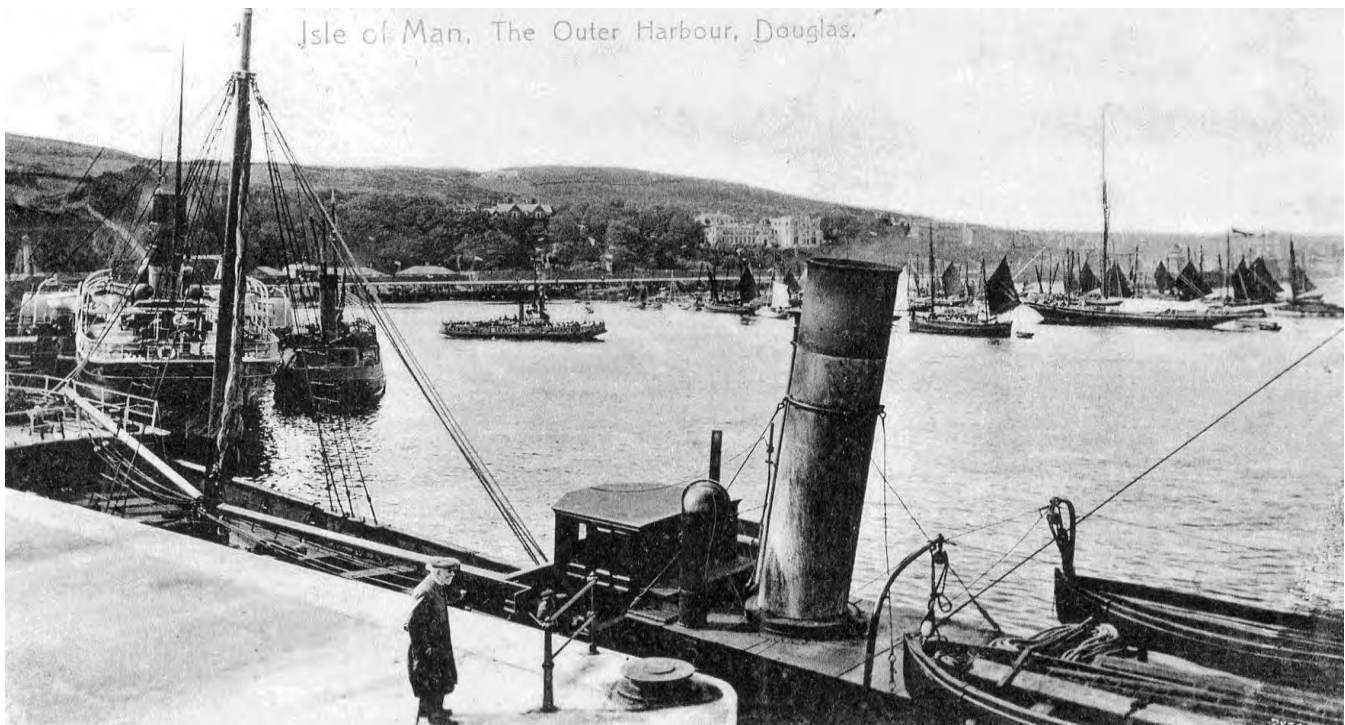
Andrew Knowles sold the **Sarah Blanche** on February 20th 1923 to the Ramsey Steamship Company for a reported £6,000. She was renamed **Ben Blanche** the following July. The coal depot at Fort Street was purchased by the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company in 1946 and was used by them as their workshops, stores and engineer's offices for over 50 years. The buildings were demolished in the summer of 2000 and the site is now a car park. **Ben Blanche** was the oldest vessel in the Ramsey fleet and traded with them for a further ten years.

During her service with the Ramsey Company the only incidents worthy of note both

occurred in 1925. On the 18th February the body of the Mate, John Edgar Costain, aged 24, was found in Ramsey Harbour. He could not swim and it seemed that he overbalanced from the deck of the ship whilst she was tied up and he drowned. On the 23rd June she was run into at Garston by the steamer **St. Mungo** and suffered damage to her stern.

The end of the **Sarah Blanche** came on the 17th December 1933 when she ran aground in a fog at Oxwich Point, South Wales, ten miles west of Swansea and this time her luck ran out. She became a total loss. The crew of seven, including Captain Gawne, took to the ship's lifeboats and were rescued by the Mumbles lifeboat. The ship had been on passage from Dundrum in Ireland to Swansea with a cargo of 183 tons of bagged potatoes. The hull was later cut up for scrap. Thus ended the career of the **Sarah Blanche** which had been both long and eventful and had included the death of one serving Captain, the drowning of another former Captain, the deaths of two seamen as well as a sinking, several strandings and finally being wrecked.

(Editor's Note: Readers might like to know that further information, details and a photograph of the **Sarah Blanche** as the Ben **Blanche** may be found in the excellent book "Ninety Years of the Ramsey Steamship Co. Ltd" by Edward Gray and Roy Fenton published in 2003 by Ships in Focus Publications.)



The Old Harbour, Douglas, early 20th Century.

THE BUOYAGE TENDER “RELUME”

A summary of a paper given to the Society by Capt Nigel Stewart on Thursday 14th October 2010

As the former Master of the MENAS tender Relume, Capt Stewart was well placed to give the Society an unusual and informative presentation on a perhaps unique institution.

Though some aids to navigation were established in the Persian Gulf at the time of Alexander the Great, it was 1913 before modern aids were first installed. Maintenance was administered from British India via the port of Basrah until Indian Independence in 1948, at which time the separate countries and states around the Gulf were reluctant to take over responsibility for their respective areas. To deal with this, the Persian Gulf Lighting Service was formed in 1948. Based in London with operational headquarters in Bahrain, in 1971 PGLS reformed as the Middle East Navigation Aids Service, MENAS, as a consequence of the independence of the various Gulf states.

In its early days, PGLS/MENAS was very much a creature of the British Government, with its Board including representatives of the Foreign Office. Light dues were received from ships on their first port of call in the Gulf, either direct to the London office from the owners or collected locally by Gray McKenzie. This funding enabled a dedicated lights and buoyage tender to maintain all of the lights and marks the entire length of the Gulf from the Shatt Al Arab, round Quoin Island and down to Ras Al Hadd and Masirah Island. Until 1974, the S.S. **Relume** operated in all areas of the Gulf but after their revolution the Iranians commandeered the aids to navigation within their own waters and are now responsible for their own maintenance.

The first tender, **Nearchus**, operated until 1953, and was previously the private yacht of the King of Iraq. The first **Relume**, known as the SS because of her power plant, operated from 1953 to 1979. The second **Relume**, a motorship registered in London and flying a defaced Blue Ensign, was in service from 1979 to 2004.

The major aids to navigation are fitted with both X-Band and S-Band Racons. Quoin Island was the last lighthouse still to be manned by a team of five but succumbed to progress in 2000. Though now defunct, the North and South Gulf Decca chains were actually owned by MENAS but contracted with Decca for maintenance.

The older buoys were acetylene powered, and carried sufficient cylinders internally (which doubled as ballast) to provide fifteen months unattended operation, more than sufficient to cover the operational period between annual refits. The base in Bahrain had a large and elderly (built 1951) acetylene-producing plant to recharge the cylinders.

This system was gradually superseded by solar panels which, though in theory providing extended periods of service, attracted the seabirds which meant that the guano had to be removed every six months.

MENAS was early into the field of satellite navigation for accurately locating their navigational aids, with **Relume** being appropriately fitted with GPS by 1988. Unfortunately, following the invasion of Kuwait, the United States applied Selective Availability to the GPS, down-grading the system's accuracy. The US military had access to a \$25 chip to overcome Selective Availability but this was not available to MENAS, who did it the hard way by establishing a reference station in Abu Dhabi in 1992 and receiving differential corrections from Singapore via the Indian Ocean satellite. This must have made MENAS the earliest commercial user of DGPS.

Relume carried a 20-ton crane on the foredeck, which enabled buoys to be lifted on board. The bigger light floats were approximately 60 tons, and were towed by **Relume** at nine knots for up to 300 miles. However, when she was withdrawn from service and went to the breakers at Gadani Beach in 2004, she was replaced by a new **Relume**.

Registered in the Bahamas, the new vessel is based on an entirely different design, providing a large after deck with operations being carried out over the stern. Additionally, she is equipped for pollution control duties. She is the fourth vessel to operate the service, and the third of her name.

As the relevant authority, MENAS is the sub-area co-ordinator for the issue of navigation warnings for Navarea IX, promulgating them over the familiar signature of MEGULITE.

During Capt Stewart's fourteen years of service on the **Relume**, she was involved in various non-routine tasks, such as laying the new Traffic Separation Scheme lanes at Zuluf and Marjam on the approaches to the oil terminals in the northern Gulf. Much of her work was done with the added interest of dodging the numerous mines which drifted southwards down the Gulf, many of which tended to accumulate in the shallow waters south of Bahrain and west of Qatar, the Dawhat Salwa.

In many ways, MENAS can be considered as one of the last remaining vestiges of Empire.



Captain Stewart's ship at the breakers yard at Gadani Beach, Pakistan, 2004

TENURE OF OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN

At the LNRS Council meeting of 6th September 2010, your Council considered that it was necessary to review the tenure of office for these positions.

In accordance with the Society's Constitution, the current arrangement is for the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for periods of three years each. Council believes that it would be in the interests of the Society to consider amending this rather onerous six-year period of service. Accordingly Council is proposing to put the following motion to the Annual General Meeting on 19th May 2011:

That the Constitution and Rules be suitably amended to provide for the election of a Vice-Chairman for one year, who would subsequently become Chairman for a further two years.

Members should note that implementation of the proposed arrangement would entail there being no Vice-Chairman in post during the first year of each new Chairman's period of office. In the absence of the Chairman, the immediate past Chairman would take the chair. Members are invited to submit any constructive comment on these proposals by 31st January 2011. *John Stokoe – Hon-Secretary.*

TRADE BETWEEN THE MERSEY AND THE DEE AND CLYWD ESTUARIES IN 1891

by Ken Davies.

This article offers a snapshot of activity between the estuaries of the rivers Mersey, Dee and Clwyd in the first six months of 1891. Fifty-seven vessels crewed by over 230 people were recorded in the estuaries of the rivers Dee and Clwyd on census night, Sunday, 5th April 1891. Vessels lay at the quays at Queensferry, Connah's Quay, Flint, Bagillt, Greenfield, the Point of Ayr and Foryd.¹ Others were at anchor in Mostyn Deep, Mostyn Roads, and the Wild Roads, and off the Point of Ayr, Bagillt, Rhyl and Llandulas. Forty-eight were sailing ships, being a smack, a sloop, a barque, four brigs, twenty-seven sailing flats and fourteen schooners. There were also nine steamers, and the floating light-vessel **River Dee**. Seventeen of the vessels were engaged in the coastal trade and eight were foreign-going. This article focuses on the thirty vessels which, via an examination of the crew agreements for the first half of that year, proved to have traded only within and between the Dee, Clwyd and Mersey estuaries.

One was a sloop, five were small steamers and a couple may have been schooners or ketches, but most were sailing flats, wooden one or two-masted vessels ranging between thirty-six and seventy-seven tons net, with dimensions between 60ft. | 14ft. | 6ft. and 73ft. | 19ft. | 8ft. Usually crewed by two men, the master and the mate, they were ubiquitous in the estuaries on census night, and are most easily discussed according to their location, starting in the Clwyd estuary and moving east to Point of Ayr, then south through the Dee anchorages, Mostyn Quay, Greenfield Harbour, Bagillt, Flint, and Connah's Quay to Queensferry.

The most informative document is the crew agreement of s/v **Petrel** (ON 81269, 93 nt.)². Possibly a schooner or ketch, she was owned by Edwin Thompson of Thomas Street, Liverpool and was at the quay at Foryd³. Her master, Captain John Verdin, possibly because his mate, Henry Mounds, was paid by the trip, gave precise times of departure and arrival, allowing us to create a picture of the trade.

Passages from Rhyl to Liverpool ranged between eleven and forty-nine hours, the most usual being twenty-three. Passages in the opposite direction were significantly shorter, One was achieved in four hours, almost certainly carrying the ebb with a fair wind, or possibly with the advantage of a tow for some of the way. The norm was around eleven hours, although five of the twelve passages recorded took considerably longer. Explaining these differences go beyond the scope of this exercise, but these are probably quay-to-quay times. Verdin may have been obliged to leave Rhyl at unfavourable states of the tide; when commencing his passage against the ebb he may have hung about for slack water to gain the advantage of the flood up the Mersey. Possibly he could often leave Liverpool at a time of his own choosing. By waiting for

¹ One vessel lying at Foryd, almost certainly a wooden flat, was unidentifiable due to the enumerator's folio being damaged by water and is excluded from the analysis..

² [Maritime History Archive, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Newfoundland furnished many of the crew agreements. Hereafter MHA/Date.](#)

³ Public Records Office /RG12/4627/161 (Hereafter PRO/Ref.)

slack water he could take advantage of the ebb down the Mersey. The longer passages were probably due to unfavourable winds and periods at anchor, possibly waiting for berths to become vacant, or waiting for a tow.

The best turnaround achieved at either end was half a day, but usually at least six to eight days were spent in each port. The ports would be congested and there may have been some overcapacity following the heady days of the eighties⁴. Whilst it was theoretically possible to complete a round trip in as few as thirty-six hours, it was more usual to take between one and three weeks. Verdin's mate was paid at the rate of £2 per trip. Reckoned in round trips, between January and June 1891 he would have earned as little as an ordinary seaman aboard a schooner. Reckoning in passages, his income would have equalled that of the mate of the same schooner. We must surely presume that Mounds was paid for each one-way passage, a point which bears on the discussion below.

S/V **Florenta** (ON 87864, 40 nt.)⁵ of Liverpool, lying at Rhyl, was owned by her master, William Roberts of Church Street, Rhuddlan, and completed ten voyages between Rhyl and Liverpool in the half year January to June, 1891.⁶ The sailing flat **Evalena** of Runcorn (ON 81296, 73 nt.) traded between Rhyl, Llandulas and Runcorn, the home of her master, Captain Ainscough, but the report does not state how many voyages were completed in the half year.⁷ These entries raise the problem of interpreting the concept of a voyage.⁸ In the light of Verdin's log, the safest presumption is that Captain Roberts meant twenty passages, considering a voyage to be a round trip, for it is difficult to see how five round trips in six months would pay him. This remains a moot point which is discussed below.

The steamer **Fawn** (ON 62217, 29 nt.) of Liverpool was also at Rhyl.⁸ She had been newly acquired by the Rhyl and Vale of Clwyd Steam Ship Company to try and establish a regular passenger and cargo service between Rhyl and Liverpool.⁹ She was managed by John J. Hughes of 2, Grove Terrace, Clwyd Street, Rhyl. and her master, Captain John Williams reported that „ *(she) usually made daily voyages between Rhyl and Liverpool, with the occasional trip to the Menai Straits.*”

S/V **Pilgrim** (ON 78766, 82 gt. 76 nt.), lying off Llandulas,¹⁰ was a single masted flat¹¹ trading between all three estuaries. Built of wood at Rhyl in 1878 by Robert Jones,¹² she was owned by Richard Atherton of Walton Village, Liverpool, in partnership with William Chadwick and John Atherton. Captain Walter Hulse of Liverpool had scribbled the useful legend Gavel trade on the schedule. The sailing flats **Nina** (ON 93748, 65nt.) and **Odessa** (ON 51047, 66 nt.), both registered in Liverpool, were alongside the quay at the Point of Ayr along with the Runcorn registered sailing flat **Zoar** (ON

⁴ See Hawkes G.I. 'Shipping on the Dee: the Rise and decline of the Creeks in the Port of Chester' in *Cymru a'r Mor/ Maritime Wales* 11 1987 pp.112 -133.

⁵ PRO/RG12/6627/155

⁶ MHA/1891

⁷ CheshireRegistryOffice/1891/NS26/85 Hereafter CRO/Ref.

⁸ PRO/RG12/4627/162

⁹ Harris, D.W. *Maritime History of Rhyl and Rhuddlan*. Prestatyn 1991.

¹⁰ PRO/RG12/4804/92

¹¹ Flintshire Records Office Shipping Registers 1891 pp. 60-98 Hereafter FRO/SR/Ref.

¹² Roberts, R. F. 'Ships Built on the River Clwyd' in *Cymru a'r Mor/ Maritime Wales* 14 1991 pp. 16-21. Hereafter Roberts (1991)

52196, 65nt.).¹³ S/V **Nina**, built by Samuel Bracegirdle at Northwich,¹⁴ was owned by Thomas Robinson of 20 Water Street Liverpool who also owned S/V **Odessa**, built at Northwich in 1855, and S/V **Zoar**. Nina's master, Stephen Bithell of Flint, reported fifteen voyages between the two estuaries during the six months, whilst Captain Frank Pierce of **Odessa** reported sixteen voyages within the Chester river.¹³ These figures support the theory that a voyage equalled a round trip, and that Bithell and Pierce were reporting thirty and thirty-two passages respectively. If we consider it difficult for an owner-master to function on ten passages, it must be more implausible for Robinson with his office overheads and crews to pay. Captain John Davies of the **Zoar**, at twenty-three the youngest master in the estuaries on census night, reported that he and his nineteen year old mate, Robert Thomas Jones had spent the half year trading both within the Chester river and between Chester and Liverpool. Presumably there was work shipping coal to other creeks on the estuary, or maintaining supplies of coal to the Mostyn Ironworks, their own pits having been lost to flooding during the previous decade.

No information beyond the census documents could be found on the two-handed sailing flat **Mary** (ON 870929, 60nt.) at anchor in Mostyn Deep,¹³ but it can be safely assumed that she too was an estuarial trader. Captain Thomas Lowe of the sloop **Thomas and Ann** (ON 27015, 52 nt.), anchored in Mostyn Roads¹⁴ and owned by John Coppack, reported fifteen voyages in the half year.¹⁵ Another vessel registered in John Coppack's ownership, the sailing flat **Star** (ON 58208, 36 nt.), under Captain **Joseph Williams** was lying at Mostyn Quay.¹⁶ We do not know how many voyages she made, but she too was engaged as a lighter between the rivers Dee and Mersey.¹⁷

Five more estuarial traders were at Mostyn Quay. The sailing flat **Duckwing**, of Liverpool, was owned by William Roberts of Greenfield. Captain Humphrey Williams reported that she had been *trading regularly between Chester¹⁸ and Liverpool. Fifteen voyages during the half year.*¹⁹ The sailing flat **Sisters** (ON 56580, 50 nt.) of Runcorn, was owned by John Dawson, the harbourmaster at Mostyn Quay.²⁰ It seems likely that she was predominantly engaged on transshipment work for the ironworks, accounting for the mere ten voyages in the half-year reported by Captain Edward Edwards. The owners of the ironworks may have seen periods of inactivity as a fair trade-off for the security of having their own vessel on call to maintain supplies of ore and the transshipment of pig iron. S/V **John and William** (ON 58211, 69 nt.), under Captain John Roberts of Ffynnongroyw, was alongside the quay at Mostyn.²¹ Built at Foryd in 1870²², she was owned by J.W. Jones of Ty Coch, Rhewl, Mostyn and had completed only nine voyages in the half year.²³ It is tempting to guess that she too was retained by the Mostyn Iron and Coal Company. We know nothing of S/V **Elizabeth** (ON 93477,

¹³ PRO/RG12/4804/105

¹⁴ PRO/RG12/4604/94

¹⁵ FRO/SR/1891/93

¹⁶ PRO/RG12/4604/111

¹⁷ FRO/SR/1891/93

¹⁸ It can be assumed that Chester was used collectively for all the creeks of the Dee.

¹⁹ MHA/1891

²⁰ MHA/1891

²¹ PRO/RG12/4604/100

²² Roberts (1891).

²³ FRO/SR/1891/98

72 nt.) beyond what the census documents tell us.²⁴ Since both crew members were Lancashire men, perhaps we can guess that she too was a Liverpool owned flat plying between the Dee and the Mersey.

The fifth estuarial trader at Mostyn Quay was not a flat, but the paddle-steamer **Swiftsure** of Liverpool.²⁵ Although she was managed by R & D Jones of 28, Brunswick Street, Liverpool for the Darwen and Mostyn Ironworks,²⁶ the harbourmaster Dawson was registered as owner. Captain Robert Lowe (Certificate no. 100683) of Bagillt, reported that she was employed carrying goods and passengers between Mostyn and Liverpool's Trafalgar Dock twice or three times a week. She was the last of four passenger paddlers plying between the Welsh and English ports, for her service was to end in 1893.

Moving up-river a couple of miles, eight vessels were in Greenfield harbour²⁷: All we know of the Liverpool registered sailing flat **Express** (O.N. 81143, 55 nt.) is that she was crewed by thirty-year-old Captain William Foulkes and his mate, forty-nine year old William Abbott, born in Greenfield and Liverpool respectively. Even less is known of a vessel called **Africa**, a name with a ring of the later Weaver steam packets. She may have belonged to Northwich, the birthplace of her master, but no information beyond that contained in the enumerator's folio can be found. Like the six others in Greenfield harbour, both vessels probably traded within and/or between the estuaries.

The sailing canal boat **William Henry** (ON 97749, 76 nt.), the sailing barge **Zion** (O.N. 55059, 60 nt.) and the sailing flat **Champion** (O.N. 96341, 81 nt.), whilst registered in Liverpool were all owned by the Northwich Salt Union of Winsford.²⁸ With them at Greenfield Quay, were the sailing flat **Rose** (ON 97225, 40nt.) of Runcorn and the Liverpool registered steamer **Harold** (ON 93738, 53 nt.), both owned by Philip Speakman of High Street, Runcorn. Captain James Taylor of s.s. **Harold** reported 'tading between Greenfield and Widnes. Twenty-eight voyages,' whilst Captain Samuel Abrams of s/v **Rose** reported 'tading between Greenfield and Widnes eighteen voyages.'²⁹ The steamer would understandably be the better performer, but it seems unlikely that she did not tow the sailer at least on some, or for parts, of her voyages. Also at Greenfield was the Liverpool registered **Alice and Mary** (ON 27940, 58 nt.) manned by the oldest master, sixty-six year old William Haxworth and twenty-one year old Joseph Haxworth, perhaps his son, or even grandson. Captain Haxworth of Shaw Street, Runcorn was the sole owner of his vessel, having inherited her from his father-in-law, Joseph Shaw of 31, Lowland Road, Runcorn.³⁰ She normally traded within the river Mersey, but was on one of her occasional trips to the Dee, possibly doing Salt Union work.

²⁴ PRO/RG12/4804/114)

²⁵ PRO/RG12/4604/95

²⁶ Fenton R 'Steam Packet to Wales: A chronological survey of operators and services' in *Cymru a'r Mor/ Maritime Wales* 12 1989 pp. 54 - 65.

²⁷ PRO/RG12/4606/130-137

²⁸ MHA/1891

²⁹ MHA/1891

³⁰ MHA/1891

S/V **Fanny** (ON 80295, 42 nt.) of Runcorn, lying at Bagillt Quay,³¹ was owned by R. Jones and Co., Grosvenor Mills, Bagillt. Under Captain John Moss of Pwllheli she traded between the Rivers Dee and Mersey,³² possibly carrying her owner's products out, and returning with raw materials for their production.

Berthed a mile or so to the south at Flint, s/v **Caliban**, (ON 1074, 53 nt.)³³ was owned by Muspratt Brothers and Huntley Limited, 31 Dale Street, Liverpool. She was three-handed, having an ordinary seaman. Captain John Jones of Flint reported that he had made „...*twenty-nine voyages from Liverpool to Flint and from Flint to Liverpool during the six months from 1 January 1891 to 30 June 1891.*“³⁴ Perhaps she too carried the products of her owners' chemical works out, returning with raw materials.

The only two-handed vessel at Connah's Quay was s/v **Confidence** and, as both crew members were Lancashire men, perhaps we can assume that she too traded between the Dee and Mersey. These two men were also from an atypical age group, being fifty-nine and fifty-five years old respectively.

Another vessel closely linked to local industry was the clencher built iron steamer s.s.

Janet of Chester (ON 88710, 38 nt.), lying at Queensferry.³⁵ Built in 1879 at Paisley,³⁶

her sole owner was John Bairnstow Burley of 32 Sealand, Chester, who was also Manager of Queensferry Chemical Works.³⁷ Her main cargoes may have been the products of that works and raw materials for their manufacture. No record for January to June 1891 could be found, but Captain Thomas Roberts of Queensferry reported seventeen voyages for the second half of 1891. This only barely exceeds the average tally for the sailers, and it must be suspected that she towed sailing flats although, as in the case of the Mostyn vessels, the low tally may reflect the specialist nature of her trade

Two steam tugs were registered in the ownership of John Coppack of High Street, Connah's Quay.³⁸ The wooden tug **Albert** (ON 81152, 27 nt.) was in the Mostyn Deep with her crew of four under fifty-eight year old Captain Edward Bennett, whilst the iron steam tug **Taliesin** (ON 88701, 78 gt., 8 nt.) of Chester was lying at Mostyn Quay. The local crew of five was aboard with the Master, another Edward Bennett (aged thirty-six) of Connah's Quay. During the first six months of 1891 both tugs were engaged in lighterage between the Dee and the Mersey, a fact which develops the question of the extent to which towage reduced the amount of sailing involved. Neither this nor the issue of voyage numbers can be decisively answered within the available information, but both can be informed by a comparison of two coasting vessels loading at Connah's Quay.

³¹ PRO/RG12/4604/86

³² MHA/1891

³³ PRO/RG12/4604/130

³⁴ MHA/1891

³⁵ PRO/RG12/4608/136

³⁶ FRO/1879

³⁷ MHA/1891

³⁸ PRO/RG12/4804/97&101

The two-masted schooner **Spencer** of Chester (ON 62717, 72 nt.) was loading for Dublin.³⁹ She was managed by John Coppack for James Coster Evans of Trevor Hall, Rhiwabon, a manufacturer of earthenware products. John Coppack's own steamer **Aston** (ON 58201, 132gt. 78n.) was loading for Belfast.⁴⁰ The net tonnages of the two vessels were almost identical, but the steamer completed forty-five voyages during 1891, whereas the schooner managed only eleven in six months. The simple comparison shows that a steamer could double the number of voyages carried out by a sailer with similar carrying capacity. It will be recalled that s.s. **Swiftsure** was able to make two or three round trips per week, and Captain John Williams of s.s. **Fawn** claimed daily sailings from Rhyl to the Mersey. This raises the question of why the steamers **Harold** and **Janet** did not greatly outperform the sailers in the estuarial trade. The question is blurred by the possibility of overcapacity mentioned above, but there must be a compelling argument that steamers generally towed sailers at least for parts of their voyages, as described at the turn of the century by Tom Coppack.⁴¹ Perhaps we can tentatively conclude that some masters considered a voyage to be a round trip, and others a passage. Some producers may have tolerated fewer trips in the interest of security of supplies and deliveries, whilst some owners were being squeezed by overcapacity. When time allowed, sailors may have made their way without the expense of towage. Conversely towage would be employed when time was short, sometimes at a cost to the overall performance of the steam carriers. In conclusion, we have caught a glimpse of the activity in the Clwyd and Dee estuaries during the first half of 1891. The total capacity of the estuarial traders on the Welsh side on census night was around 1400 net tons. Deadweight tonnages (dwt.) are never used in the documentation, but a coefficient of around 1.8 is considered a reasonable mean for smaller vessels.⁴² We might thus suppose that something in excess of 2000 tons dwt. was being handled in estuarial trade on the Welsh side at any one time. Assuming twenty-four round trips per vessel per year, this would give 48,000 dwt. per annum. It is not a complete picture, for many vessels (logically another twenty to thirty),⁴³ would have been at the Mersey ports.

³⁹ FRO/SR/18891/109

⁴⁰ FRO/SR/1891/86

⁴¹ Coppack T. *A lifetime with ships* Prescot Lancs. 1973

⁴² Armstrong John and Fowler David 'The Coastal Trade of Connah's Quay in the Early Twentieth Century: A Preliminary Investigation' in *Flintshire Historical Society Journal* 34 1996 Flintshire Records Office pp. 53-88.

⁴³ This could be an overestimate as there is evidence of adverse northerly winds during the April of 1891 which may have delayed vessels on the Welsh side

THE WARTIME TRAGEDY OF TSS **CAP ARCONA**

by Charles Dawson (LNRS Member)

Before the Second World War, TSS **CAP ARCONA** was owned by the Hamburg-Südamerikanischen Dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft (Hamburg South American Line). Her name, despite sounding of Italian or Spanish origin, came from the cape at the northern extremity of Rügen island, directly south of Sweden. Perhaps a ship of that name had foundered many years before at the Cape to give it its unusual name.

The Hamburg-South America Line had in 1871 taken over where the Hamburg-Brasilianische Dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft left off. This latter firm, strangely enough, had some English roots: two Tyneside firms, the Walker-upon-Tyne shipbuilders C Mitchell & Co and shipowners Watts, Milburn & Co, had founded the line in 1869 in conjunction with the Hamburg shipbroker August Bolten. The company was nominally a German one, but the two English firms had provided the majority of the capital. Although the service prospered, the Germans decided, after two years, to take control. In the re-organisation, a German bank became the main shareholder, followed by August Bolten. However, the English companies remained as British supporters together with nine Hamburg firms as a small German contingent.

CAP ARCONA was the second ship of the line bearing the name. She was launched by Blohm & Voss, Hamburg on 14 May 1927. She was 643.6' long x 84.6' beam and of 27,561 gross tons. Her single reduction geared turbines to her twin screws gave her a speed of 20 knots. Originally she could accommodate 575, 275 and 465 first, second and third class passengers respectively. Among her many amenities were a full-sized tennis-court situated at the after end of the promenade deck. She was an elegant ship in the classical style, with three funnels, (white, with red top), two masts and cruiser stern. Her lifeboats were slung in pairs and, rather unusually, were painted brown.

In 1940 she had become an "accommodation ship" at Gdynia. In 1945 she made three voyages to evacuate 25,000 people from East to West Germany. On 3 May 1945 she was bombed by British aircraft and completely destroyed in Lübeck Bay. This was four days after Hitler's suicide and four days before Germany's unconditional surrender. The thousands of passengers on board were prisoners who had been rounded up from German concentration camps.

Why British aircraft attacked her and two other ships has not, it seems, so far been satisfactorily explained. We have at least one eye-witness account of the events: he is Alexander Frangos, a 73 year old Greek engineer now living in Sweden. He was in May 1944 transported, with some 1250 other of his countrymen who had been herded together in goods waggons, from Thessalonika to Neuengamme concentration camp of Hamburg. After being worked there almost to death, he was lucky to overlive that hell, only to be destined to experience another.

On 18 April 1945 the evacuation of prisoners from the camp began. One wonders if they had heard of the fearful tragedy that had already been enacted two days earlier in the Baltic Sea. In the dark, close on midnight, the cargo ship **Goya**, taking prisoners from Danzig, was torpedoed by a Soviet submarine with the loss of some 7000 lives. The ship sank in a few minutes and only 177 were rescued. But that is not all; the German ship **Wilhelm Gustloff** had been torpedoed by another Soviet submarine on 30 January 1945, when some 5500 died.

If the prisoners were aware of these shattering events, what must they have thought when they heard that they too were to make the journey, on foot, to take ship at the coast. Their harrowing march to Neustadt took them eleven days. On their arrival at the coast they saw, anchored in Lübeck Bay (earlier called Neustadt Bay) some 500 yards from land, three ships, **Cap Arcona**, **Thielbeck** and **Athens**. The latter two ships were of somewhat smaller size and Frangos found himself being herded, along with thousands of others, into the holds of the biggest of the trio, **Cap Arcona**.

At the last minute, with **Cap Arcona** full to overflowing, he was ordered off, together with a few dozen other prisoners, to the **Athens**. Thursday 3 May was a foggy day. At 2 p.m. eight British *Typhoon* aircraft flew in low over the Bay. The captain of the **Athens** reacted quickly and backed his ship towards the quay, but the other two ships did not move. The aircraft circled twice then attacked them. In a few minutes the two burning ships had capsized and sunk. Those who had any strength left cast themselves into the water but in their weakened state they could manage only a few strokes. The motor boats that came out gave priority to the German personnel. For the next few months, thousands of bodies were washed up on the coast of the bay. The ships were salvaged in March 1950 and a further 7000 bodies were recovered.

In the chaos which ensued after the attack and sinking of the two ships, Frangos had escaped. He hid in the forests and, to sustain himself, ate any raw crops that he could find at night in the fields. Several days after peace he was found in a ditch by Red Cross men.

Frangos kept silent about his story for fifty years, but in the end he felt forced to tell it, in order to attempt to understand how such things could have happened so near to the final German collapse. He has tried to find out who gave the order for the sinkings, and why, but to no avail. It seems as if the archives are closed for eternity, but he has his own theory. Himmler had given orders on 16 April - the very date on which the cargo ship **Goya** had been sunk by a Soviet submarine - that no political prisoners were to fall into Allied hands. It was difficult for so many of them to be liquidated by the Nazis in such a short time. What better for them than to leak to the British that Nazis would be attempting to escape from Germany by ship? Frangos has visited Neustadt where a memorial has been raised to the dead. Of his own countrymen, 1250 are remembered; he is one of only a score or so who survived.

ART AT KARLSKRONA MARITIME MUSEUM

by LNRS Member Anders Akesson

An exhibition of marine art entitled '*Towards the Horizon*' was launched on 12th. December 2009 by Richard Bauer, Director of the Naval Maritime Museum, art collector Eric Ekegren and also Ronald Bergman who is Chair of the National Maritime Museum Society. I was privileged to receive an invitation for this special occasion. Ranging from marine art in general, ship portraits, and depictions of life in all its aspects both aboard ship and ashore, this collection covers the lives and work of the participating artists together with their motives and epochs, additionally outlining the collector's own personal impressions. Each painting is set against a black backdrop and these are further highlighted with the help of indirect lighting.

Artists range from 17th. Century Dutch painters such as Pieter Muller and Wilhelm van der Velde the younger; from the 19th. Century there are George Chambers, Marcus Larson, Johan Christer Berger, Harry Redmore and Harry Williams and, more recently, the 20th century is represented by Barry Mason. It is of interest to note the British connections of Swedes J.C. Berger and M. Larson, the former being influenced by J.W.M. Turner during UK studies undertaken during his youth and the latter having exhibited his works at the World Exposition in London in 1862. Berger's '*Entrance to the Karlskrona Harbour with the frigate Eugenie*' (1855) should be noted in the accompanying photograph.

The person behind this marvellous collection is Erik Ekegren, CEO of the Swedish bakery concern Pagen AB '*The Lad Ltd*' who has a strong naval background within his family. Erik has collected marine paintings, posters and stamps over a long period and has also produced two lavishly illustrated books based on material from his extensive collection, which had at the last moment thankfully been saved for Sweden by the National Maritime Museum Society in Stockholm before being auctioned most likely to foreign buyers.

Karlskrona Maritime Museum has a colourful and fascinating history. After the Province of Blekinge, together with a large part of Denmark, was relinquished to Sweden through the Peace Treaty of Roskilde in 1658, the first Swedish naval vessels were based in the inner Blekinge archipelago in 1679. One year later the area developed into a fully-fledged naval base with the newly founded town of Karlskrona (lit. Karl's Crown after its founder King Karl XI) as its core. In 1998 the old parts of the town and the naval base area were selected by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site and are well worthy of a visit.

As a base for the Swedish Navy, Karlskrona has experienced some dramatic moments during its history and in particular two stand-offs can be brought to attention. The first occurred during the Napoleonic Wars when Sweden, Russia, Prussia and Denmark had joined a Neutrality League targeting Britain. When the British Royal Navy under the command of Sir Hyde Parker attacked the Danes in Copenhagen on 2nd April 1801, due to adverse winds and lack of onboard training a Swedish relief squadron had not been able to reach Copenhagen in time to augment the Danish forces. The Swedish vessels spotted the Hyde Parker squadron at sea but being outnumbered by 18 to 7 ships of the line, it withdrew inside the defence perimeter of the Karlskrona naval station and together with land forces prepared to fight it out. This stand-off between Sir Hyde Parker and Commanding Admiral Cronstedt of Karlskrona was eventually resolved when the Russian Tsar Paul I was liquidated and Alexander I assumed the throne and dissolved the Neutrality League.

More recently a second stand-off occurred when the Swedish armed forces faced the Soviet Twice Red-Banner Baltic Fleet during October - early November 1981. The Soviet Whiskey Class submarine **S-363**(also referred to as **U.137**) was discovered to have run aground inside the restricted area of the naval base during trials of a new submarine hunt torpedo. Soviet requests to salvage the nuclear armed submarine were denied by the Swedish Foreign Secretary and a Soviet submarine rescue vessel escorted by 12 warships commanded by Vice-Admiral Kalinin weighed anchor bound for Karlskrona. On the Swedish side, coastal artillery batteries and mine units protecting the naval base were put on a war footing augmented by coastal commando units. In addition, Swedish Air Force strike units were armed and readied to protect the maritime border together with Swedish submarine **HMS Neptun**. Together they showed the ability and resolve to protect Sweden's territory. This serious diplomatic incident was defused in early November when the Swedish navy removed **S-363** towing it into international waters to await handover to Soviet forces.

It is also of note that the above mentioned Swedish submarine **Neptun** involved in the incident in 1981 will later this year become a new Museum exhibit at Karlskrona. Another Exhibition '**Surface Tension - The Cold War in the Baltic 1978-89**' has already been launched on the same floor within the Maritime Museum shedding further light on Sweden's position between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in the Baltic



THE SS IXION AND A FIRE AT SEA

by Willie Williamson and Ian Morris (LNRS Members)

The **Ixion** was built 1892 by Scotts of Greenock (yard number 302). Official number 102068. Her signal letters were MWHK.

She is listed as being 3612 grt with a length 355 ft and a 43 ft beam. She had triple expansion engines giving a speed of 11 knots. She was originally built for Ocean Steamship Company of Liverpool and in 1902 Capt. R.C. Thompson was in command. The company was keen to trade with Java, however the Dutch had a monopoly on this trade insisting that any cargo had to be shipped in their own flagged vessels.

To overcome this problem, a new Dutch company was formed and in September 1902 the **Ixion** was transferred to Dutch ownership. Three other Ocean ships, the **Pyrrhus** (Scotts Yard No 302) **Tantalus** (Scotts Yard No 303) and **Rhipeus** were also transferred. The name **Ixion** was retained but her signal letters changed to PCMH and she was registered as being 3489 gross tons 2153 net tons. Her new owners being,

Nederlandsche Stoomvaart Maatschappij Oceaan (NSMO)
145 Prins Hendrikkade,
Amsterdam,
Holland.

Initially this new company used British masters and in 1903 the **Ixion** is listed as being under the command of Capt. D. Robinson. Later the first Dutch master for the Blue Funnel Line, Captain Barend de Boer, commanded her. In common with most ships at this time she was not equipped with wireless at the time of the incident.

The **Ixion** left Liverpool on the 29th July 1911 on voyage 46 under Captain de Boer and arrived in Indonesia on 30th August 1911. She spent some time island hopping around Java and left Batavia on 30th September 1911. Lloyd's casualty return for 1911 simply records, *"Ixion, Java to Amsterdam, general cargo, 25 miles from Engano. 4th October 1911. Burnt."*

However, a more detailed report on this incident was obtained from a translation of an article in *-Soerabaiasch Handelsblad*

THE FIRE ON THE SS IXION

The following news from Benkoelan appears in the Batavia Nieuwsblad of 7th October 1911.

With reference to the fire which broke out on board the ss **Ixion** and about which I have already telegraphed on Tuesday I can still advise the following particulars.

The ship which was loaded with tea, tobacco, and other products sailed from Batavia

on Saturday afternoon and on Sunday night was North of the Island of Engano, and about 90 miles from the coast, when the fire was discovered. At a quarter to ten the fire broke and the flames spread with such rapidity that by ten o'clock the vessel had to be abandoned. The reason for the rapid spread of the fire is that the steamer had been steaming along the north coast of Java for about a month during very dry weather and consequently the ship and cargo had become –orkdry.”

The fire was first discovered amidships and it is supposed that it had started in the fanroom. The crew was therefore divided into two bodies, one at the fore and one at the after end of the ship. The fire spread so rapidly everywhere that the boats, with the exception of two, were caught in the flames and in these two boats the crew, consisting of 47 persons, endeavoured to save their lives. In one boat were 23 Europeans and in the other 7 Europeans and 17 Chinese. The third officer was in command of the latter boat.

As already telegraphed, this boat is still missing and no proper explanation of the fact is forthcoming as the accounts of the survivors differ considerably, but considering the panic, which would occur, this is not to be wondered at. According to some of the survivors the boat was leaking and when the third officer, who wished to jump out received the order from the Captain to remain in the boat, he cried out, –Then we are lost.”

According to others, the ship, which still had steam up and having no one to look after her rudder, moved in various directions and turned herself in between the two boats, and, by so doing must have sailed over the second boat, since, when the steamer had passed, the boat was no more to be seen. In the meantime three men from the second boat came into the first.

According to my ideas most probably the first boat could give no further help, because if the 24 men had also got into this boat, the latter would certainly have been lost too. This boat remained in the neighbourhood of the ship the whole night, and the next morning a few ventured on the after deck of the steamer in order to fetch provisions. They abandoned that as soon as possible for fear of the boilers bursting and afterwards rowed in the direction of the shore. On the way they were picked up by an English ship, the **Good Hope** that was bound for Calcutta.

They were landed by the steamer at **Bencoelen** and thus the shipwrecked men arrived on shore at half past one on Tuesday afternoon. With the exception of a few clothes practically nothing was saved and the men looked thoroughly exhausted. Immediately measures were taken to give them relief. All possible assistance was offered by the military authorities and moreover the townspeople helped them by supplying clothes so that the men soon recovered their spirits. The ship's doctor, and old gentleman, is at present suffering from nervous prostration.

The ss **Maetsuijcker** which arrived in the Roads on Wednesday, soon sailed again in order to cruise around the place where the accident occurred. The s/s **Java** sent from Batavia, which arrived here on Friday had nothing to report except that the burning

wreck was seen drifting in a Southerly direction off Kroe.

At the time of the fire the **Ixion** had a crew of 47, all the navigating officers were Dutch as were the engine room staff. Of the 12 ABs and one OS on board, only one AB was British. The catering staff seem to have been British and all the firemen were Chinese.

From wage records kept in the library, it can be reported that ~~the~~ old gentleman, presently suffering from nervous prostration” was the ship’s surgeon H.S. Nelson. For those in the second boat, there were thirteen Chinese firemen and their cook. All were lost and judging from the family names in the wages book they belonged to two families and most likely came from the same village in China. This boat also had the third mate, the carpenter, B.J. Frit along with three Dutch ABs the 4th steward E.A. James and the cook, J.J. Helwy. All these men were lost.

There was no further information about the fate of the burning **Ixion** although it was assumed she sank as her name does not appear in the 1912 edition of Lloyds Register. However, a check on the web revealed two sites that gave the position of the **Ixion** as lying in position 04° 45’ South 102° 15’ East.

The s.s.**Good Hope** was built in 1903 at Doxfords in Sunderland, (3618 gross tons) and owned by the World S.S. Co and managed by G.T. Symons & Co.

The survivors of the fire came home in various Blue funnel ships including, the **Hector**, **Memnon**, **Glaucus** and **Sarpendon**. The **Ixion’s** first mate, J.B. van de Werff later took command of various Blue funnel ships.

Note. A second blue Funnel vessel named **Ixion**, was built in 1912 at the Scott Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. Ltd yard at Greenock, her call sign was MLLB. This vessel successfully traded for many years but was torpedoed by **U-94** on the 7th May 1941. Carrying 2900 tons of general cargo she was in convoy OB-318 on a voyage from Glasgow to New York. She sank in position 61° 29’ North 022° 40’ West. All of her crew (105 in total) survived the attack and were rescued. The corvette HMS **Marigold** rescued 17 and took them to Gibraltar.

The third vessel of this name was launched by Harland and Wolf in Belfast in 1953 and was scrapped in Barcelona in 1972.

Reference Sources.

Lloyds Register for 1911
Lloyds Casualty Return
Ocean Fleet Wage Return

www.wrecksite.eu

www.merchantnavyofficers.com/nsmo2.html

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THE IXION IN THE MERSEY



EDITOR'S NOTE

I hope that members have, over the last 12 months, enjoyed the revamped style of *The Bulletin* and have found it a good read. We have had much positive comment from readers about the changes and we hope to keep improving it in both style and content as we progress.

However it is now becoming apparent that the stock of articles at the disposal of the editor is now very low indeed and without the contributions of members *The Bulletin* cannot hope to meet its obligations to the Society and to its members. Therefore could I ask members who are involved in research and wish their work to be published in *The Bulletin* not to be shy in coming forward! The preferred medium for members to offer their work for publication is by Microsoft Word sent by e mail or on CD. However typed and even handwritten contributions will also be gratefully grasped with both hands!

I look forward to receiving members' contributions in due course.

THE SOUTH AMERICAN MEAT TRADE

By Captain H.F. Pettit

*(This article is from the L.N.R.S. „Transactions“, Volume V, 1949 – 50
was written by the Cargo Superintendent, Houlder Brothers and Co., Ltd.)*

I am principally concerned with the handling and carriage of meat in refrigerated vessels, but before dealing with this the following historical outline may be of interest. About 1870 the population of these Islands had increased to such an extent that home-produced meat was insufficient, even when eked out by the importation of live cattle. In 1874 the first shipments of frozen meat were imported from the U.S.A. In 1880 we commenced receiving beef and mutton from Australia, and mutton from New Zealand. This meat was carried in sailing ships. Cold air (passed over ice boxes) was first used as a refrigerant, then refrigerated holds were used, cooled by brine pipes. The first shipments of frozen beef and mutton from Argentina were received in 1883. This was largely due to the large U.S.A. packing houses (e.g., Swifts and Armours) establishing freezing works in the Argentine.

From then on the quality of South American beef improved as, in fact, did all the meat consumed in Great Britain, due to keen competition. Prize cattle from home were shipped out to South America to improve the breed of the cattle there. About the time of the 1914-18 World War, Brazil and Uruguay also began to export meat to Great Britain. In 1932 shipments from various sources were so large, that Imperial Preferences were introduced. The resulting import tax on South American meat tended to regulate supplies from there, with the result that many refrigerated ships were sailing home with empty spaces. However, these spaces were eventually filled with Brazilian fruit (oranges and bananas).

We now come to the difference between chilled and frozen meat. Frozen meat (which comprises beef, mutton and offal) is carried at a temperature of about 14° f., and has to be thawed out before use. The blood cells burst and blood runs out of the meat, with a consequent deterioration of appearance and quality. It is packed into the ship's chambers on 3 in. x 3 in. dunnage, carefully placed in position. Provided that the meat is stowed with due regard to air circulation and that there is no crushing, the more meat that can be got into the space the better. It stows at roughly 90 to 100 cubic feet per ton and can be stowed for long periods without much danger of deterioration.

Chilled meat, however, is carried at temperatures of 28-29° F. and the temperature must be carefully controlled to the half degree without variation. Chilled meat must be in the markets for use within 28 days of being killed. If it has to be kept longer than this the storage temperature must be lowered and the meat ~~frozen~~ "frozen down," with a resulting loss in price. More elaborate stowage is necessary for chilled meat. It is hung on galvanised chains and hooks from overhead rails in the ship's chambers and is never

laid down from the time it is killed until it is discharged. Chilled meat stows at 120 cubic feet per ton and compares very favourably with home killed.

During the First World War and the World War Two, chilled meat imports were stopped and all the meat imported was frozen in order to save valuable shipping space. Then, later, it was shipped boneless, and the sheep were cut in half and telescoped. The stowage factor dropped to about 70 to 80 cubic feet per ton.

Freezing Works Procedure

There are many meat works in South America — especially in the River Plate. They are large, square white buildings that can be seen for miles. They are usually situated near the ports and have their own quay facilities. Their names are well known in this country — Swifts, Armour, Wilson, Anglo, Smithfield and Argentine. In normal times only prime cattle, two years old, are killed for export as frozen and chilled meat. Older or poorer quality cattle are used for tinned meat. The animals are mostly sent to the works by rail — not driven for long distances, as this would mean their arrival in poor condition. They are allowed to rest for 24 hours before killing. The cattle are driven to the top of the building, where they are knocked down, slaughtered and hung up by their hind legs on travelling rails. The carcass is kept moving along the rails by gravity, and as it is moving, it is skinned, cleaned and washed. The hides, offal, etc., are sent down shoots to other parts of the factory while the carcass is cut into four quarters (two fores and two hinds) which travel downwards to the cooling rooms. They are covered with two clothes — one stockinette and one hessian — and are ready for shipment next day. Some works kill 5,000 to 10,000 cattle a day.

Shipment of Meat

The British Lines operating in the South American Meat Trade are the Royal Mail, Blue Star, Donaldsons and Houlders, Sixty per cent of the world's refrigerated tonnage is British. The Houlder Line commenced operating with sailing vessels in 1852, and was in the frozen meat trade practically from its inception. It was in the River Plate Trade when it opened up. It now operates some of the largest and most up-to-date refrigerated vessels in the world — **Hornby Grange, Ripplingham Grange, Condesa** and **Duquesa**

They are fitted to carry any refrigerated cargo — meat, butter, eggs and fruit (bananas and oranges from Brazil). 'Tween decks with a height of six feet enable the holds to be divided up into 40 to 50 separate compartments. The steel hull and decks are cased with timber, lined with silicate of cotton or cork, and varnished for cleanliness. Overhead and along the sides, pipes or grids are fitted, together with rails to hang meat. The grids carry cool brine from the engine room to cool the chambers.

The more modern ships are fitted with cold air refrigeration. Air is blown through coils

of brine pipes to cool it and then through ducts or tunnels into the chambers. The foul air is extracted from the chambers. Most expensive gear is carried by these ships. In addition to the thousands of feet of 3 in. x 3 in. dunnage, 60,000 to 100,000 meat hooks and 20,000 chains form part of their normal equipment. The refrigerating engine room is separate from the main engine room. Carbon dioxide gas is compressed by the engines until it is turned into liquid. This liquid CO₂ is allowed to vapourise in coils of pipes which are immersed in large tanks. These tanks contain brine (salt water and calcium chloride) which will not freeze in spite of the intense cold produced by the expansion of the liquid CO₂. The brine is pumped through to pipes in the chambers and the flow of the brine, and in consequence the temperature of the chambers, is regulated by valves. There are at least four thermometers in each chamber and readings are taken every four hours. A high standard of efficiency is required from Officers and Refrigerating Engineers. One of their problems can be appreciated when it is realised that a refrigerated vessel will have approximately 15 miles of brine pipes, with the resulting risk of leakage due to working of the ship.

Before loading, the holds are washed by hand, particular attention being paid to the bilges. The scuppers are sealed by brine and the chambers cooled and deodourised. They are then inspected by Lloyd's, who must issue a certificate before any more is loaded. The principal enemy in the chambers is mould; this has to be carefully searched for, and removed.

Loading

The ship is made fast to the wharf at the meat works. Approximately 10 to 15 minutes after the ship has come alongside, platforms are erected near the various hatchways together with tents from quay to ship, covering the hatchways completely. Overhead rails are fitted under the tents and the meat, still hanging, is pushed to the ship. The meat, which is never allowed to lay down, is weighed automatically at two points as it passes along the rails. At the hatchway the meat is hooked on to slings (10 tails and hooks) — one piece to each tail. The meat is then lifted off the rails and lowered into the holds. It is then carried — one man, one piece — and hung on the ship's rails. As soon as the meat is loaded great responsibility falls on the chief and chief refrigerating engineers. When a hatch is full it is sealed, but the hatchways are so designed that each deck is insulated from the hatch, and each can be sealed in turn until the ship is full. The ships are designed so that any space, top or bottom, can be discharged first with a minimum of trouble. The cargo has to be planned before loading, space being allocated to various shippers with separate chambers for meat, fruit, eggs and butter. During loading and discharging, particular attention must be given to the stability of the ship. Chilled meat hanging raises the centre of gravity considerably, and often the meat loaded first is discharged first in order to beat the time factor of 28 days.

Pre-war, refrigerated vessels from South America ran with regularity to a fixed timetable. Average cargoes were 4,800 tons of frozen or 4,000 tons of chilled meat. The cargo was loaded in eight days, including the time spent in moving the vessel to five different meat works. The discharging time was five to six days. Vessels were always berthed at the same discharging berths at London and Liverpool, where ample supplies of rail and road refrigerated vans were available to transport the meat to its destination all over the country. In London the discharging berth was fitted with overhead rails similar to those in use at the meat works in the Plate, thus allowing the meat to hang and to be handled with more care. It is intended to equip Liverpool with a similar berth in the future. On completion of discharge the chambers are very carefully cleaned and de-odourised, as it is possible to carry fruit one passage and meat on another in the same space.

Bananas are shipped green. They are stowed in the ship and cold air blown through the chambers, the temperature being kept at 55° F. The air-flow is adjusted to give a complete change of air in the chamber every four hours as the fruit gives off gas which ripens it. After landing the bananas are hung in the warm, still air of the ripening rooms for a week to ten days.

Eggs have to be carried at a temperature of 35° to 40° F. and oranges at 39° to 40°F. The different temperatures required for the various cargoes show the need for accurate control of chamber temperatures and for the multiplicity of chambers into which a refrigerated ship is divided.

In conclusion, a few remarks on Patagonia may be of interest. A wild, rocky country, similar to parts of Scotland, Patagonia rears no cattle, only sheep. The pasture is of poor quality but produces excellent quality sheep and lambs. The sheep ranches are unusually large, one single ranch may have a quarter of a million sheep at a density of one sheep per acre. The sheep are driven to the works in droves of 20,000 driven by three or four men, each with two horses and two dogs.

My own firm were the first to erect a meat works in Patagonia nearly fifty years ago. The works were pre-fabricated in Great Britain and erected in Patagonia under the supervision of one of Houlder Brothers' senior Chief Engineers, Mr. Flower. The fuel used at the works was entirely wood. Incidentally, the poor quality pasture is only found in Patagonia. Other South American countries are very fertile, yielding two crops of alfalfa a year, thus enabling the fine South American cattle to be bred from the best of British stock (carried out as deck cargo) without any additional feed.

THE MONA'S QUEEN OF 1934

by Adrian Sweeney (L.N.R.S. Member)

The **Mona's Queen** of 1934 was the third ship to be built in the Steam Packet Company's renewal of the fleet between the wars. She followed the **Ben-My-Chree** of 1927 and the **Lady of Mann** of 1930 and she was a near sister of these vessels, but whereas the two older ships were very familiar to my post war generation, the **Mona's Queen** became the forgotten sister because of her loss at Dunkirk. Apparently she was nearly built again after the war in the form of the **Snaefell** of 1948; the Company gave serious consideration to building the **Snaefell** to the 1934 design but in the end decided to stick to the design of 1937, modified in 1945 into the **King Orry** class of vessels we are all so familiar with.

The **Mona's Queen** was ordered from Cammell Laird of Birkenhead in August 1933 and was completed in June 1934. Her vital statistics were;

Length overall – 337 feet

Breadth – 48 feet

Draught – 17 feet.

Gross tonnage – 2756 tons.

Designed service speed – 21 knots.

The **Mona's Queen**, as Duckworth and Langmuir stated —.followed the conventional lines of the period for first class cross channel vessels”(1966) and therefore followed on from the **Ben-My-Chree** of 1927 and the **Lady of Mann** of 1930. However she was easily recognised from her two consorts in that she was decked to the bow at boat deck level which gave her a very lofty appearance forward. She followed her two consorts in having an all white hull and superstructure (green boot topping); however she was the only ship launched for the Company in that colour scheme, all others having been repainted.

The ship was of course A1 at Lloyds. Her life saving equipment consisted of 10 class A1 lifeboats, and teak buoyant seats and rafts for over 2440 persons. The hull was divided into 10 watertight bulkheads, 5 of which were fitted with sliding watertight doors. The ship had 5 decks, the boat deck, promenade deck, shelter deck, main deck and lower deck.

Passenger Accommodation.

The passenger accommodation of the **Mona's Queen** followed closely the style and opulence of the time especially in the first class areas of the ship. She boasted 20 cabins, 8 private ones and 12 convertible ones. These convertible ones were a feature of the first class lounge; the sofas at the side of the vessel were quickly transformed into 12 private cabins giving sleeping accommodation for 48 people. The private

cabins also boasted a washbasin. First class public rooms consisted of a ladies lounge on the promenade deck, a smoking room/bar and buffet on the promenade deck, a dining saloon for 90 people on the main deck forward and 3 saloons on the lower deck. Steerage passengers could look forward to an entrance hall on the shelter deck aft with a staircase leading down to a dining saloon, lounge and ladies lounge on the main deck. There were 2 saloons also on the lower deck.

The first class saloons were certainly designed for comfort and a style unknown today. The ladies lounge was panelled in a light sycamore with jade green mouldings and furniture of mahogany, the smoking room was in olive teak, French walnut graced the first class entrance and stairway from the promenade deck, the first class lounge was in walnut and birch and the dining saloon was panelled in Burma mahogany. The three lower saloons boasted light oak and they were fitted with well upholstered sofas on spring mattresses and berth curtains were provided for when these lower saloons were used as sleeping saloons.

The large windows on either side of the promenade deck were of the vertical sliding type and were very similar to those on the **Lady of Mann**. The promenade deck was fitted with the famous longitudinal bench seats which extended the full length of the deck.

Equipment.

The **Mona's Queen** was fitted with the most up to date navigation and communication equipment. There was a Marconi wireless and an echometer sounding device and there was also a submarine signal receiving apparatus with a distance finding auxiliary.

The **Mona's Queen** was fitted with twin screws driven by two sets of Parson's turbines, the propeller revolutions at full power being 275 per minute. Her astern turbines were capable of generating 70% of her forward power. The screws were three bladed and of bronze. Steam was provided by water tube boilers of the Babcock and Wilcox type, which were of course oil fired.

Sea Trials.

After launching at Cammell Lairds on the 12/4/34 and after fitting out, the ship was ready for her sea trials. These took place at Skelmorlie on the 14/6/34. The weather on the day of these trials was good; the wind was nil and the sea smooth. On her fourth run on the measured mile running south to north she reached a maximum speed of 22.3 knots. This was with the tide with 17 nozzles fully open and against the tide she attained 21.6 knots. This gave a mean of 21.9 knots. On her fifth run, south to north with the tide she achieved 22.1 knots. This was again with 17 nozzles fully open, 2 a third turn open with the regulating valve fully open. Against the tide a speed of 21.8 knots was recorded which gave a mean for the whole run of 21.9 knots. Fuel consumption during the 6 hour trial was 17.47 tons in five and a half hours steaming which was 3.176 tons per hour. It should be noted that just keeping the ship in steam without moving would use about 0.75 tons of oil per hour which in itself is a pointer as to why the diesel engine eventually replaced the turbine.

In the Service of the Steam Packet.

The maiden voyage of the **Mona's Queen** took place on the 27th June 1934 from Liverpool to Douglas. The Way Book tells us that she left Liverpool at 15.05, passed the Bar at 15.55 and arrived at Douglas at 18.30. There was a westerly light breeze and the sea was slight. There were only 194 passengers on board and these comprised of;

54 saloon 15 day returns.	73 saloon returns.
30 steerage 15 day returns.	10 steerage returns.
6 saloon singles.	13 passes.
9 steerage singles	

The first visit to Fleetwood was on the 29th June, a Friday. She took the 16.00 sailing from Douglas, leaving at 16.05 and there were 617 passengers on board.

On Thursday the 5th July she did her first Round the Island Cruise, departing from Douglas at 14.25, berthing back at Douglas at 18.27. 2919 passengers enjoyed the cruise on a smooth sea.

The first visit to Ardrossan was on Thursday 12th July; this was a light sailing from Liverpool at 05.10, arriving at the Scottish port at 15.30. She then sailed for Douglas and then spent the next two days on the Douglas to Ardrossan service, doing round trips on Friday and Saturday. A total of 8105 passengers were carried.

Tuesday the 17th July saw the first visit to Llandudno. It was a fine day with a slight S.W.breeze and a slight sea as she left Douglas at 09.40 arriving at the Welsh resort at 12.28. There were 708 passengers on board and she took 705 passengers back to Douglas at 18.04 arriving back in Douglas at 20.46.

The **Mona's Queen** first visited Dublin on the 18th July, a Wednesday. There was a light southerly wind that day, good visibility and the sea was slight. She departed Douglas at 08.35, passed the Bailey at 12.09 and was berthed at 13.00. She had carried 357 passengers to the Irish capital and she took 347 back to the Isle of Man when she sailed at 15.05 arriving at Douglas at 21.30.

It was not until July 11th 1936 that the **Mona's Queen** made her first sailing to Belfast. She left Douglas at 08.35 with 50 passengers on board. Two of these got off in Ramsey(!) but 9 got on. She returned from Belfast at 16.07 with 1847 passengers on board. 89 of these got off at Ramsey. It was a dull, drizzly day.

Two interesting evening cruises were offered in the August of her first season. The first was on Wednesday the 8th. She departed Douglas at 20.16 and sailed north up the coast to Ramsey Bay where she arrived at 21.11. The 1461 passengers on board however had been unlucky with the weather as there was a thick mist and heavy rain - bet the bar did a brisk trade that night! She arrived back in Douglas at 22.15. The

second cruise was on the Thursday the 16th and it was a cruise to Chicken Rock. She left Douglas at 19.47, was at the Chicken Light at 20.49 and returned at 22.00. Better weather that day and 2294 passengers took advantage.

An interesting small entry in the Way Book on the 6th September of that first season tells us that because of a gale force south easterly wind the ship left Douglas and sailed to Port Erin Bay where the anchor was dropped and she stayed overnight. She returned to Douglas the next day.

The 1935 season was the first full season for the **Mona's Queen**. Analysis of her sailings for that season show that she was being used in a more general way than her two older half sisters; the **Lady of Mann** was used at this time almost exclusively at Fleetwood and the **Ben-My-Chree** at Liverpool.. Sailings for the **Mona's Queen** were as follows;

Barrow to Douglas: 1 sailing. Douglas to Barrow: 1 sailing.
Douglas to Liverpool: 76 sailings. Liverpool to Douglas: 79 sailings.
Douglas to Dublin: 2 sailings. Dublin to Douglas: 2 sailings.
Douglas to Fleetwood: 7 sailings. Fleetwood to Douglas: 4 sailings.
Douglas to Llandudno: 2 sailings. Llandudno to Douglas: 2 sailings.
Douglas to Ardrossan: 10 sailings. Ardrossan to Douglas: 10 sailings.
Ramsey to Liverpool: 1 sailing.
Cruises from Douglas: 12.
Light positional sailings – various ports: 16 sailings.
Inclusive of passes, 176,249 passengers were carried during the 1935 season, which ended on the 20th October.

Last Week of Steam Packet Service.

For the next four seasons the Mona's Queen served her Company and the Isle of Man well and was part of one of the finest short sea fleets in the world. However, of course, by the late summer of 1939 the clouds of war were gathering and the ship started her final week of Steam Packet service on Monday 28th August 1939. She left Liverpool bound for Douglas at 01.01 with 206 passengers on board, arriving at 05.40. At 08.38 she departed Douglas for Dublin, in thick fog, with 617 passengers on board, arriving in the Irish capital at 13.43. With 385 passengers on board she left Dublin at 17.37 arriving back in her home port at 23.08 – a busy day indeed!

Tuesday 29th August saw her leave Douglas at 09.06 with 452 passengers on a calm sea with a light variable wind and a few fog patches left over from the day before, heading once more for Liverpool, berthing at the Pier Head at 12.48. She departed Liverpool at 15.34 with only 169 passengers and arrived at Douglas at 19.08.

Wednesday 30th August was her final sailing to Dublin. She left Douglas at 08.39, sailing into a slight sea, a light south easterly breeze and it was hazy. There were 768 passengers on board who disembarked at about 13.30. 557 passengers embarked for her 17.30 departure back to Dublin. She left five minutes late, passing the Bailey and sailing into Dublin Bay for the last time. She got back to Douglas at 21.48.

Thursday 31st August was a much quieter day. She was rostered only for a Calf of Man cruise. She left Douglas at 19.43, she was off the Calf just over an hour later and she was back at just passed 22.00. Just on 400 passengers did the cruise; little did they know that the ship would never return.

Friday 1st September was her final commercial sailing to Liverpool. She left Douglas at 09.02, was off the Bar at 12.23 and arrived at Liverpool at 12.42. There was a light south south easterly breeze and 848 passengers were on board. The return sailing left Liverpool at 15.37, berthing at Victoria Pier at 19.04. There were 327 passengers on board.

Saturday 2nd September was her final day of Steam Packet service and saw her leaving Douglas at 06.47 heading for Fleetwood. There were 2082 passengers leaving the Island on her that day and they passed the Wyre Light at 09.38 arriving at Fleetwood at 09.55. A quick turn round saw the ship depart at 10.47 with only 308 passengers on board. The sea was slight, there was a light south easterly breeze as the **Mona's Queen** set course for her home port for the last time, berthing there at 13.48. Her final sailing was back to Fleetwood, departing Douglas at 16.07. Once again the sea was smooth, the wind light; there was a haze as the ship steamed out of her home port and left the shores of the Isle of Man for ever. Many of the 1387 passengers on board no doubt were wondering if the German army would withdraw from Poland and peace would once more descend on Europe. Of course war was inevitable and as the passengers disembarked at 19.20 no other fare paying passengers would ever again stroll the decks or relax in the elegant saloons of this fine steamer.

Next morning the 3rd September 1939, as Britain and France were declaring war on Germany, the **Mona's Queen** left Fleetwood light at 06.09 and sailed to Liverpool where she was chartered by the Admiralty. She retained her Manx Captain and crew.

A Short War.

The **Mona's Queen** reached Southampton from Liverpool on the 4th September and her role as a troopship began very quickly. She left Southampton at 12.45 on the 7th September carrying French reservists to Cherbourg but on subsequent passages she carried British troops. She was in fact the first troopship to make regular crossings to France.

Early in 1940, on the 7th January, she was transferred to Dover where until May 14th she was engaged in bringing troops home on leave from Boulogne. On May 14th she was ordered to sail to The Netherlands to evacuate Dutch troops but as she approached the coast she was attacked by German bombers and the thick smoke from burning oil drums hampered her progress. Early on the 15th May it was realised that the Dutch Army had surrendered so the **Mona's Queen** returned to Dover. There was no time to rest however as the next day she was ordered to proceed to Ostend to evacuate British troops. She was once again attacked by enemy bombers and the ever present threat of mines were a constant worry, but she managed to evacuate 1,786 British, Dutch, French and Belgian men, women and children and arrived at Folkestone by 21.25 on the 16th May.

Three days later she was back at Boulogne rescuing troops and returned once again on the 23rd May when she took across a contingent of Irish and Welsh Guards who were to act as a demolition squad at the French port – over 250 tons of ammunition and explosives were carried to facilitate that purpose. Many refugees boarded for the return crossing and the **Mona's Queen** left her berth just in time as German bombs devastated the quay at which she had been lying, destroying much of the explosive material that had just been landed there.

Dunkirk.

At mid-day on the 26th May the **Mona's Queen** left the Kent coast, bound for Dunkirk and Operation Dynamo. As she approached the port shell splinters from guns on shore damaged her masts and deck fittings and damage to steam pipes was also caused by bombs narrowly missing the ship. She berthed at a quay and embarked 4,000 troops according to her Captain, although this figure was disputed later in the official report. She reached Dover safely and repairs were effected.

The **Mona's Queen** left Dover in the early hours of the 29th May, carrying fresh water for the troops. However at 06.00, within two miles of Dunkirk Harbour she was blown up by a magnetic mine and broke her back and sank. **H.M.S Vanquisher** picked up 32 survivors but one of them died on the way home. Over 20 of the ship's company were lost.

Postscript.

Since the 29th May 1940, the remains of the **Mona's Queen** remained on the seabed where she had sunk, just two miles off Dunkirk. However, in 2010, to mark the 70th anniversary of the sinking of the ship, together with her fleetmates **King Orry** and **Fenella**, the starboard anchor of the **Mona's Queen** was raised from the seabed in a ceremony attended by Manx Government officials and officials of the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company. Also present was Captain Hamish Ross, formerly Managing Director of the Steam Packet, who together with the late Captain Andrew Douglas, had been the main impetus in the planning and eventual success of the venture.

During the anchor raising ceremony the Royal Navy frigate **H.M.S. Monmouth** had been present and fired a 12 gun salute as the anchor broke the surface.

It is intended that the anchor will be returned to the Isle of Man and displayed as a fitting memorial to all Manx seamen who lost their lives during the Second World War. The location of the memorial has not yet been decided although the Calf of Man has been suggested as a suitable place.

For the Record.

The Way Books of the Company provide vast amounts of information about every voyage of the Steam Packet ships. Another mine of information are the books entitled "Particulars of Steamers" which belonged to the Engineering Superintendent and provide us with a huge amount of information about the performance of the ships in service. For example, the record runs of the **Mona's Queen** are recorded thus;

Record Runs between Liverpool and Douglas.

12th September 1934: Douglas Head to Bar Lightship – 2 hours 28 minutes – 22.3 knots.

to Victoria Tower – 3 hours 11 minutes – 22.0 knots.

18th June 1935; Douglas Head to Bar Lightship – 2 hours 26 minutes – 22.6 knots.

to Victoria Tower – 3 hours 10 minutes – 22.1 knots.

17th July 1936; Douglas Head to Bar Lightship – 2 hours 25 minutes – 22.76 knots.

to Victoria Tower – 3 hours 9 minutes – 22.22 knots.

These figures compare with the record run of the **Lady of Mann**, which was from Douglas Head to the Lune Buoy on the 6th August 1934 which was 2 hours 3 minutes at an average speed of 23.9 knots. The **Ben-My-Chree's** record was on the 18th July 1929 from Douglas Head to the Bar, which took her 2 hours 23 minutes at an average speed of 23.08 knots.

Mona's Queen; time and speed on service – average per year.

Year. Between Head and Tower.

Between Head and Bar.

<u>Time.</u>	<u>Knots.</u>	<u>Time.</u>	<u>Knots.</u>
1934 3h 36 mins.	20.4.	2h 34 mins.	21.35.
1935 3h 24 mins.	20.6.	2h 34 mins.	21.35.
1936 3h 28 mins.	20.2.	2h 37 mins.	21.02.
1937 3h 28 mins.	20.2.	2h 37 mins.	21.02.
1938 3h 27 mins.	20.3.	2h 38 mins.	20.88.
1939 3h 24 mins.	20.6.	2h 33 mins.	21.56.

Average/3h 26.1 mins. 20.4.

2h 35.5 mins. 21.22.

6 years.

References and Acknowledgments.

Way Books of the Mona's Queen.

Particulars of Steamers. (Both by kind permission of Manx National Heritage).

Life and Times of the Steam Packet by John Shepherd; Ferry Publications 1994.

Island Lifeline by Connery Chappell; Stephenson and Sons 1985.

West Coast Steamers by Duckworth and Langmuir; Stephenson and Sons 1966.

Shipbuilding and Shipping Record; August 9th 1934.

MERSEY MARITIME NEWS

August 2010

On the 5th the cruise liner **Astor** berths at the Cruise Liner Terminal. This German owned vessel, operated by Transocean Tours, was built in 1987 as the Russian **Fedor Dostoevskiy** and is of 20,606 gross tons. She departed the Mersey the same day at 19.00.

The cruise liner **Crown Princess** calls at the Cruise Liner Terminal on the 14th. Owned by Princess Cruise Lines, she was built in 2006 and is of 113,561 gross tons. She flies the flag of Bermuda. It is reported that when she left the Mersey on the evening tide, she left behind 14 Chilean passengers who dawdled too long among the delights of Liverpool! The Crown Princess returned to the Mersey on the 26th August, but not presumably just to pick up her errant passengers.

Two days later, on the 16th, **The World** calls at the Cruise Liner Terminal. This unusual cruise liner does not have ordinary cruise passengers but mostly has residents on board who live on the liner for longer or shorter periods and quite simply, cruise the world. She is owned by ResidenSea of Norway and was built in 2002. She is 43,188 gross tons and has a service speed of 18 knots.

A further cruise liner visit occurs on the 22nd when the **Azamara Journey** visits the port and berths at the Cruise Liner Terminal. This vessel, owned by Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd, is of 30,277 gross tons and was built in 2000. She flies the Maltese flag.

Observers had noted that over the last few months three of Everard's coastal tankers had been laid up in Vittoria Dock, Birkenhead. On the 24th it was observed that one of them, the **Superiority**, was towed out of the dock system to one of Cammell Laird's dry docks. Here she was refitted and came out on the September 3rd in full James Fisher livery and left the Mersey for further service. Fisher's, of course, had taken over F.W. Everard's fleet a couple of years ago. On September 4th, the **Asperity** was towed out of Vittoria Dock and was given the same "makeover", returning to service with James Fisher later in the month.

On the 27th August the cruise liner **Ocean Countess**, formerly **Cunard Countess**, enters Langton Dock to originate a cruise from Liverpool to Norway. Owned by Majestic International Cruises, this 1976 built vessel is of 16,795 gross tons and has a service speed of 18 knots. After her Norwegian cruise she returned to the Mersey and offered a short cruise to Southampton via Cobh in Ireland. Many observers believe that if the cruises prove successful, the ship will return in future years to take up the business which will have been abandoned by Fred Olsen Cruise Lines when they cease to operate from Langton Dock and the Mersey in 2012.

On the 31st the Port of Liverpool cargo figures for 2009 are released. In all the port handled 29.8 million tonnes of cargo in 2009, a fall of 7% year on year and 12% below the peak of 33.78 million tonnes in 2005.

September 2010

On the 10th, the **European Endeavour**, of P&O Line, entered dry dock at Cammell Laird for refit. She left on the 20th bound for further service out of Dunkerque.

A long time resident of the Birkenhead Dock system, the former **H.M.S. Bronington**, is towed from Vittoria Dock, where she has been berthed alongside the former HMS Plymouth since the demise of the Historic Warships several years ago. She is towed into the Gillbrook Basin in the West Float. Observers had noted for many months that the ship, formerly commanded by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, had developed a severe list. Reports of the condition of the vessel range from abysmal to frightening! At the time of writing her fate is unclear.

The R.F.A. tanker **Gold Rover** leaves dry dock at Cammell Laird and enters Alfred Lock on the afternoon tide, on her way to Bidston Dock for further work in her current refit. This leaves the R.F.A. supply vessel **Fort Rosalie** on her own in the dry docks of Cammell Laird at Birkenhead.

October 2010

Another R.F.A. vessel, the **Wave Knight**, which had been under refit in Canada Dock, leaves the dock system after her refit is complete on the 25th. Taking advantage of the morning tide, she heads out to sea and further service.

Worrying developments for the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company are evident on the 26th when Mezeron of Ramsey start a twice daily freight service from Liverpool (Seaforth) to Douglas using two Lithuanian vessels, the **Kurkse** and **Kalana**. Mezeron, owned by the German shipping company Peter Doehle, get round the User Agreement linkspan problem by using unit load containers which are craned off on the Edward Pier at Douglas. The Steam Packet warn that a significant loss of its freight revenue might well have a negative effect on the frequency and fare structure of its passenger operations.

As she approached the river entrance on the 27th, the self loading bulker the **Stella Gemma**, lost power in her main engines which could not be re-started. The tugs **Ashgarth** at the stern and **Svitzer Stanlow** at the bow tried to bring the ship under control but during this attempt the stern line parted and the **Svitzer Stanlow** had to bring her round as she slowed. The docking was aborted and once the ship regained some power she returned to her anchorage at the Bar to affect full repairs.

A naval visitor for the Cruise Liner Terminal on the 29th when the Patrol Ship **H.M.S. Mersey** visited the port. She departed on the 1st November.

November 2010

On the 3rd the Isle of Man Steam Packet fastcraft **Manannan** sails light from Douglas and berths at the landing stage. Later she enters Alexandra Dock to go into winter hibernation alongside her fleetmate, the **Snaefell**.

On the 4th another naval visitor berths at the Cruise Liner Terminal, this time the powerful frigate **H.M.S. Argyll** (F231). She departs on the 7th, several hours earlier than planned to avoid predicted bad weather in the Irish Sea.



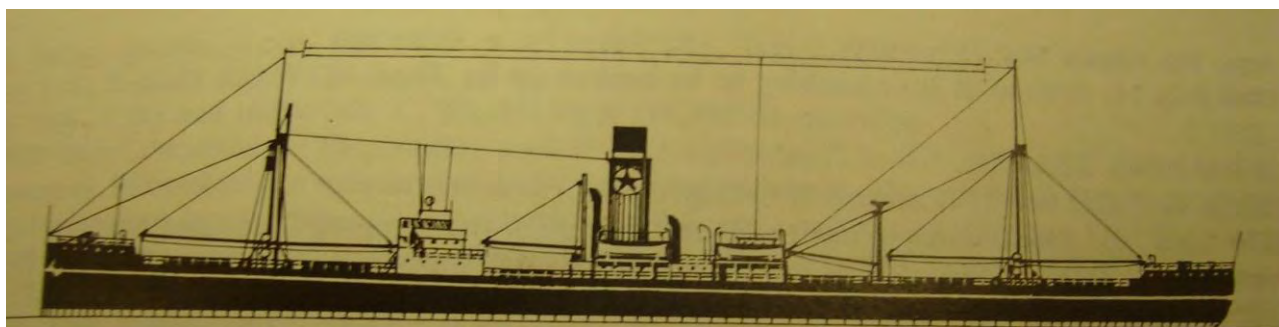
The Ocean Countess in Liverpool Bay September 25th 2010. (Adrian Sweeney)

The Liverpool Nautical Research Society

(Founded in 1938)

THE BULLETIN

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The refrigerated cargo liner ss **Royal Star** was built in Belfast by Workman, Clarke and Co.
Her dimensions were 450 x 58.5 x 37.1 feet with a gross tonnage of 7,900 (4,880 net)
On 20 April, 1944 she was torpedoed by enemy aircraft and sunk N.E. of Algiers

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Brocklebank's **Mahseer** is featured on page 5. Here pictured in 1948, on her maiden voyage



The fully restored classic yacht **Nahlin** at Dartmouth in July 2010.

Is also featured on page 20

Clip taken with owners approval from www.youtube.com/topcamerman

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MEMORIES OF RATS NOXAS

By William Bones

When I mention (occasionally) that for two years, two months, and two days, I sailed in a vessel called '**Saxon Star**', even men quite senior gaze at me in astonishment—provided, of course, they have not heard it all before.

'The WHAT Star?' they ask, as though I had said I had sailed in Captain Cook's **Endeavour**. They are not aware, these young fellows, that at one time it was customary to name Blue Star Line ships after Trojans and Romans, Vikings and Normans—and Saxons. It was later that ships came to be christened after the place they would trade to: Australia and New Zealand, Melbourne and Auckland etc. With the latest ships the style has changed once more. I suppose the last ship to be named after a tribe (if that is the word) is **Canadian Star**.

But Saxon? The name does indeed have a fine, seafaring ring about it (unlike the names of some box boats I could mention). When one hears **Saxon Star** for the first time, the mind conjures up visions of tall masts, elaborate clipper bows with figure heads, tailboards, gilded scrolls. Yet the last ship of that name was not so ancient, really. She was built in Belfast in 1942 as the **Empire Strength**, along the lines, I have been told, of a pre-war Bank Boat. But, unlike the Bank Boats, she was fully-refrigerated in the modern manner. Unlike most refrigerated ships before her, and many built later, she did not have her cargo spaces lined with brine pipes, but had the brine pipes in the nest in separate compartments, with electric fans to drive the cool air through her cargo.

She had five hatches, only one tween deck, two derricks to each hatch, and was what many engineers referred to as a steamship with a main propulsion diesel, for although her main engine was a Harland B and W, all her auxiliaries, steering gear, and cargo winches were driven by steam.

Neat little craft

She was a very neat, trim-looking little craft, of 7355 gross tons, flush decked with a raked plate stem, rounded bridge front, and full cruiser stern.

Far from having tall masts and yards, her two masts were very stumpy, and did not even carry topmasts. Over her bridge she had the wartime signal mast known as a Christmas tree, from which her flags flew bravely, if sootily, as they were very close to the top of her squat funnel. Her decks were of steel, but the bridge deck and the deck below—the Captain's Deck—were covered with black bitumastic. She hurtled around the oceans at twelve knots on a good day, ten or eleven more often, eight or nine quite frequently, and almost nothing in a strong head wind and swell. But she carried her cargoes well, and provided employment for what would now seem an enormous crew, usually about forty-eight men all told

Her navigational gear was simple, consisting of two magnetic compasses, an echo sounder which rarely worked, and a DF set of considerable antiquity and doubtful reliability. No gyro compass, radar, or any of your fancy modern gadgets.



'Saxon Star' at Durban in 1953



At Circular Quay, Sydney, in 1954.

The famous Opera House now occupies this site

Her accommodation, however, was not at all bad for her time, and she even boasted an Officers' smoke room. Air conditioning was provided by round portholes in every cabin, and at least one electric fan per room. The cadets' cabin, which bore over its door the rather quaint sign, 'Apprentices', was situated above somewhere rather hot, and as its one porthole faced aft the cadets usually slept out on deck when in the tropics. This, of course, was very healthy—until the rains came in the middle of one's slumbers.

Pride and joy

Though tiny by modern standards this cabin was our pride and joy. When I joined the ship for the first time, in Salford Dock, Manchester, I was the junior cadet, and my mate went to some pains to lay down for me the very high standard of cleanliness that he expected me to keep it in. Though senior to me, he was a bit younger, and not much bigger. So after a certain amount of discussion on the matter, the work of maintaining these unquestionably excellent standards was shared by us both. I remember him making a truly magnificent job of our small mahogany desk, which he stripped right off to the bare wood and then frenchpolished until it looked better than new. We bought the french polish for it ourselves too.

Our bunks were one above the other, with blue curtains and bunklights which we discovered were made of copper. These, together with other bits of brass in the room, we polished to a brilliant gleam, often in our spare time, especially before entertaining guests in port. The cabin floor was composition, painted red, and I remember a certain Chief Steward becoming incensed when my mate 'found' us a carpet square—but after various altercations we were allowed to keep it.

There were no bars on that ship, no films, no television; yet life at sea seemed to be lived at a much more communal level than it is today. Ships spent longer at sea and longer in port then, and people onboard provided their own entertainment. They spent a lot of time in each other's cabins, yarning, and hobbies were indulged in to a great degree. Socks had to be darned in those days, and mending, together with the ironing of whites, took a lot of one's spare time.

In those balmy days cadets were able to supplement their princely salaries (twelve pounds a month in the second year) by earning overtime at the rate of one and sixpence an hour. Many were the happy, often hilarious, evenings spent cleaning and painting holds, repairing damaged insulation, cleaning bilges, battening-out for future freezer cargoes, and painting cabins and alleyways, for formica bulkheads were practically unheard of. Wads of cotton waste, or a four-inch brush bent on to the end of a bamboo manhelp, were much used, as paint rollers were not then in vogue. They may have been used ashore, but not at sea. These toilsome tasks were not considered drudgery, and we never regarded ourselves as cheap labour. They were a useful form of income, usually undertaken in a light-hearted spirit, and some of the yarns we heard from the sailors whilst working with them made our hair stand on end. In addition, it was part of our education.

Friends for life

I mentioned the entertainment of guests. This was quite a feature of life in port, and I still think our greatest effort in that direction was when we entertained the whole of the Port Curtis Sailing Club of Gladstone, Queensland, to an evening aboard in the cadets' cabin. Cadets in those days were not officially allowed liquor, but this ruling could usually be got around provided discretion was used, and on this occasion our guests were more than generous. I made friends then who are still my friends today. The Port Curtis Sailing Club had made us so welcome, and treated us with so much kindness and hospitality, that we felt we must make an effort to reciprocate, and our party was the result. Happy days!

Saxon Star, as already mentioned, began life in Belfast as the **Empire Strength**, armed with a four-inch gun down aft and numerous anti-aircraft guns besides. Ten years later the guns had long gone, but the magazines for the ammunition were still there, as were the gunners' quarters, with notices on the doors saying that the door must not be shut when the vessel was in a danger zone (in case it jammed shut with the occupants inside). All the cabin doors had crash panels in the lower half, which could be easily kicked out if the occupant were trapped within, and each cabin porthole had a hand-rail outside, to enable a man to haul himself out if necessary. One still came across grey wartime paint here and there, and the compasses were surrounded by elaborate apparatus to shield them from the effects of the degaussing gear, the purpose of which was to

protect the ship from magnetic mines. During the war she voyaged all over the world, but she must have come through unscathed as she is not mentioned in Taffrail's book, *Blue Star Line at War* (recently republished).



Saxon Star

At a time quite early in her career, she was involved in a collision in Port Phillip, near Melbourne, with an Australian ship called **Iron Monarch**. I have been told that one of the lawyers engaged in the subsequent court case was a brother of Mr (later Sir) Robert Menzies, the distinguished Australian Prime Minister.

Last Voyage

The **Empire Strength** was renamed **Saxon Star** in 1949, the second Blue Star ship to bear the name. Unlike most others given one of the old-fashioned names after the war, hers was not changed until sold out of the Company in 1961. Her twin sister, the **Empire Castle** of 1943, became the **Gothic Star** in 1946, but this was changed to **Nelson Star** in 1947, and again, to **Patagonia Star**, in 1958. (The former **Patagonia Star** reverted to her original name of **Columbia Star** about this time, having been with Lamport & Holt's for a spell in the meantime as the **Dryden**.) The new owner of the old **Saxon Star**, D L Street of Newport, Monmouthshire, named her the **Redbrook**, and she sailed as a general cargo tramp under this name until 1965, when she passed to the Greeks and became the **E Evangelia**. She was wrecked in the Black Sea on 19 October 1968, while on passage in ballast from Rijeka to Contanza. She was declared a total loss.

Though the Company's trade routes in the early fifties were more defined than they are today, she visited several ports off the beaten track. Not many Blue Star ships these days call at Manchester or Middlesbrough, where she loaded.

Tenerife was the port for bunkers, and she would then go out to the Cape, calling at all the ports from Cape Town to Beira. In Beira she loaded copper for Port Kembla, and usually called at the full range of Australian ports, often going on to New Zealand. We called at Galveston in Texas once, and sailed from Hamilton, Bermuda, one Christmas Eve, that fairytale town bright with coloured lights and Christmas trees.

But how does this nostalgic little piece get its title? Well, in the early fifties it was considered humorous to say a name backwards—and seamen are nothing if not humorous.

AN IGNOMINIOUS END

By Captain A.C Sprigings

This extract is taken from the book 'Beyond the Mersey', and is published with the Author's kind permission.

*[Editor's Note: Brocklebank's **Mahseer** was built in 1948 by William Hamilton & Co. 3 Scotch boilers and single reduction turbines gave a speed of 15 knots. With gross registered tonnage of 8,961 her overall length was 508ft. with a beam of 67ft.]*

In October of 1974 my wish was granted and I was given the title of Operations Manager. It was a peculiar title really because it only applied to the 'conventional tonnage'. That is, the residue of the Brocklebank fleet and a few of the Port Line vessels seconded to the Indian trade. Almost as soon as I was appointed a further spate of ship selling took place and things were beginning to look fairly desperate.

In the June of the following year I was required to take a trip to Karachi to supervise the beaching of one of our vessels the S.S. **Mahseer**, which had been sold to the Pakistani breakers for scrap.

This proved to be far more difficult than anyone had been led to believe because firstly it was very late in the season with the south west Monsoon about to start and the Master and crew of the vessel were convinced that they were being sent to their deaths.

I arrived ahead of the ship and spent the first few days discussing how it was to be done and being taken out to see the area in which the beaching would take place. This was known as Gadani Beach and when I arrived there I was amazed to see ninety ships already beached and being slowly cut up into manageable pieces that could be transported to the smelting plant.

This saga began in the Marble Arch Office when I was visited by a

representative of the buyers. He was a very interesting character who unfortunately was an alcoholic and could not conduct his business without several sips from a flask that he carried with him.

I must admit that I was not too sure that we would ever get our money from the sale because one tends to be suspicious of doing business with people who smell strongly of drink at nine o'clock in the morning. Despite these misgivings a deal was struck and the details of the beaching were discussed. It was during one of the meetings, we had three or four, that it was decided that I should go to Karachi to establish an agency to represent owners interests rather than buyers.

As I had mentioned the beaching had been arranged to take place in June and this was considered to be very late in the season because the south west monsoon was becoming well established by that time. Actually I think we had rather hoped to have got her there by the end of May but because of engine trouble she was making a very slow passage from U.K. I arrived out there about three days before the ship and consequently had plenty of time to get things ready. I had long discussions with the pilot who would be doing the job and he was not at all certain that it was possible because of the large swell that had begun. He was a very experienced Sikh and I could see that if he said no, we were going to be in breach of contract. He finally agreed to reserve judgement pending the arrival of the ship and if all was well he would consider trying it.



ss **Mahseer** in the River Hooghly – picture by LNRS Member J Pottinger

The message arrived next day that **Mahseer** had arrived at the anchorage off Karachi and I boarded a launch to go out and discuss details with the Captain.

The journey out in the launch took about thirty minutes and the swell got

steeper and steeper, by the time we got alongside we were rising and falling so much that one minute we were level with her deck and the next we could see her bilge keel. Probably some twenty five feet of vertical movement as each swell past under us. After carefully judging the timing of the swell I jumped from the launch at the moment when we were level with her deck and fortunately landed on board.

Somewhat shaken by this experience I then had to set about convincing the Captain that it would be quite safe to thrust his ship at the beach without fear of any accident. He was very far from convinced but agreed at least to have a try. The biggest worry was the state of the engine because it was certainly on its last legs and the Chief Engineer could only promise a maximum of 80 revolutions and even that for only a few hours because they were nearly out of fuel oil. Having listened to this tale of woe it was now time for me to try and board the launch once more and get back to the office.

Getting on board was equally exciting and depended very much on the skill of the helmsman, who managed with great dexterity to bring her alongside right on the top of the swell and all I had to do was step across. I shudder to think what would have happened if I had missed my footing at that moment!

The following morning the pilot boarded **Mahseer** and they set off for Gadani Beach, some thirty nine miles up the coast. I waited for a while and then drove up there to be ready for the actual beaching. I had the agent with me and we arrived at this desolate spot in an otherwise featureless desert, to be greeted by a motley array of offices all standing on stilts which kept them from filling up with sand.

We made our way to one of these and after climbing up an old ship's companionway which had obviously been taken from one of the wrecks, entered an office which would have done justice to a place in Dickens. There were a couple of 'Babus' scratching away at ledgers and most incongruously, every now and then picking up a radio telephone to discuss something with the gang at the waters edge.

We were offered seats in this Office to await the arrival of our ship but as it was so hot we decided to wait outside until she was sighted. I was suddenly aware of great excitement within the office and calls of "Sahib, Sahib, your ship is not coming!" I rushed up the steps and grabbed a radio telephone and called the Captain to ask what was the matter. He replied that the weather was too bad and that he was going back to Karachi.

I was speechless because the weather was certainly not going to improve and the next try would be even worse. But I had not heard the worst because it seemed that the officers and crew were on the brink of mutiny and were refusing to risk their lives. There was no point in remaining at the Beach with the ship having turned tail so I set off for Karachi myself and yet another trip out to the ship.

This time the boarding was not quite so alarming but the reception I got more than made up for this. The Captain had virtually washed his hands of the whole affair and he advised me that none of the officers wanted to be party to another attempt. This was not going to be easy but nevertheless it had to be done because we were under contract to deliver the ship to the beach and the alternative of leaving her at anchor until the change of monsoon, some four months, later was just not feasible.

I therefore asked the Captain to muster all the officers on the boat deck and I would address them and try to allay their fears. This proved easier than I had first thought because most of their fears were groundless and based on the premise that the ship had a keel, something similar to that of a yacht and therefore when she ran onto the Beach she would fall over and they would all be thrown off and drowned in the surf. I could hardly believe that I was hearing this from people who made their living from going to sea. Admittedly the deck officers knew this was not the fact but they were in favour of supporting any action that would prevent them having to try again.

After some fairly tough talking I managed to convince them that all would be well but then the Chief Engineer chimed in with the fact that he was running out of distilled water for the boilers. I suggested that in that case he should put salt water in them because this was a one way trip and it didn't matter what happened to the boilers once we had grounded her.

He was very unhappy about this and was sure that it would be only as a very last resort that he would ever contemplate such drastic action. After what seemed ages I finally got them all to agree to have one final attempt the next morning and taking my leave of them I jumped into the launch and went back to my hotel to await developments.

First thing the following morning I again set off for Gadani Beach to await the arrival of the doomed ship. At about midday, around the point she came, smoke pouring from her funnel. I noted that the swell was much larger than the day before but the wind had also strengthened and was whipping up the sea and making the spume fly.

To ensure that a beaching is successful the vessel must be trimmed as nearly as possible to the angle of the shelf of the beach. This had been done in the case of **Mahseer** but of course it is not possible to allow for the rise and fall created by the swell and this was posing a problem.

As she commenced her final run in a large swell picked her up and she seemed to rush in towards us then suddenly she staggered and slewed sideways across the waves. For an instant I thought we had lost her, but she seemed to shake herself and turn the full 180 degrees until she was pointing out to sea again.

This of course meant that she was now trimmed entirely the wrong way for a shelving beach and in a matter of moments she had grounded with her

stern to the beach. There was not another revolution left in her engine to try and move her again, so there she stayed at least 1000 feet out of position, the wrong way round and completely helpless.

The buyer, who had been witness to the whole episode, was jumping up and down saying that this was simply useless and he was not going to pay, but I reminded him that the contract called for the ship to be beached but it didn't say which way round and therefore he would have to pay. Whilst all this was taking place, over the noise of the surf, I heard another deep booming sound. Looking out to sea I could see that the bow of **Mahseer**, being afloat, was swinging round to starboard and hitting the stern of a large tanker that had been beached next to her. It was a very eerie sound and because of the distance involved, it was possible to see the two ships hitting together before the sound reached us. It was in fact a blessing in disguise because the tanker being the right way round would prove the means of escape for the Officers and crew provided they could jump across each time the two ships met.

I called the Captain on the "Walkie Talkie" and suggested that this would be the way to disembark his Officers and crew, all 68 of them. He was not best pleased by this advice but there was no other possible alternative with the tide still rising. So with great trepidation the escape began. Thinking about it now I realise how lucky we were not to have any serious injuries because once aboard what remained of the tanker they had to make their way up to her bow which was standing about fifty feet above the waters edge. They had then to crawl through into her chain locker and down to where a hole had been cut in the bow plates and then climb down a wire ladder into the water. You can imagine that having assured them all the day before that nothing could go wrong I came in for a lot of stick but as I pointed out 'the best made plans of mice and men gang aft agley'. After all they were all safe even if they were a bit wet!

The final corollary to this tale is even more bizarre because when we had all left the scene, in the middle of the night the high tide proved even higher than the tide we had beached her on and she took off, all on her own and beached herself on a shoal some three miles out to sea! We of course were not aware of this and it was some two years later that I had a visit from the same buyer's representative with a handful of photographs to prove it. He said it had taken them two years to dismantle her on the reef and he was simply wishing to prove that they were not the rogues I had first taken them for!

REMEMBER THOSE DAYS

From 1970 and also 1990, these are a sample of events selected from the archives, and published by kind permission of Sea Breezes.

January to March, 1970

In October, whilst on passage from Hull to Portland, Oregon the Royal Mail motorship **Loch Loyal** experienced a major engine room fire which destroyed the port switchboard, main cables and extensively buckled plating in the engine room. The Hamburg-Amerika liner **Thuringia** took off the passengers and all but 12 of the crew; subsequently the fire was extinguished and the crew rejoined the ship, passengers being taken on to Cristobal by the **Thuringia** to continue their journeys. Meanwhile **Loch Loyal** was towed to the Azores by the Dutch tug **Tasman Zee**; and then by another Dutch tug the **Elbe** to Belfast for repair by Harland & Wolff

The **Challey** (2,175 tons gross), a member of the Stephenson, Clarke fleet since she was built in 1957 is a good example of a trunk deck tanker, but has been sold to Italian buyers and is now trading under the new name of **Filiendi**. She was one of S-C's first tankers having being completed by the Grangemouth Dockyard Co. in September, 1957 and has an 8-cylinder Polar oil engine giving a speed of 11 knots.

Liverpool's overseas passenger traffic has suffered a serious blow with the decision of CP Ships to dispose of their passenger liner **Empress of England** (24, 467 gross tons). This reduces the fleet to only the **Empress of Canada** (25,615 gross tons); meaning that only four ships carry significant numbers of overseas passengers from Liverpool. The **Empress of Canada**, Elder Dempster's **Aureol** and the Aznar Lines' **Monte Anaga** and **Monte Umbe**, the two latter serving the Canary Islands.

American Export Isbrandtsen Lines report the sale of the **Constitution** (23,754 gross tons); built in 1951 by the Bethlehem Steel Co., Quincy, Mass., and a twin-screw steam turbine ship having the unusual feature of an attractive counter stern, she has a speed of 22½ knots and is fully air-conditioned. American President Lines have sold their **President Roosevelt** (18,920 gross tons), also to the Chandris Group. The latter was built by the Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co., of Kearny, NJ. In 1944. Again a twin-screw steam turbine powered vessel her speed is 20 knots; she also is fully air-conditioned and is stabilised by the Flume system.

The former Royal Mail cargo motorship **Escalante** (7,791 gross tons) recently sold to Greek buyers, has not lasted very long under her new owners. Renamed **Manes P.** she was driven aground in stormy weather near St. John, N.B., and after several unsuccessful attempts at refloating, is to be sold for breaking up.

Work is in progress on the new headquarters for the Mersey Division, Royal Naval Reserve, at Princes Half-Tide Dock, Liverpool. The entire project, estimated to cost over £200,000, is scheduled for completion early in 1971. The new headquarters will replace the static drill ship **HMS Eaglet**, a Racehorse Class frigate built in 1918 as **HMS Sir Bevis** and renamed in 1926 as headquarters.

January to March, 1990

For Det Forenede Dampskibs-Selskab, Akties, to give the 134-year old Copenhagen shipping firm its full name, the latter part of 1989 will be a period best forgotten. First the **Tor Britannia**, bound from Harwich to Gothenburg, had trouble with English football supporters, one of whom went over the side and was drowned. Next 79 dogs, through no fault of the company, suffocated in the cages in which they had been consigned. A fire on the **Tor Scandinavia** cost the lives of two passengers. Then whilst outward bound from Hamburg to Harwich and nine miles south of Heligoland, the company's **Hamburg** was in collision with the container ship **Nordic Stream**; although there were Force 9 winds visibility was said to be good. The bows of the **Nordic Stream** penetrated the Mayfair Lounge wherein some of **Hamburg's** passengers were awaiting the start of a fancy dress competition. Two British tourists and a German Customs Officer died, and another British passenger was found seriously injured on the foredeck of the **Nordic Stream**

"The Dock" is a maritime museum project telling the story of steel ship building. It will open in Barrow early this year when a notable exhibit will be the bell of the First World War battleship **Vanguard**. Having been built by Vickers at Barrow in 1909, she fought at the Battle of Jutland, but did not suffer any damage or casualties. On 9 July, 1917, whilst at anchor in Scapa Flow she suddenly blew up. Eight hundred and four men lost their lives, only two survived.

From a bell to a propeller, one of the four which drove Blue Riband holder **Lusitania** until her tragic end in 1915 as victim of a torpedo from **U20**. Acquired by Merseyside Maritime Museum, it was due to arrive there from Pembroke Dock under police escort, 82 years after the Cunarder first sailed from Liverpool to New York in September, 1907. The propeller was salvaged in 1982

Over 33 years ago a link with another tragic Cunarder surfaced. On September 5, 1956, the company's **Saxonia**, anchored in the Mersey, made to weigh preparatory to moving to the Landing Stage. As her port anchor came up, so did another one. Both anchors had to be laid out by derrick on the deck of the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board's salvage vessel **Salvor** before they could be disentangled. Cleaning revealed the Lloyd's ID Numbers, which turned out to be those of the **Lancastria**. According to Cunard records she had lost it in the river in 1924!

Following negotiations which to the layman might seem more appropriate to an Eastern Bazaar than Whitehall, the M.O.D. has agreed to sell the withdrawn frigate **Plymouth** to the Warship Preservation Trust for £205,000, and an appeal has been launched to raise the money. A unit of the nine-strong "Rothesay" class of Modified Type-12 first-rate anti submarine frigates, she was built in 1961 at H.M. Dockyard, Devonport. She played an offensive role in the Falklands conflict, shooting down two enemy aircraft and damaging others. The surrender of South Georgia was signed in her wardroom, and she was the first ship to enter San Carlos water.

PROPOSED SUPER LINERS - 1950

By LNRS Member Gordon Bodey

In September 1950 it was announced by Mr Walter Ballard, speaking in Washington, that the company of which he was vice-president, Liberty Liners Inc., had drawn up a proposal to build two super liners, each of 105,000 tons. He stated that the proposal had considerable support from U.S. Government officials and that, *"they [the company] had not been discouraged anywhere along the line"*. He further stated that the company was awaiting a decision by the Federal Maritime Board on an application filed in July for a \$120 million construction subsidy toward the estimated total building cost of \$200 million (then about £71,430,000); with Liberty Liners finding the difference. Mr Ballard compared the requested construction subsidy to the cost to the U.S. Government of hiring Cunard's two 'Queens' as troop carriers in WWII, which he stated as \$150 million (about £57,143,000). He did not put a cost on the hiring of the two proposed liners for the same purpose.

The two liners were to be 1250ft long, 144ft wide, and have a draught of 34ft. Their cruising speed would be 34 knots, but they would be capable of a top speed of 38 knots. When built they would each be able to accommodate 10,000 passengers in a single class. If built commercially, completion would take three years, but in view of their importance in a defence role, it would be possible with the help of the U.S. Navy to complete them in two years. In fact, Mr Ballard reported, the U.S. Defence Department had studied the plans and was enthusiastic about the project.

Mr Ballard went on to say that the liners could bring about considerable savings in transatlantic fares: with 5,000 passengers on board, a one-way passage would cost \$100 (then £36), and the company would still show a profit; with 7,500 passengers the fare could be reduced to \$60. He estimated that the number of American tourists visiting Europe would rise rapidly from 400,000 in 1950 to some two million [many of them, apparently, by the new ships] per year, and that the ships could operate without U.S. Government subsidies.

In the event of war the ships could be converted 'overnight', and that each one would be able to carry up to 60,000 troops. He said, *"All we would have to do would be to take the spreads off the beds, and each liner would be able to carry 30,000 troops sleeping in eight-hour shifts. Therefore, it is obvious that by installing double-tiered bunks they could each carry 60,000"*.

In addition to their troop-carrying capacity, each ship's recreation spaces would become aircraft hangars capable of holding two hundred fighter aircraft, these being used *en route* to provide air cover, then unloaded in Europe. He envisaged that 2,000 aircraft and 600,000 troops could be ferried to Europe in thirty days.

To facilitate the use of the aircraft on trooping voyages, and subsequently if used as fighting ships in time of war, the funnels would be telescopic, the ventilators removable, and the masts could be lowered, thus providing a flight deck some 800ft

long and 140ft wide. No details were given of life-saving provision for over 60,000 troops and crew in the event of a disaster occurring whilst at sea.

However, another scheme, albeit on a much smaller scale, was already in progress and was to emerge as the **United States** less than two years later, having cost some \$77 million. Capable of carrying 14,000 troops should the need arise, and able to pass through the Panama Canal, she had a speed of 35 knots and an estimated top speed of 42 knots. Unfortunately, she was already entering obsolescence by the time of her maiden voyage in July 1952 as 'progress' in the form of jet air travel rapidly developed. The **United States** was withdrawn from service in 1969 due to commercial considerations.

Although Mr Ballard's innovative and imaginative scheme was not realised, its commercial *raison d'être* has been amply vindicated in the form of the very numerous, and often very large, cruise liners that now transport passengers by the millions per year.

Sources:

Report in Lloyd's List, 7th September, 1950

'Sail, Steam, and Splendour', B.S. Miller

SOCIETY VISIT TO LIVERPOOL COASTGUARD STATION

By Bill Ogle

Somehow the weather forecast for Thursday 11th November, 2010 was appropriate for a visit to H.M. Coastguard station by 15 members of the society.

Parking on the sea front adjacent to the impressively modern building we were very aware that "southwest veering west gale 8 to storm 10, occasionally violent storm 11" was imminent – in fact conditions in the Irish Sea peaked some 12 hours later with average wind speed of 44 knots and average wave height of 19 feet!

A fascinating introductory talk covered development of the Coast Guard Service from its earliest records in 1822 (although it possibly began some 60 years earlier) with a prime responsibility for the apprehension of smugglers and ship wreckers, through being incorporated in a variety of Governmental Bodies to establishment of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency in 1998. This was followed by a DVD which clearly showed how H.M. Coastguard now operates within the overall responsibilities of the M.C.A.

The specific objectives of HM Coastguard are to:

- respond to requests for assistance from, or for, vessels or persons in distress or potential distress, including those vessels or persons missing at sea or on the coastline
- respond in conjunction with the MCA's Counter-Pollution and Response

- Branch to reports of actual or potential threats of maritime pollution; use the skills and experience of Coastguard Officers in an accident prevention capacity by providing safety education for professional and recreational mariners, students and children in colleges and schools



The Crosby Station



Members gather...

A visit to the operations room, with its by now salt caked panoramic windows, made clear how “jobs” are handled using the wide range of linked systems to give immediate access to voice contact by radio, mobile phones and landlines; similarly the availability of on–line charts, maps and A.I.S. data. The ability to act in a co-ordinating role with direct access to a range of different Coastguard options, R.N.L.I. resources, air rescue by units of Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, Police and Air Ambulance as well as land based resources such as Police, Ambulance Services, Fire and Rescue Services and a wide range of other organisations is most impressive.

The Crosby Station, one of 21 regional bases, is the co-ordination centre for all Maritime Search and Rescue activity in the Liverpool District. The District extends from the Point of Ayr, North Wales out to some 20 miles south of the Isle of Man, and then to the Mull of Galloway (although the Isle of Man operates a separate and independent Coastguard for its own sea area).

THE WARNING

An elderly gentleman was on the operating table awaiting surgery and had insisted that his son, a renowned surgeon, perform the operation. As he was being prepped he asked to speak to his son.

"Yes Dad, what is it?"

"Don't be nervous, son; do your best and just remember, if it doesn't go well, if something happens to me ... your mother is going to come and live with you and your wife...."

LELIA

*A summary of a paper given to the Society by Chris Michael
on Thursday 18th November 2010.*

When the Liverpool-built paddle steamer **Lelia** left Liverpool on her maiden voyage on 14 January 1865, there were many men aboard who hoped to make their fortune by running the Union blockade of the Southern States. There were also several passengers aboard who were Confederate Navy personnel. She left as, technically, a British vessel but it was intended to change ownership to the Confederacy as they were crossing the Atlantic. The weather was stormy and the urgency of bringing help to the Confederate cause must have been a factor in deciding to depart. Her construction, loading and departure were observed by Union spies who sent records to Washington.

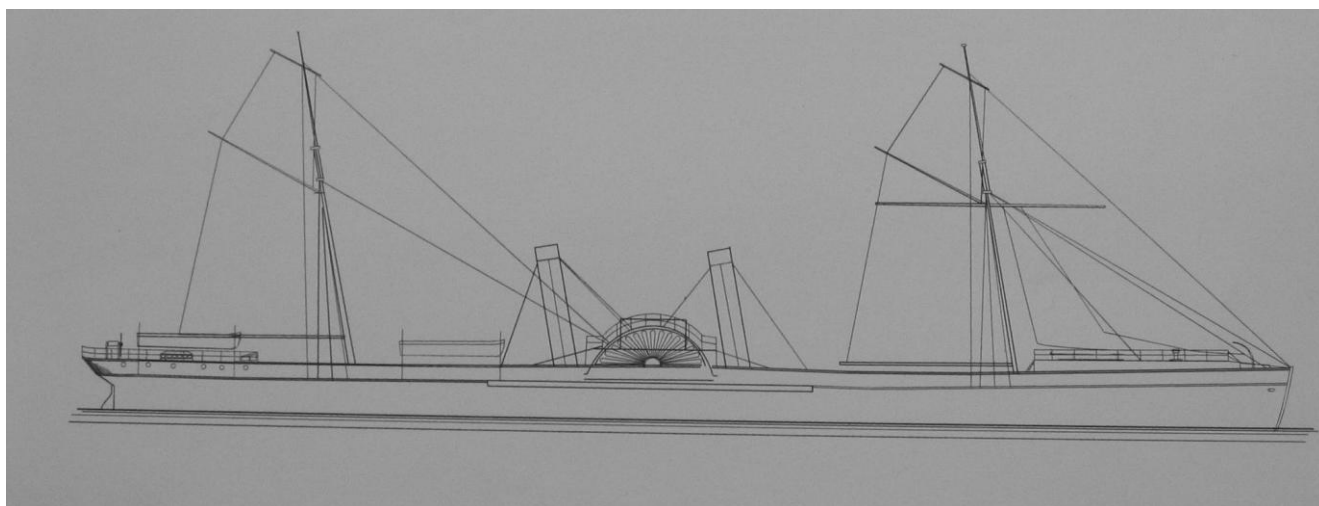
Liverpool was the port of entry for much cotton (going to be processed in the Lancashire mills) and the Confederate shipping agents in Liverpool arranged with local shipbuilders to construct vessels suitable to run the blockade. **Lelia** was a pioneering vessel for her day - steel built by Millers with enormous engines by Fawcett and Preston, giving her a good speed. She was designed as a high speed, shallow draft ship to bring cotton out of the Southern ports, running the blockade to a neutral port such as Bermuda where it was offloaded for transport to Liverpool.

Miller's shipyard in Toxteth had a record of innovative building. They had built the **Florida** (as she was named when a Confederate Navy vessel) which roamed the seas preying on Union merchant shipping. Miller's built the **Phantom** as a blockade runner: she was the first steel screw ship to cross the Atlantic and was a prototype for what became the basic ship design thereafter. By 1854, the success rate of blockade runners was rapidly declining and many replacements were under construction at Liverpool. In February 1855 the Toxteth shipyard of Jones Quiggin launched four blockade runners on the same day.

Lelia was launched in early 1855 and took on supplies, mainly coal. It was intended to cross the Atlantic mainly under sail, with coal reserved for high speed operations. Her crew had not had time to familiarise themselves with the vessel when she met a NW gale on leaving the shipping channel. She took in water forward and became unmanageable.

She was forced to turn around off the Great Orme and head back to Liverpool. Running downwind, she broached and was down by the head with the holds full of water so the order was given to abandon ship. In the huge waves many were lost in transferring to the ship's boats and then more lives were lost in getting aboard the Northwest Lightship. A further tragedy was the overturning of a Liverpool Lifeboat sent out to help. In total 47 men from the **Lelia** died (12 were saved) and 7 lifeboatmen perished. Among those lost were Confederate Navy

Commander Arthur Sinclair and Thomas Miller (the son of William Miller the shipbuilder). It was intended that Arthur Sinclair should be in command during blockade running, and **Lelia** had been named after the wife of Arthur Sinclair.



css **Lelia** – Rigging Plan

The wreck of the **Lelia** in Liverpool Bay was discovered and identified in 1997 by local amateur diver Chris Michael. He has written a book 'LELIA' (published by Countywise in association with Liverpool Marine Press) which gives full details of the construction, personnel, loss, shipwreck and also much background detail of Liverpool's connection with the Confederate cause. He was also involved in a TV programme in the Wreck Detectives series about the **Lelia** in 2003 which sought to establish whether she was carrying military supplies.

LOOKOUT VERSUS LIGHTS

With acknowledgement to *The Journal of Navigation:*
Some Sidelights on the Dark History of Navigation Lights

Before the middle of the 19th Century, sailing vessels under way at night did not set a light. This paper investigates the reasons for this practice and explains the development of navigation lights which culminated in the requirement for both steamships and sailing vessels to display lights at night.

It is the paradox of the twenty/twenty vision afforded by hindsight that it often obscures the state of knowledge in which the actor under investigation practised his art. Thus, it is very difficult for modern seamen to understand why it was a custom of the sea that sailing ships under way at night did not set a light so that other vessels would not collide with them. A clue to the reason for this custom is to be found in the returns of all vessels belonging to the United Kingdom reported on the books of *Lloyd's* in the years 1816, 1817 and 1818. Of the 1,204 ships

reported wrecked, missing or not heard of in those three years, 230 were wrecked, 109 lost on specified rocks or shoals and 151 stranded; whereas only 14, or approximately 1%, were run down. It is evident that the chance of being run down was only slight compared to the risk of running into some natural danger. The paramount objective was to see rather than be seen. It was vital that nothing should interfere with the night vision of the watch so that they could keep a good lookout. Ships at anchor were from the earliest times expected to show a light but this requirement was entirely consistent with the primacy of lookout over lights, since once a ship came to an anchor the need to keep a vigilant lookout ceased and the only remaining danger for the night was that of being run down in the roadstead.

When courts in England began to try collision cases on their merits, it was invariably decided that vessels under sail were under no necessity whatever to carry lights. Apart from the effect which carrying a light would have on one's own lookout, it was perceived by the Elder Brethren of Trinity House advising the Admiralty Court that there would be a danger to other ships in that such a light might be confused by them for lights on shore or lighthouses.

The advent of the steamship brought a new danger of collision. Ships were no longer constrained to sail together on the ebb and arrive together on the flood; nor were they driven by the same wind so that they were now likely to meet each other from opposite directions at full speed. The more direct course and certain reckoning of steamships meant, too, that they would not heave-to at night for navigational reasons. This increasing risk of collision is evident from the returns of all vessels belong to the United Kingdom reported on the books of *Lloyd's* in the years 1833, 1834 and 1835. Of the 1,690 ships reported wrecked, missing or not heard of in those three years, 49, or approximately 3%, were run down. This represented a three-fold increase in the risk of collision at sea since 1818, though loss from running down still accounted for only a small proportion overall and the principal dangers remained navigational (which a vigilant watch might avoid) and un-seaworthiness.

As early as 1822, a Committee of the House of Commons recommended the precaution of carrying a light. The danger of collision was in that year underscored when, for want of lights, the steam boat **Hercules** ran down the **Catherine Jane** on the Clyde, drowning forty two people. Again on the Clyde, in 1825 the steamer **Ayr** ran down the steam packet **Comet** with the loss of nearly seventy lives. However, the precaution of showing a light was always qualified by the need to mask it from the lookout. For example, in answer to the question: "Are there any regulations on the rivers in America as to the lights that should be carried in steamboats at nights, when it is dark?" Captain Basil Hall replied to the Select Committee on Steam Navigation in 1831: "None that I know of, but I think that every steam boat in America does carry a light under her bowsprit. I think a single light. It is certainly very low down. I never met a steam boat in America that had not a light low down.

That is my impression decidedly. Perhaps it is right to mention why it is so. The helmsman being forward, if there was a light so near him, it would prevent his steering. It is a great object in steering that the helmsman should have no light in his eyes."

Again, the Select Committee on Steam Vessel Accidents (1839) reported that "Mr Shaw, engineer to the City of Dublin Company, Liverpool, introduced a system of night signals in 1834 which has since been adopted by Her Majesty's packets at Liverpool, and by some other owners. This system consists of the exhibition of one white light at the foremast head, visible in clear weather from 8 to 10 miles, one white light attached to the fore-part of the starboard paddle box, which can be seen 4 miles in clear weather, and a third light which is red, attached to the fore part of the larboard paddle box, visible about 3 miles. The three lights can only be seen at one and the same time when right ahead, or nearly so. In any other position before the beam only two are visible, and their colours define the position of the vessel. The mast light is transmitted through a solid glass lens, so shaped and disposed that the light ceases to be visible abaft the beam. The starboard paddle-box light is also transmitted through a solid glass lens, the larboard light through a hollow glass lens containing a red mineral solution. These are placed in houses attached to the paddle-boxes, and the rays are projected at an angle of about 35 degrees with the keel, so as not to dazzle the lookout men on the forecastle."

Mr Shaw submitted a plan of his lights to the Select Committee. The significance of the 35 degree angle to the keel is that the light was projected in this direction so as not to dazzle the look-out men on the forecastle. The objective was that the light would be visible from right ahead to abeam. The paddle box was used to cut off the light from being seen aft. This angle of cut off appears to have been determined by the fairing of the paddle box. It would seem that the practice of showing the side lights to two points abaft the beam entered the seaman's oral tradition in determining how a vessel was heading and was carried on by the Admiralty Regulations in 1848.

The preference for red and white sidelights rather than red and green as proposed by Captain William Davis Evans of the Milford Dunmore East packet service was explained to the 1839 Select Committee on Steam Vessel Accidents by Captain E Chappell RN, who was the superintendent of the squadron of Government steam packets at Milford and Liverpool, as follows: "If coloured lights could be made to give us as strong a light as white light, unquestionably the red light on one side and the blue or green on the other, as proposed by Mr W D Evans, would be preferable, but the light is considerably dimmed by being coloured red, and blue or green are but other names for darkness, particularly where the weather is in the least hazy.

The technical problems of projecting coloured light, particularly green, were overcome by Robert Rettie, a lantern maker of Aberdeen, and his system of lights

was successfully tested in the steam frigate HMS **Comet** off Spithead in November 1845. In correspondence commencing in 1843, Rettie requested the Admiralty to test lanterns which he had devised to indicate the ship's head for the avoidance of collision at sea. It seems that the Admiralty were not easily moved but on 12th July 1845 the lamps were tested at Woolwich and carried on board a naval ship on the River Thames. This led to the official tests at Spithead. According to Rettie's letters, his system of collision avoidance was that enacted for steam ships in the Admiralty Regulations which became law on 11th July 1848 under powers contained in Act 9 & 10 Vict, c100. Rettie was disappointed in his expectations of being employed by the Admiralty in the implementation of his idea and he was dealt with parsimoniously by the Admiralty in relation to the work he had done. A bitter dispute ensued over expenses in the course of which Rettie wrote on 28th February 1848 to his MP:

"Now when I showed him my code of signals on the cards, which are also entered at Stationer's Hall, which goes along with the lamps and is necessary to explain them, which signal cards Mr Evans, at the last trial at Woolwich, had copied from mine, and made for himself a plan exactly the same, and which cards I then challenged, and told him that if ever I found any more of them, I should make him pay the penalty of £5 for each copy, which is the legal claim for any piratical usurpation of the Act."

The adoption of the green light as the starboard sidelight made the sidelights uniquely distinctive and also made the white light available for use on the bowsprit or foremast in conjunction with the higher white light on a mast farther aft. The lower white light was not included in the new Admiralty regulations though it had been in use on some ships as an alternative to sidelights. The disposition of two lights along the length of the ship was not as definitive as the arcs of coloured sidelights in telling how she was heading but two lights so disposed were superior to sidelights in that they immediately signalled a change in the vessel's heading if the lights were perceived to open or close with one another. It was said at the International Marine Conference held in Washington in 1889 that the greatest advantage of such lights on the main mast and foremast respectively *"is that a small change in the course of the steamer approaching end on, or nearly so, is at once and unmistakably indicated."* The result was the adoption of the second white light or ranging light as an optional light for steam vessels in the 1897 Rules.

The proposals of an anonymous *A Skipper* in 1837, that a sailing vessel should show a coloured light so that an approaching vessel would know what tack she was on, became fixed sidelights the same as those of steamships when prescribed by Admiralty regulations in 1858. However, it is interesting to note that the Admiralty had, in fact, intended in 1858 to prescribe red and green lights for sailing vessels which would be fixed to show from right ahead to right astern on the port and starboard sides respectively. This was to meet the concern that sailing ships were in considerable danger of being run down by overtaking steam ships,

though the main motivation in prescribing sidelights for sailing ships was to allow for the abolition of the port-helm/right-rudder rule which was the only possible rule in the absence of sidelights but was itself the cause of many accidents. The Board of Trade objected to this different treatment for the sidelights of sailing vessels on the grounds that the valuable utility of sidelights in determining how a vessel was heading would be lost. The Admiralty acceded to this objection and so the sidelights to be prescribed for sailing vessels were made the same as those for steamships. In the words of the Admiralty Judge, in commenting on the proposed rules, *“the rule as to porting the helm should be relaxed to the extent rendered necessary by the carrying of the lights, the lights becoming the governing principle.”*

The port-helm/right-rudder rule remained for steam vessels meeting on opposite course, that is to say, vessels meeting end on or nearly end on. After a period of confusion this was defined in 1868 to mean, at night, the situation where each vessel is in such a position as to see both of the sidelights of the other.

A FITTING MEMORIAL

By Bill Ogle

Mona's Queen was one of three Isle of Man Steam Packet vessels lost in a single day during the Dunkirk evacuation in World War II, and one of her anchors was recovered from the seabed near France last summer. It is now being restored at the Cammell Laird shipyard in Birkenhead, where she was built in 1934. It then will be returned to the Island where it will feature as a war memorial, although there is still some debate as to its final resting place.

The vessel, one of eight Manx Steam Packet ships involved in the operations, was sunk by a mine on her second trip to the beaches; she had already completed one trip back to Dover with twelve hundred troops on board. Steam Packet vessels rescued 25,000 troops, one in fourteen of all the soldiers brought back to Britain.

THE MONDAY FACILITY

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

March	Mondays	7 th , 14 th , 21 st , 28 th
April		4 th , 11 th , 18 th .
May		9 th , 16 th , 23 rd

BOOK REVIEW:

TITANIC and LIVERPOOL *By Alan Scarth*

Published by Liverpool University Press & National Museums

Liverpool, 2009 ISBN 978-18463-2229

Titanic's links to Belfast, where she was built, and Southampton, whence she sailed on her only voyage are well known; so why a book on **Titanic** and Liverpool?

Alan Scarth, in this finely researched book, provides the answer. The back cover of the book states "If you had been astern of **Titanic** on that fateful night in 1912, the last word to flash before your eyes as the great ship plunged beneath the waves would have been 'Liverpool' ". **Titanic** was built for the White Star Line which was headquartered in a splendid building in the city whose design was based on that of the London police headquarters, New Scotland Yard. Liverpool was the home port of the company's magnificent passenger liners though **Titanic** never visited what was then England's pre-eminent port.

Scarth provides a concise history of the White Star Line, its relationship to Liverpool and the subsequent move of the transatlantic mail/passenger operations to Southampton which he describes as "bold and pragmatic". The White Star Line had been losing ground to competitors Cunard since 1904, so company President and Managing Director, Bruce Ismay, ordered two liners of "unprecedented size and luxury" to compete on the Southampton to New York route.

Titanic was ordered from the Belfast shipyard of Harland and Wolff in 1907 and Scarth discusses the rationale behind the design and order of the ship whose keel was laid on 22 March 1909. A considerable proportion of the materials and fittings used in **Titanic** and her sister **Olympic** were provided by Liverpool firms. Items ranging from the ship's telegraph to rope work, navigation charts to galley equipment were sourced or manufactured in Liverpool.

Two chapters of the book provide an insight into the 114 crew members (of 892) who were from Liverpool or had a strong association with the city. Many were key officers and crew of the ship. Although the chapters contain lists of these people these chapters are more than simply a bland recital of names. There are numerous personal histories.

Only a few passengers on that fateful voyage hailed from Liverpool but Scarth suggests that this was not unusual, only 17 of the 954 passengers had a Liverpool connection. One was J. Bruce Ismay himself. As is well-known Ismay survived the sinking although his valet and personal secretary perished.

The book is not about the wreck of **Titanic** per se, but three chapters are devoted to the outward voyage, the sinking and its immediate aftermath. Ismay's appearances at the various inquiries into the disaster are well covered. The news was received with shock in Liverpool. Telegrams bounced around and expressions of

sympathy were received at the company's office. The personnel manifests were held in Southampton and it was some time before personal information was available in Liverpool. Ismay was vilified in the American press, largely suggests Scarth, because of newspaper baron William Randolph Hearst's long held dislike for Ismay. "The (disaster) almost ruined our lives" said Ismay's wife. Ismay retired from the company in 1913.

In the final chapter Scarth looks at the "long shadow" cast by the sinking, including the effects upon the survivors, the company and others such as Captain Lord of SS **Californian** who was castigated by a British inquiry for failing to adequately assist **Titanic**. The wreckage was discovered in 1995. The ship's position appeared to support Lord's estimate of his position but a resultant review of the inquiry a few years later failed to totally reverse the initial findings.

Scarth has drawn extensively upon the archives of the company and paper, archives and artefacts held in the extensive collection of the Merseyside Maritime Museum. Much of this material has not previously been published. The book is extensively illustrated, contains various personnel lists and a detailed index.

Although Southampton suffered far more than any other British port as a result of the disaster and many other ports throughout the world played major roles, Scarth suggests - and in the reviewer's view proves - that the port of Liverpool was central to the **Titanic** story from beginning to end. It is no idle boast that "Titanic and Liverpool" will be required reading for anyone interested in **Titanic** and also for anyone hoping to understand Liverpool's role as the great processing port of Europe and gateway to the US and Canada." *Larry Robins (NZ)*



THE LIVERPOOL NAUTICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY
NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The A.G.M. of the Society will be held at 12.30 pm on
Thursday, 19th May, 2011 in the Long Room,
2nd Floor, Merseyside Maritime Museum

THE IDEA OF A MARITIME MUSEUM

By Dr. C. Northcote Parkinson (1909 – 1993)

Published in L.N.R.S. Transactions, Volume III, 1946

Introduction by LNRS Vice President Mr H Hignett: Dr. Parkinson studied naval history as an undergraduate and his Ph.D. also related to that subject. During the World War II he was a lecturer at various Army and Naval Staff colleges, and then at Liverpool University from 1946 – 1949, when he was a member of the L.N.R.S. He is also remembered as the author of Parkinson's Law, as an essay in The Economist: stating "Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion".

In attempting to interest you in the idea of a Maritime Museum in Liverpool, I shall begin by pleading such right as I have to be heard. My first plea is that I am a Lecturer in Maritime History and, so far as I know, the only one in existence. I have a scarcity value, and I mean to make the most of it. More than that, I was, nearly fifteen years ago, one of the late Sir Geoffrey Callender's assistants. When the National Maritime Museum was formed —and before it opened its doors — I constituted fifty per cent of the staff. I knew then — I think I know, now — how a Museum is formed. While, therefore, I concede that you might reasonably have hoped for a paper from one who knew far more, you might also, I maintain, have had to listen to one who knew even less.

Granted so much, you may still doubt whether a newcomer to Liverpool can expect to grasp the complexity of the problems which surround the Shipping Gallery and the Bluecoat School site. But a newcomer's position has its advantages. Such knowledge as I have of Liverpool ends, as I readily admit, round about 1815. Facing a Liverpool audience in the year 1808, say, I should have known, more or less, what topics to avoid. But now I am happily unaware of the toes on which I may trample and the feelings I may outrage. My ignorance, which I have been careful to preserve, although powerless to improve, must be my protection.

What I am discussing is the idea of a Maritime Museum - of a Museum in the abstract. I am in no position to argue the merits of this site or that. Leaving that to the experts, I shall stick to principles. I ask not "where is it to be?" but "what is it to be?" And you will notice that I have partly answered that question - in the very title of my paper. For I have used the word "Museum" and not the term "Shipping Gallery." I never saw the Shipping Gallery and have read only one description of it, apart from the catalogue. Even from that, I should think the name imprecise. Granting, however, that the term "Shipping Gallery" fairly described what Liverpool used to have, I should still maintain that it is not what Liverpool ought to have. What is needed is a Museum.

At this point I may be asked to define my terms. What is a Museum? The word has, for many people, rather gloomy associations. We picture ourselves on a wet Sunday afternoon in November, the bored attendant, the catalogue (2d.), the

lovers disturbed by giggling children at the moment when they thought themselves alone. We visualise all this against a dusty background of skeletons, Zulu weapons, pampas grass and a scale model of the Parthenon. There is that bust of Garibaldi, those roman coins, the blunderbuss, the coaching horn. Overhead the rain falls pitilessly on a grimy skylight and in the next room someone is lecturing as pitilessly on we know not what. We are tired and depressed, and mainly anxious to go home. These visions of ours relate, of course, to some distant period, and (naturally) to some other city. Since our young days things have changed. A Museum is no longer a collection of objects under glass, grimly surveyed by people whose sole care is to prevent their being stolen. A Museum is nowadays a more lively institution.

The change could best be summarised perhaps by saying that a Museum consists primarily today of people rather than things. By people I mean those who frequent it for their use and pleasure. Without all these people, a Museum is dead. Without them, it scarcely exists. Just as a playhouse, with its lights and curtain and scenery, is nothing without players and audience, so is a Museum nothing without its active friends. I would urge you to think of it, first of all, in terms of people. We must, from the start, visualise its public; interested, excited, pleased and entertained. I do not say that things do not matter. I only plead that people matter more.

Does this bring us any nearer to defining a "Museum?" I think it does. Discarding our painful recollections and fixing our attention on Museums that are alive, we might frame a definition on these lines: a centre of public resort for instruction and entertainment, mainly by means of exhibits. Let us assume that this definition will suffice for now. A Maritime Museum would then be a centre of public resort for the instruction and entertainment of those interested in the Sea.

There must be exhibits. What are they to be? Taking Greenwich as our model, we might list the exhibits under these headings: (I) Ship models, (II) Marine paintings, prints, drawings and photographs, (III) Printed books, (IV) Manuscripts, (V) Instruments and (VI) Relics. Those are the obvious categories, but the arrangement would of course, be according to subject and period. The ideal (almost unattainable) would be to show, say, the model of a Liverpool West Indian with, nearby, a painting of the same ship, a portrait of her owner, a page (in facsimile) from her log, a chart pricked out with the routes she normally followed, her actual house-flag and a telescope which her last captain is said to have used. I urge that this is better than scattering these things round the town; the portrait in a gallery, the chart in a library, the telescope in private hands, and the house-flag in a Museum of Local antiquities.

Then there must be books. Let us agree not to rob any existing Library of a single volume. Our Maritime Museum should have a Library just the same. How else could the assistants answer the questions which are hurled daily at every Museum of reputation? When was this ship launched? Which harbour does this painting represent? From what period does this model date? Without a reference library these questions could not be answered. And acquisition of such a library, it is easy,

provided that we all make our Wills. True, we have to die first. But those of us who use Liverpool trams must always feel on the brink of eternity, and act accordingly.

However, we cannot make our bequests because there is no existing body we can name. Every month — every week — our future Museum, is losing the gifts and bequests which it would receive if already established. I know of several, even in the short time I have been in Liverpool. Many present will know of more. And the moral of this is — let's get on with it! Whenever this subject is discussed we tend to get bogged down in arguments about where the museum should be. That is a question for a later stage for no useful purpose can be served by discussing it now. Let the Museum exist before we seek its home. I was with Sir Geoffrey Callander, remember, when the National Maritime Museum was founded, and I can assure you that a Museum must grow underground — probably for years — before it can open its doors. There *must* be a temporary Museum; a storehouse and office. There must be time to accumulate the exhibits and train the staff. It does matter that the Museum, as a corporate body, should be brought in to existence, and with the least delay.

I wonder if I have, so far, gained some measure of agreement? I hope so, because my next point may well arouse opposition. It is this: such a Museum as I have tried to describe should *not* be housed as part of a larger Museum. It is wrong, as I think, to group (in effect) several Museums under one roof. Why? Well, first, because the best Museums are relatively small. True, there is the British Museum, and such a place, on the national scale, is justified. But one thinks with more pleasure of the Musée de Cluny, the Musée des Arts Decoratifs, the Casa d'Ore or the Kirke Collection at York.

Apart from the size, however, considered as a disadvantage in itself, there is a stronger reason for keeping Museums apart; a reason connected with human fatigue. People who have been through a Museum may want a number of things. They may want to sit down. They may want tea. They may even want brandy. What they *don't* want is another Museum. There is nothing, you may say, to prevent them going only to the bit they want to see. But that is not what happens. In practise the seeker after Chinese pottery has to run a gauntlet of stuffed giraffes. And people who like ships are not (as a rule) equally enthusiastic about butterflies, fossils, flint arrow-heads or surrealist art. Perhaps it will be urged that Museums which do not connect can still adjoin. They can. But why should they? *Administrative Convenience*? Of that expression we have heard enough.

My next plea is that our Maritime Museum should be controlled (not necessarily owned by) a body of Trustees, and not preferably by the City of Liverpool as such. My plea is founded on two main considerations. First, I maintain that the scope of the Museum should stretch — and must stretch — far beyond the municipal boundary. Such a Museum should serve the educational needs not only of Liverpool but of Birkenhead, Manchester, Chester and Whitehaven. I will go further than that. The Museum should have the closest connection (just as Liverpool always

had) with Boston, Philadelphia, Halifax and Newfoundland. Were I to choose a name for it I should call it the ATLANTIC MUSEUM. Second, I maintain that the Liverpool Ship-owners are the men without whose support the Museum must fail. I am not asking for their money. I suspect there are enough people doing that. No, what the Museum needs is their support, their archives, their builders' models. One does not expect a firm to make the Museum a gift of, say, the dockyard model of the **Queen Elizabeth**. But in twenty years time, when all up-to-date vessels are being driven by atomic energy — what then? But it would be rash to hand over a firm's treasures to any bodies of Trustees on which the Ship-owners, as such, were not represented.

Since I have the audacity to be appointing the Trustees in all but name, allow me to add one more to the list: the Director of the National Maritime Museum, whoever he may be. It should be made clear from the beginning that we intend no harmful rivalry. Greenwich must always remain the national centre and we would not have it otherwise. In things strictly naval, there would be no competition at all. But should anyone propose that the local collections of models and paintings should go down to Greenwich, I should say "No." Greenwich is too far away. We cannot send our school children there to see what sort of ships their forebears used to sail. But there should be close co-operation and we should not be ashamed to ask advice.

Sometimes I allow myself to dream of what a Maritime Museum here in Liverpool could be. I think its main theme should be the story of transatlantic shipping — it would be the point, as it were, where Liverpool and Boston should be drawn most closely together. The main sections would be three: the age of sail; the age of transition; and the age of steam. But other galleries would be needed, too. In one we should see the growth of Merseyside. In another we might see what an 18th century counting house looked like, with the tall desks. Models would show how a merchantman was laden, and her guns fired. We should see the portraits of 19th century Sea Captains — some of the finest men this country has ever produced — and we should see how a 20th century vessel is built and launched. The Museum should include a restaurant (serving dishes, presumably of burgoo and lobscouse), a cinema, a lecture-room and (for members of this Society) a Club. One room might be a memorial to Nathaniel Hawthorne; a place to which Americans would be especially welcome. In another a floating model would demonstrate exactly how a sailing ship really works. Here and there the building itself would look rather like a ship. Suppose it agreed that such a Museum is desirable, what are the immediate steps to take? The first step is to urge on the City the appointment of Trustees. The second is to begin enrolling the people on whom the future Museum is to rely. This Society is the nucleus but it is not more than that. We must seek more widely the cooperation of the City, the University, the neighbouring Boroughs, the Ship-owners and shipbuilders, together with such societies as this, so that our Museum can ever come into being.

*(Editor's note: part only of the Regulations,
this extract covers part 1 of 3)*

REGULATIONS

TO BE OBSERVED BY THE
CAPTAINS, OFFICERS
AND ENGINEERS
OF THE
STEAM SHIPS
OF THE

Moss Steam Ship Company, Limited

LIVERPOOL.

June, 1920.

GENERAL REGULATIONS.

General to Deck and Engine Departments.

- (a) Captains and all Officers are expected to maintain a courteous and gentlemanly manner at all times towards each other. The use of improper language to be avoided as Officers' example is frequently copied by the Crew.*
- (b) All broken parts of machinery, derricks, gear, etc., are to be retained on board and delivered over to either Marine Superintendent or Superintendent Engineer.*
- (c) No hatches to be taken off without the sanction of the Officer of the Watch, and he is to report to the Captain on the first available opportunity.*
- (d) All Officers and Chief Steward to be addressed with prefix Mr. All other members of the Crew by their surname only.*
- (e) Wives of any members of the Crew are not allowed to live or sleep on board at any port, and are on no account to be accorded a passage (even shifting ports) in the vessels in which their husbands are employed.*
- (f) Gambling is strictly prohibited.*
- (g) Officer of Watch is to look after the trimming of all ventilators and windsail, both for engine and, deck department.*
- (h) No member of the Crew is allowed to carry any description of goods for trading purposes.*

UNIFORM.

The undernoted Uniform, or Standard, Uniform, must be worn by the Captains, Officers, Engineers and Stewards at all times when on duty. If Standard Uniform is worn the Company's Buttons and Badge must be worn.

BLUE CROSS OR SERGE SUIT –

Captain :- Double-breasted Coat, six gilt Company's buttons on each breast. Sleeves mounted with one row of ½-inch gold navy lace with curl, and three rows of ¼-inch navy lace straight round.

Vest to have six gilt Company's buttons. Naval Cap, mounted with black oakleaf band, with one row ½-inch gold buoy lace in centre, Company's badge, large black chinstay, with gold Turk's head's and two Company's buttons.

Chief Officer - Double-breasted Coat, five gilt Company's buttons on each breast. Sleeves mounted with three rows ¼inch gold navy lace, top row with curl. Vest to have six gilt Company's buttons. Naval Cap, mounted with black oakleaf band, Company's badge, small black chinstay, with gold Turk's heads and two Company's buttons.

Second Officer - Double-breasted Coat, five gilt Company's buttons on each breast. Sleeves mounted with two rows of ¼-inch gold navy lace, top row with curl.

Vest and Naval Cap, same as Chief Officer.

Third Officer - Double-breasted Coat, five gilt Company's buttons on each breast. Sleeves mounted with one ¼-inch row gold navy lace, with curl.

Vest and Naval Cap, same as Chief Officer.

Apprentices - Double-breasted Coat, five gilt Company's buttons on each breast.

Vest and Naval Cap, same as Officers.

Chief Engineer - Single-breasted Jacket, with five gilt Company's buttons and three rows black braid, top row with curl. Naval Cap, same as Chief Officer.

Second Engineer - Single-breasted Jacket, with five gilt Company's buttons and two rows black braid, top row with curl. Naval Cap, same as Chief Officer.

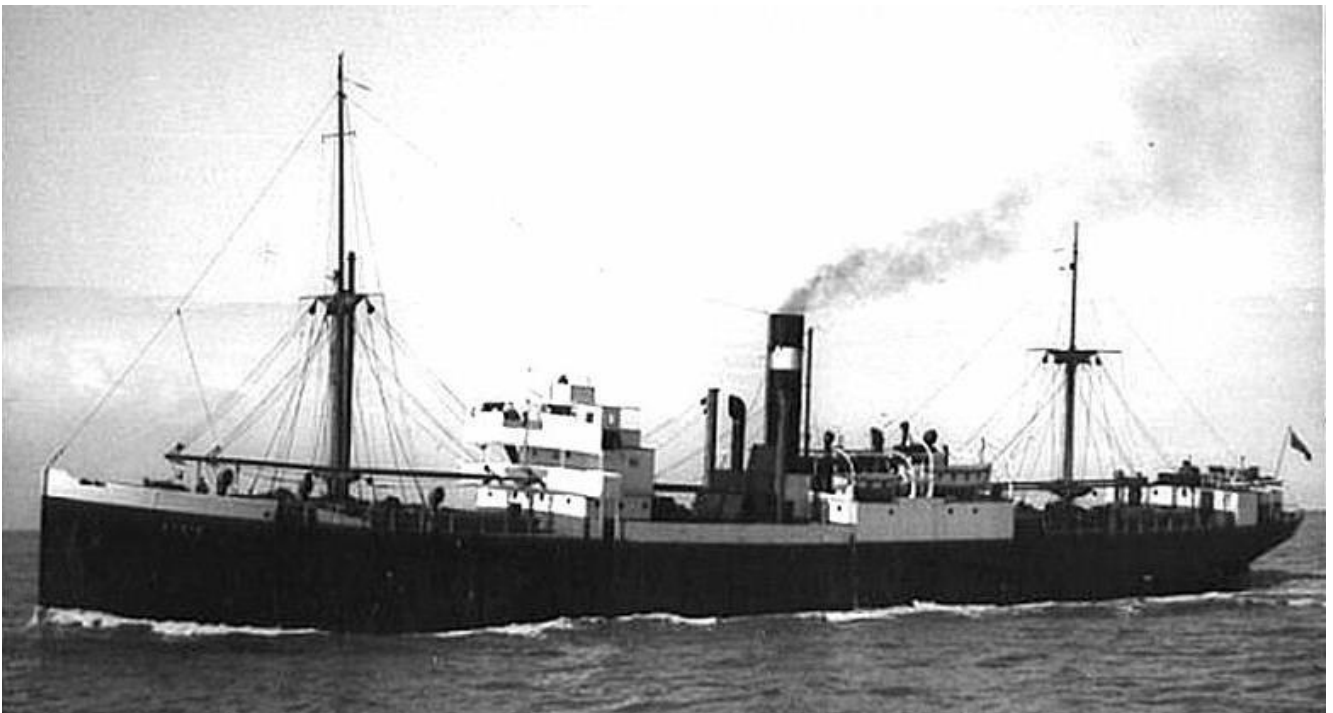
Third and Fourth Engineers - Single-breasted Jacket, with gilt Company's buttons and one row black braid, with curl. Naval Cap, same as Chief Officer.

Chief Steward - Double-breasted Coat to button (four) out-side breast pocket and (two) out cross pockets below. Two side vents 4½-inches deep. Lace to be two rows of ½-inch gold (zig-zag shape) two inches deep on cuff. All buttons to be gilt. Second Steward - Double-breasted coat as above, but with one gold zig-zag lace of ½-inch.

General

Black Ties are part of the Uniform; tie-rings and pins are not to be worn.

Change of Uniform - Officers and Engineers during hot weather may, in lieu of the Company's prescribed Uniform, wear White Uniform clothes with the Company's distinctive shoulder straps.



SS Etrib

At the time this document was first published the **Etrib**, 1,943 grt., was new to the fleet, being built by Swan, Hunters on the Tyne in 1919.

Having loaded a general cargo at Cartagena she sailed from Gibraltar in the Liverpool bound 23 ship convoy HG-84 on 10th June 1942. In an attack off Corunna five Merchant ships were sunk including the **Etrib**. Most of the crew were picked up and subsequently landed at Gourock on 20th June 1942. Sadly 2 crew & 2 gunners were lost.

S.Y. NAHLIN

By Bill Ogle

Several Merseyside projects relating to maritime preservation have not achieved success in recent years, but a different story can be told with regard to **Nahlin**. Many readers will recall her berthed on the river wall at Sandon Dock for some years, being prepared for restoration by Liverpool based G. L. Watson & Co.

Her story is fascinating and begins in 1929 when Lady Yule wished for a steam yacht which could visit every part of the globe. Designed by the renowned G L Watson & Co she is 296ft long with a beam of 36ft, and 1,392 gross tons; she was built by John Brown & Co on the Clyde and launched in 1930. Following several extended cruises which included a circumnavigation, **Nahlin** was made available for charter. King Edward VIII was an early client during the summer of 1936 who cruised the Adriatic. Also on board was Mrs Wallis Simpson, whose presence caused great media interest in the royal romance and ultimately to the abdication crisis.



S.Y. **Nahlin** at Sandon Dock, Liverpool

This publicity also brought **Nahlin** to the attention of King Carl II of Romania who purchased her in 1937 as his private yacht. However he was deposed on the outbreak of World War II, and since she was now away from prying eyes in a remote part of the Danube **Nahlin** survived the war largely intact. By 1988 she was still on the Danube, being used as a floating restaurant, but now in very poor condition

However her attractiveness was still obvious and after fraught and extensive negotiations she was purchased on behalf of clients. Eventually she was floated onto a barge for towage to the U.K. Following asbestos removal and partial stripping out she was brought to Liverpool where the work was completed and detailed specifications for restoration prepared. She was then, again by barge, relocated to Hamburg where the work was completed.

On-line you can now see a number of short videos of this beautiful ship by searching Youtube for *Nahlin*

TWENTY YEARS ON

By W K Wishart



A forest of cranes at King George V Dock

With the decline of London as the major port for all the well-known lines I thought it would be interesting to take a trip through the docks and compare it with a similar imaginary trip in the 1950s. The 20 years since then have seen remarkable changes in the pattern of shipping and its environs; had I written about the period 30 or 40 years back it would have been a 'journey down memory lane' or purely personal reminiscence. The docks comprise some 700 acres of static water which reflects, on a bright day, the London and Essex skies; they are the largest area of impounded water in the world. These 'reservoirs of light brimmed daily by the tides of the sun' were dug out by private enterprise to serve all our commercial needs during the last century; should

you visit them now you may see them before they are filled in at the end of this century.

Our journey begins in the middle 1950s. I shall try to take you through from the river as we would see it arriving from abroad. For those who have never arrived at the lock gates it should be explained that a blue flag hoisted at the lockside is our signal from the Dock Master that we may enter. We turn in between the pierheads of King George V Dock where the gates from the river are open. Perhaps an assistant Dock Master superintends our vessel as it is made fast.

Marine history

On our left we see the enormous workshops of Harland & Wolff. These were opened in the 1920s, with Government help, as competition to the largest Ship Repair Company on the Thames, R & H Green & Silley Weir. This company was formed from a group of marine engineers, one of which, Lester & Perkins, dated back to the East India Dock Company. On our right, we can see the masts and funnels of ships in Gallions Reach.

The river lock gates are closed, and we slowly rise until the water levels are

equal; depending on the tide we could have to rise by as much as 20 feet. The gates between the lock and King George V Dock are now opened and the cantilever bridge is raised to let us proceed through. Traffic stretches back from either side of the bridge: people press their faces against the road gates, young children on buses run to the front to get a better view. On either side of the dock there are long rows of ships, stem to stern; most of them are busy, with men and machinery about them; quayside cranes stand with jibs luffing and slewing and look from a distance like giant birds feeding.

On our extreme left is the King George V Dock, some 60 acres of water: on the north side bounding the centre road are six two-storey warehouses with verandahs on the upper floors. Taking a peek through an open door we may see an underslung crane moving, like magic, a hogshead of tobacco. On the south side of the dock, there are dolphins (not the performing ones!) each about 30 feet from the main quay and some 500 feet in length, supporting cranes. They were built to help 'lighters' or 'dumb barges' to manoeuvre and speed up the discharge of cargo on either side of the ship. Gangways link the dolphins to the quays.

Ships of all the lines

Loch Garth is in a berth regularly used by Royal Mail Line, possibly discharging lumber, sugar, or grain. Next we see **Dominion Monarch**, the largest motorship regularly using London. She is owned by Shaw Savill Line and is 26,463 dwt. With four Doxford engines, she is a nightmare to the ship repair worker, although lucrative to the contractor. Each engine drives a separate shaft and I can tell you it is a soul-destroying job replacing all those stern tubes.

We can also recognise the funnel of Cunard and find **Alsatia**: this vessel is not a usual 'Cunarder'. However, she is notable for having a real period piece amongst her accommodation. This is an Olde English Bar, complete with every trimming, even to a horseshoe. She is on the New York-London run.

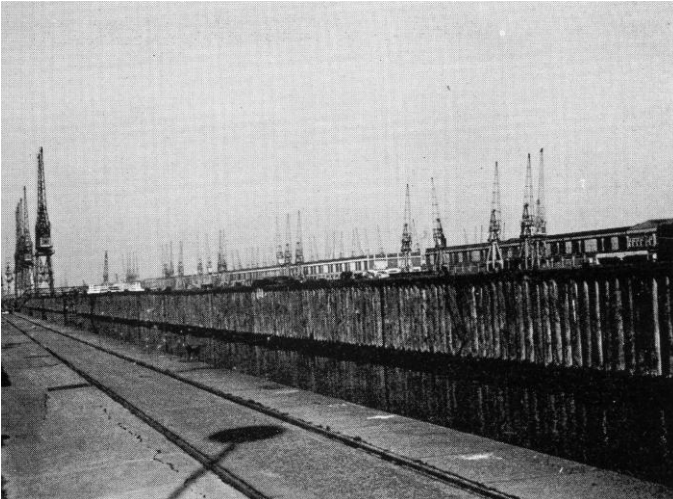
Farther along we see the P & O ships **Soudan** and **Bailor** and beyond them, **Glengyle**, off to the Far East for Glen Line. The Shaw Savill ship **Seuvic** is in drydock.

On the south side we make out the distinctive lavender colour hulls, white superstructure and the brilliant red and black funnel of two Union-Castle ships, **Dunnottar Castle** and **Braemar Castle**, 15,000 and 17,000 tons respectively. One is loading and one is discharging. Next we see the **Port Macquarie** looking like a yacht with her fine lines and single screw. She is no doubt discharging lamb from Canterbury in the South Island of New Zealand. Leaving the King George V Dock we see the Shaw Savill ship **Cymric**, loading and the P & O ship **Singapore** discharging. We have seen a total of twelve ships in this dock.

The Royal Albert Dock

We now turn right to proceed through the Adelaide Cutting, after which we can look west down the full length of the Royal Albert Dock, with a quay either side

over one mile in length. I can vouch for this, it's a long walk when the weather is cold and windy. Behind these quays are single storey transit sheds: the only warehouses in the docks are the cold air stores for imported meat.



*From No 2 King George Shed the motionless
Cranes of Albert Dock are visible
behind the warehouse*



*A view of Centre Road from the Adelaide
Cutting. The warehouses on the left
house the underslung cranes*

As we proceed down the Royal Albert Dock towards Royal Victoria we see the vessels lying alongside the north quay, which has well over 150 quayside cranes: some vessels are two abreast. We pass a vessel flying the Swedish flag: next **Hughli**, a Nourse Line vessel (now Hain-Nourse of P & O General Cargo Division). We then come past one of the 'Leith Yachts', **Bennevis**, owned by Ben Line: these vessels are very distinctive with their grained and varnished woodwork on the superstructure. Next we pass **Mapledell**, owned by Canadian Pacific Line, renamed from **Beaverdell**. The famous black funnel with two white bands distinguishes a BI ship, **Ismailia**; this company, founded by MacKenzie and MacKinnon was known originally as the Calcutta and Burma Steam Navigation Company; it is now part of P & O Group.

Two motorships lie further on; one, **Port Wyndham**, was built during the depressed period of shipping when many apprentices were employed on building, being bound by their indentures; the other vessel is **Rangitane** owned by New Zealand Shipping Company, now also part of P & O Group. NZS Co was founded at Christchurch, New Zealand, in 1873, and started with four small sailing ships. Next we see **Gascony**, possibly from Jamaica, carrying rum and general cargo. Also, a Norwegian boat in from Jamaica, with very clear cut lines and a clean white hull: it's **Northern Lights**, at the banana berth. As a point of interest, we import from Jamaica a colouring matter known as annatto: this is a seed used to colour butter, cheese, and varnishes. South American Indians colour their bodies with it.

Corfu is just out of drydock and awaiting a final coat of paint. Two ships are in dry-dock, **Largs Bay**, and one which is not recognisable. Beyond the drydocks are two

BI ships with general cargo. There is also **Uganda**, painted white and not black, as is usual with BI ships, and now converted to an educational vessel. Her sistership, **Kenya**, has since been sold. We see **Clan MacBean** loading, no doubt for South Africa. Another BI ship, **Padana**, is unloading a mixture of general cargo from East Africa. **Taranaki** (Shaw Savill Line) is unloading meat, dairy produce, and wool from New Zealand; lying aft of her is another Shaw Savill vessel, **Gallic**. The masts and funnels previously mentioned in Gallions Reach, are now identified as **Drina** (Royal Mail), **American Forwarder** (United States Line), and **Mastita**. Twenty-one ships we have seen in this dock alone.

We have now reached the western end of Royal Albert Dock. Beyond is the Connaught Passage spanned by the swing bridge; on the right, the modern Co-op flour mills can be seen on the skyline.

And so to 1975

The approach roads to the docks were practically empty, it is December 1975—'twenty years on'. The lock gates are rarely opened now, in fact they may close for three months to allow renewal of the gates. Gallions Reach is now the London Marina, a haven for small boats and widely used. The bascules of the road bridge are still prominent, but the bridge rarely causes any traffic hold-ups. The volume of traffic has dropped enormously with the diminishing dock work and the factory closures.

We look across the King George V Dock, where a few months ago oil tankers were laid up, no longer required owing to the Middle East problems. They have since gone, probably to be sold. The P & O building at No 2 berth is permanently closed—even the dock gate is permanently closed. Other empty offices are slipping into dreadful disrepair. The Port Line Office is used to store container couplings.

Grass grows in places where one would never have thought it possible. As our footsteps echo on the cobble stones, the years roll back, revealing childhood details clearly etched on the retina of memory: the Indians walking around with their 'Castela Pots' or little tins, trying to ride bicycles, buying up old sewing machines . .

Wartime project

The only vessel on the far side of King George V Dock is **Clan Ramsay** at No 4 berth. Only ten dockside cranes are evident, all quite still. The centre road between King George V Dock and Royal Albert Dock is empty: only the Shaw Savill office is still open. At No 7 berth King George V is **Sugar Corsair** and at No 9 **Braila**, a small foreign ship. Standing on the 'Knuckle', we recall the strange-looking containers erected there during the war, which later turned out to be reservoirs for the PLUTO project.

As we continue into the Royal Albert Docks, not a crane is moving its jib: only about 20 cranes remain on either side of the dock. At No 13 shed lies **Adventurer**, owned by the T & J Harrison Shipping Company: this vessel shipped an

unusually heavy lift—a 133-ton generator for Cape Town. And at No 21 shed the Glen Line vessel **Glenogle** (recently in the headlines over alleged poisonous cargo).

A large area of still black water; no lighters; the 'giant birds' are motionless. The weak December sun is mirrored in the still water. Not a sound: no chugging of the launches towing the lighters; no trucks whizzing along the quays like bumper cars at a fun fair. A tranquil sight for the camera lens, but not to anyone who had known the docks 20 years ago.

We move down to the Royal Victoria Dock with its swing bridge, alleged to be the widest in England. The only vessel visible here is **Aryt** of Arabia at the Co-op mills, which have now closed down. The new berth, built just inside the 'Vic', was for the American Lines ships. It has the largest unique transit shed in the UK. Built with no internal pillars, the roof was designed to allow complete freedom of movement inside. Previously, this site was used during the war to build tank landing craft, virtually the prototype for our modern Ro-Ro and container vessels, which arrived in their present sophisticated form in about 1967/9. These craft were used after the war by a number of small shipping companies, taking exports from the UK to the Continent and the Mediterranean.

Dilapidated

Apart from work being carried out in connection with building the new Silvertown barrier, there is nothing else in the docks. Most of the well-known offices in the 'Vic' have closed down and are looking very dilapidated. Grass is everywhere; vermin abound in the few remaining habitable buildings. The large meat berth in which BSL had some interest and which caused many problems in the 1960s is empty, its escalators poised outwards over the water, monuments to a declining trade.

And so the journey ends, with six vessels reflecting the decline in trade of our largest terminal port. It is arguable that this picture changes every day, but the number still remains small.

As I related this to a colleague in the Dock, he told how in the Surrey Commercial Docks, a single Customs Office remains open for the occasional yacht. Grass and beautiful wild flowers now grow there, and a wide variety of unusual birds wing their way through them, a poignant reminder of a distant past.

I hope you have enjoyed this travelogue. Perhaps, as a sequel to this story, we could look at the next twenty years. People would maybe say I am pessimistic, but I do not think I was over the past twenty years.

*Editor's note: and what did the future hold?
These pictures say it all!*



Above – can this really be the locks now?

Below – an aircraft landing at London City Airport.
Could anyone have imagined that?



A RACE TO THE WIRE

An Old Hand at Morse Code beats txt msgrs

Dotty and old-fashioned means of communication can still be the best: Morse code has seen off the challenge of the text message in a contest pitting the best in 19th-century technology against its 21st-century successor. The race to transmit a simple message, staged by an Australian museum, was won - at a dash - by a 93-year-old telegraph operator who tapped it out using the simple system which was devised by Samuel Morse in 1832 and was the mainstay of maritime communication up until 1997.

Gordon Hill, who learnt to use the technique in 1927 when he joined the Australian Post Office, easily defeated his 13-year-old rival, Brittany Devlin, who was armed with a mobile phone and a rich vocabulary of text message shorthand. Mr Hill, whose messages were transcribed by another telegraph veteran, Jack Gibson, 82, then repeated the feat against three other children and teenagers with mobile phones.

In the competition, at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, Mr Hill and his rivals were asked to transmit a line selected at random from an advertisement in a teenage magazine. It read: "Hey, girlfriend, you can text all your best pals to tell them where you are going and what you are wearing." While the telegraphist tapped out the line in full, to be deciphered by Mr Gibson, Miss Devlin employed text slang to save time. She keyed: "hey gf u can txt ur best pals 2 tel them wot u r doing, where ur going and wot u r wearing." Just 90 seconds after Mr Hill began transmitting, Mr Gibson had received the message and written it down correctly. It took another 18 seconds for Miss Devlin's message to reach the mobile phone belonging to her friend.

Mr Hill said that he was impressed by modern technology, even though his clunky telegraph machine emerged on top in three further contests. Text messaging, he said, had even been predicted by one of his colleagues in 1961. "An engineer told me the day would come when we would be able to send messages without wires," he said. Miss Devlin said that she had two years of texting experience. "I send about three messages a day," she said. "I used to send lots more but I ran out of credit."

WHISKY FOR ALL

The Merseyside Maritime Museum has an exhibition to mark the 70th anniversary of the stranding of the SS **Politician** and the true story behind 'Whisky Galore'

Until 27 March 2011 there is a showcase on the 2nd floor featuring a whisky bottle from the wreck; and in the basement until 8 May 2011.

Visitors can also enjoy a Scottish themed menu in the Maritime Dining Rooms.